

LIGAND PHARMACEUTICALS INC

Form 424B5

October 16, 2013

Table of Contents

Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)

Registration No. 333-177338

Prospectus Supplement

(To prospectus dated October 26, 2011)

\$24,000,000

Common Stock

We have entered into separate sales agreements with each of MLV & Co. LLC, or MLV, and Meyers Associates, L.P. (doing business as Brinson Patrick, a division of Meyers Associates, L.P.), or Brinson Patrick, each a sales agent and, collectively, the sales agents, relating to shares of our common stock offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus pursuant to a continuous offering program. In accordance with the terms of the sales agreements, we may offer and sell shares of our common stock having an aggregate offering price of up to \$24,000,000 from time to time through the sales agents, as our agents.

Our common stock is listed on The NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol "LGND." On October 15, 2013, the last reported sale price of our common stock on The NASDAQ Global Market was \$48.06 per share.

Sales of our common stock, if any, under this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus may be made in sales deemed to be "at the market" equity offerings as defined in Rule 415 promulgated under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, including sales made directly on or through The NASDAQ Global Market, the existing trading market for our common stock, sales made to or through a market maker other than on an exchange or otherwise, in negotiated transactions at market prices prevailing at the time of sale or at prices related to such prevailing market prices, and/or any other method permitted by law. Neither sales agent is required to sell a certain number of shares or dollar amount of our common stock. The sales agents will each use commercially reasonable efforts to sell on our behalf all of the shares of common stock requested to be sold by us, consistent with their normal trading and sales practices, on mutually agreed terms between the sales agents and us. There is no arrangement for funds to be received in any escrow, trust or similar arrangement.

Each sales agent will be entitled to a commission of 2% of the gross sales price per share sold under the sales agreement with that sales agent. In connection with the sale of the common stock on our behalf, each sales agent may be deemed to be an "underwriter" within the meaning of the Securities Act, and the compensation of the sales agents may be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts.

We have also agreed to provide indemnification and contribution to the sales agents with respect to certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act.

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. Please read the information contained in or incorporated by reference under the heading "Risk Factors" beginning on page S-3 of this prospectus supplement, on page 3 of the accompanying prospectus and in the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is truthful or complete.

Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

MLV & Co.

Brinson Patrick

Prospectus Supplement dated October 16, 2013

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT	Page
ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT	S-i
PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT SUMMARY	S-1
THE OFFERING	S-2
RISK FACTORS	S-3
FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS	S-5
USE OF PROCEEDS	S-7
DILUTION	S-8
PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION	S-10
LEGAL MATTERS	S-12
EXPERTS	S-12
WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION	S-12
INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE	S-12
PROSPECTUS	Page
ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS	1
ABOUT LIGAND	2
RISK FACTORS	3
SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS	4
USE OF PROCEEDS	5
RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES	6
PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION	7
DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES	9
DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK	16
DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK	19
DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS	21
GLOBAL SECURITIES	23
CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF DELAWARE LAW AND OF THE COMPANY'S CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION AND BYLAWS	26
LEGAL MATTERS	28
EXPERTS	28
LIMITATION ON LIABILITY AND DISCLOSURE OF COMMISSION POSITION ON INDEMNIFICATION FOR SECURITIES ACT LIABILITIES	28
WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION	28
INFORMATION INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE	29

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus relate to the offering of our common stock. Before buying any of the common stock that we are offering, we urge you to carefully read this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, together with the information incorporated by reference as described under the headings “Where You Can Find More Information” and “Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference” in this prospectus supplement. These documents contain important information that you should consider when making your investment decision.

This document is in two parts. The first part is this prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of this offering of common stock and also adds to, and updates information contained in, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. The second part, the accompanying prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference into the accompanying prospectus, provides more general information, some of which may not apply to this offering. Generally, when we refer to this prospectus, we are referring to the combined document consisting of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. To the extent there is a conflict between the information contained in this prospectus supplement, on the one hand, and the information contained in the accompanying prospectus or in any document incorporated by reference into the accompanying prospectus that was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the Commission, before the date of this prospectus supplement, on the other hand, you should rely on the information in this prospectus supplement. If any statement in one of these documents is inconsistent with a statement in another document having a later date — for example, a document incorporated by reference into the accompanying prospectus — the statement in the document having the later date modifies or supersedes the earlier statement.

You should rely only on the information contained in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and in any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering. We have not, and the sales agents have not, authorized any other person to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. We are not, and the sales agents are not, making an offer to sell or soliciting an offer to buy our securities in any jurisdiction in which an offer or solicitation is not authorized or in which the person making that offer or solicitation is not qualified to do so or to anyone to whom it is unlawful to make an offer or solicitation. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and in any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering, is accurate only as of the date of those respective documents. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates. You should read this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering, in their entirety before making an investment decision. You should also read and consider the information in the documents to which we have referred you in the sections of this prospectus supplement entitled “Where You Can Find More Information” and “Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference.”

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT SUMMARY

This summary highlights certain information about us, this offering and selected information contained elsewhere in or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. This summary is not complete and does not contain all of the information that you should consider before deciding whether to invest in our securities. For a more complete understanding of our company and this offering, we encourage you to read and consider carefully the more detailed information in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including the information incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and the information included in any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering, including the information referred to under the heading “Risk Factors” in this prospectus supplement on page S-3, in the accompanying prospectus on page 3 and in the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement.

Overview

We are a biotechnology company focused on developing or acquiring revenue generating assets and coupling them to a lean corporate cost structure. Our goal is to create a sustainably profitable business and generate meaningful cash-flow and value for our stockholders. Since our business model is based partly on partnering with other pharmaceutical companies to commercialize and market our assets, a significant amount of our revenue is based on payments made to us by partners for royalties, milestones and license fees. We recognize the important role of the drug reformulation segment in the pharmaceutical industry and in 2011 added CAPTISOL[®] to our technology portfolio. CAPTISOL is a powerful formulation technology that has enabled six U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved products, including Onyx Pharmaceuticals' Kyprolis[®], Pfizer's VFEND[®] IV and Baxter International's Nexterone[®] and is currently being used in a number of clinical-stage partner programs. In comparison to our peers, we believe we have assembled one of the largest and most diversified asset portfolios in the industry with the potential to generate significant revenue in the future. The therapies in our portfolio in development address the unmet medical needs of patients for a broad spectrum of diseases including cytopenias, oncology, infectious diseases, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, muscle wasting, and osteoporosis. We have established multiple alliances with the world's leading pharmaceutical companies including GlaxoSmithKline, Onyx Pharmaceuticals (recently acquired by Amgen Inc.), Merck, Pfizer, Baxter International, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Lundbeck Inc., Eli Lilly & Co. and Spectrum Pharmaceuticals.

Risks Associated with our Business

Our business is subject to numerous risks, as described more fully and incorporated by reference into the section entitled “Risk Factors” immediately following this prospectus supplement summary.

Company Information

We were incorporated in Delaware in 1987. Our principal executive offices are located at 11119 North Torrey Pines Road, Suite 200, La Jolla, California, 92037, and our telephone number is (858) 550-7500. Our website address is www.ligand.com. The information on, or accessible through, our website is not part of this prospectus. Our trademarks, trade names and service marks referenced herein include Ligand and CAPTISOL. All other trademarks, trade names and service marks appearing in this prospectus are the property of their respective owners. Use or display by us of other parties' trademarks, trade dress or products is not intended to and does not imply a relationship with, or endorsement or sponsorship of, us by the trademark or trade dress owners.

Table of Contents

The Offering

Common stock offered by us

Shares of our common stock having an aggregate offering price of up to \$24 million.

Common stock to be outstanding after this offering

Up to 20,817,000 shares, assuming sales of up to 499,375 shares of common stock in this offering at an offering price of \$48.06 per share, which was the closing price on The NASDAQ Global Market on October 15, 2013. Actual number of shares issued will vary depending on the sales price under this offering.

Manner of offering

“At the market” offering that may be made from time to time through our sales agents, MLV & Co. and Brinson Patrick. See “Plan of Distribution” on page S-10.

Use of proceeds

We currently intend to use the net proceeds from this offering, if any, for general corporate purposes, including capital expenditures and working capital. We may also use a portion of the net proceeds from this offering to acquire or invest in complementary businesses, technologies, product candidates or other intellectual property. See “Use of Proceeds” on page S-7 of this prospectus supplement.

Risk factors

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. See the information contained in or incorporated by reference under the heading “Risk Factors” beginning on page S-3 of this prospectus supplement, on page 3 of the accompanying prospectus and in the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement.

Nasdaq Global Market Listing

Our common stock is listed on The NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol “LGND.”

The number of shares of our common stock that will be outstanding immediately after this offering as shown above is based on 20,317,625 shares outstanding as of June 30, 2013. The number of shares outstanding as of June 30, 2013, as used throughout this prospectus supplement, unless otherwise indicated, excludes the following all as of June 30, 2013:

- 1,914,245 shares of our common stock issuable upon the exercise of outstanding stock options at a weighted average exercise price of \$16.56 per share;
- an aggregate of 81,512 additional shares of common stock reserved for future issuance under our Employee Stock Purchase Plan; and
- 20,788 shares of common stock issuable upon the vesting of outstanding restricted stock.

Unless otherwise stated, all information contained in this prospectus supplement reflects an assumed public offering price of \$48.06 per share, which was the last reported sale price of our common stock on October 15, 2013.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

An investment in our securities involves a high degree of risk. Before deciding whether to invest in our securities, you should consider carefully the risks and uncertainties described below and discussed under the section entitled “Risk Factors” contained in our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended June 30, 2013, which is incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus in its entirety, as updated by subsequent periodic and current reports filed by the Company, together with other information in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, the documents incorporated by reference and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering. The risks described in these documents are not the only ones we face, but those that we currently consider to be material. There may be other unknown or unpredictable economic, business, competitive, regulatory or other factors that could have material adverse effects on our future results. Past financial performance may not be a reliable indicator of future performance, and historical trends should not be used to anticipate results or trends in future periods. If any of these risks actually occurs, our business, financial condition, results of operations or cash flow could be seriously harmed. This could cause the trading price of our common stock to decline, resulting in a loss of all or part of your investment. Please also read carefully the section below entitled “Forward-Looking Statements.”

Additional Risks Related to This Offering and our Securities

Management will have broad discretion as to the use of the proceeds from this offering, and may not use the proceeds effectively.

Because we have not designated the amount of net proceeds from this offering to be used for any particular purpose, our management will have broad discretion as to the application of the net proceeds from this offering and could use them for purposes other than those contemplated at the time of the offering. Our management may use the net proceeds for corporate purposes that may not improve our financial condition or market value.

You will experience immediate and substantial dilution.

The offering price per share in this offering may exceed the net tangible book value per share of our common stock outstanding prior to this offering. Assuming that an aggregate of 499,375 shares of our common stock are sold at a price of \$48.06 per share, the last reported sale price of our common stock on The NASDAQ Global Market on October 15, 2013, for aggregate gross proceeds of approximately \$24 million, and after deducting commissions and estimated aggregate offering expenses payable by us, you will experience immediate dilution of \$48.46 per share, representing the difference between our as adjusted net tangible book value per share as of June 30, 2013 after giving effect to this offering and the assumed offering price. The exercise of outstanding stock options and warrants and the vesting of outstanding restricted stock will result in further dilution of your investment. See the section entitled “Dilution” on page S-8 below for a more detailed illustration of the dilution you would incur if you participate in this offering.

You may experience future dilution as a result of future equity offerings.

In order to raise additional capital, we may in the future offer additional shares of our common stock or other securities convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock at prices that may not be the same as the price per share in this offering. We may sell shares or other securities in any other offering at a price per share that is less than the price per share paid by investors in this offering, and investors

Table of Contents

purchasing shares or other securities in the future could have rights superior to existing stockholders. The price per share at which we sell additional shares of our common stock, or securities convertible or exchangeable into common stock, in future transactions may be higher or lower than the price per share paid by investors in this offering.

The price of our common stock has been and may continue to be highly volatile, which may make it difficult for stockholders to sell our common stock when desired or at attractive prices.

The market price of our common stock is highly volatile, and we expect it to continue to be volatile for the foreseeable future. For example, from August 31, 2012 through September 30, 2013, our common stock traded at a high price of \$50.85 and a low price of \$14.75. Some of the factors that may cause the market price of our common stock to continue to fluctuate include:

- fluctuations in our quarterly financial results or the quarterly financial results of companies perceived to be similar to us;
- fluctuations in our recorded revenue, even during periods of significant sales order activity;
- changes in estimates of our financial results or recommendations by securities analysts;
- clinical trial results;
- developments related to the pharmaceutical companies with which we are partnering for purposes of commercializing and marketing our assets;
- failure of any of our products to achieve or maintain market acceptance or the failure of our partners to achieve certain commercial milestones;
- product liability issues and warranty claims involving our products or our competitors' products;
- changes in market valuations of similar companies;
- success of competitive products or technologies;
- changes in our capital structure, such as future issuances of securities or the incurrence of debt;
- announcements by us or our competitors of significant services, contracts, investments, acquisitions or strategic alliances;
- developments or announcements related to our application for government stimulus funds;
- regulatory developments in the United States, foreign countries or both;
- litigation involving us, our partners, our general industry or any of the foregoing;
- additions or departures of key personnel;
- investors' general perception of us; and
- changes in general economic, industry and market conditions.

S-4

Table of Contents

The stock market in general, and The NASDAQ Global Market and the market for life sciences companies in particular, have experienced extreme price and volume fluctuations that may have been unrelated or disproportionate to the operating performance of the listed companies. There have been dramatic fluctuations in the market prices of securities of biotechnology companies. These price fluctuations may be rapid and severe and may leave investors little time to react. Broad market and industry factors may seriously harm the market price of our common stock, regardless of our operating performance. Sharp drops in the market price of our common stock may also expose us to securities class-action litigation.

Sales of a significant number of shares of our common stock in the public markets, or the perception that such sales could occur, could depress the market price of our common stock.

Sales of a substantial number of shares of our common stock in the public markets could depress the market price of our common stock and impair our ability to raise capital through the sale of additional equity securities. We cannot predict the effect that future sales of our common stock would have on the market price of our common stock. We do not anticipate paying dividends on our capital stock.

We do not intend to pay cash dividends on our capital stock in the foreseeable future. The declaration of dividends is subject to the discretion of our Board of Directors and will depend on various factors, including our operating results, financial condition, future prospects and any other factors deemed relevant by our board of directors. You should not rely on an investment in our company if you require dividend income from your investment in our company. The success of your investment will likely depend entirely upon any future appreciation of the market price of our capital stock, which is uncertain and unpredictable. There is no guarantee that our capital stock will appreciate in value or even maintain the price at which you purchased your shares.

Table of Contents

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, the documents we have filed with the Commission that are incorporated by reference and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering contain “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act, that involve risks and uncertainties, as well as assumptions, that, if they never materialize or prove incorrect, could cause our results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements generally are identified by the words “may,” “will,” “project,” “might,” “expects,” “anticipates,” “believes,” “intends,” “estimates,” “should,” “could,” “strategy,” “plan,” “continue,” “pursue,” or the negative of these words or other words or expressions of similar meaning. All statements other than statements of historical fact are statements that could be deemed forward-looking statements.

For example, forward-looking statements include statements about our future financial and operating results, plans, expectations for potential research and development payments, milestone payments, royalty payments, cash burn rates, timing of achieving positive cash flow, potential revenue and profits of a combined company, costs and expenses, interest rates, outcome of contingencies, financial condition, liquidity, business strategies and cost savings, any statements of the plans, strategies and objectives of management for future operations, any statements concerning our product candidates and product development, any statements regarding future economic conditions or performance, statements of belief and any statement of assumptions underlying any of the foregoing. We discuss in greater detail, and incorporate by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus in their entirety, many of these risks and uncertainties under the heading “Risk Factors” beginning on page S-3 of this prospectus supplement. We may not actually achieve the plans, intentions or expectations disclosed in our forward-looking statements and you should not place undue reliance on our forward-looking statements.

If any of these risks or uncertainties materializes or any of these assumptions proves incorrect, our results could differ materially from the expectations in these statements.

The forward-looking statements included in this prospectus supplement are made only as of the date of this prospectus supplement, and we are not under any obligation to update our respective forward-looking statements and do not intend to do so. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus, as applicable, or that any information incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is accurate as of any date other than the date of the document so incorporated by reference.

You should read this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, the documents we have filed with the Commission that are incorporated by reference and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering completely and with the understanding that our actual future results may be materially different from what we expect. We qualify all of the forward-looking statements in the foregoing documents by these cautionary statements.

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

We expect to receive net proceeds of up to approximately \$23.4 million from this offering after deducting sales agent commissions of 2% of the gross proceeds and estimated offering expenses payable by us. However, we cannot guarantee if or when these net proceeds will be received. We currently intend to use the net proceeds from this offering, if any, for general corporate purposes, including capital expenditures and working capital. We may also use a portion of the net proceeds from this offering to acquire or invest in complementary businesses, technologies, product candidates or other intellectual property, although we have no present commitments or agreements to do so.

As of the date of this prospectus supplement, we cannot specify with certainty all of the particular uses for the net proceeds to us from this offering. As a result, our management will have broad discretion regarding the timing and application of the net proceeds from this offering. Pending the uses described above, we intend to invest the net proceeds in interest-bearing, investment-grade securities.

S-7

Table of Contents**DILUTION**

If you invest in this offering, your ownership interest will be diluted to the extent of the difference between the public offering price per share and the as adjusted net tangible book value per share after giving effect to this offering. We calculate net tangible book value per share by dividing the net tangible book value, which is tangible assets less total liabilities, by the number of outstanding shares of our common stock. Dilution represents the difference between the portion of the amount per share paid by purchasers of shares in this offering and the as adjusted net tangible book value per share of our common stock immediately after giving effect to this offering. Our net tangible book value as of June 30, 2013 was a deficit of approximately \$31.8 million, or (\$1.56) per share.

After giving effect to the sale of our common stock in the aggregate amount of approximately \$24 million at an assumed offering price of \$48.06 per share, the last reported sale price of our common stock on The NASDAQ Global Market on October 15, 2013, and after deducting estimated offering commissions and expenses payable by us, our net tangible book value as of June 30, 2013 would have been a deficit of \$8.4 million, or (\$0.40) per share of common stock. This represents an immediate increase in the net tangible book value of \$1.16 per share to our existing stockholders and an immediate dilution in net tangible book value of \$48.46 per share to new investors. The following table illustrates this per share dilution:

Assumed public offering price per share	\$48.06
Net tangible book value per share as of June 30, 2013	\$(1.56)
Increase in net tangible book value per share attributable to this offering	1.16

As adjusted net tangible book value per share as of June 30, 2013, after giving effect to this offering	\$(0.40)
---	----------

Dilution per share to new investors purchasing shares in this offering	\$48.46
--	---------

The table above assumes for illustrative purposes that an aggregate of 499,375 shares of our common stock are sold at a price of \$48.06 per share, the last reported sale price of our common stock on The NASDAQ Global Market on October 15, 2013, for aggregate gross proceeds of approximately \$24 million. The shares sold in this offering, if any, will be sold from time to time at various prices. An increase of \$1.00 per share in the price at which the shares are sold from the assumed offering price of \$48.06 per share shown in the table above, assuming all of our common stock in the aggregate amount of approximately \$24 million is sold at that price, would increase our adjusted net tangible book value per share after the offering by less than \$0.01 per share and would increase the dilution in net tangible book value per share to new investors in this offering by less than \$0.01 per share, after deducting commissions and estimated aggregate offering expenses payable by us. A decrease of \$1.00 per share in the price at which the shares are sold from the assumed offering price of \$48.06 per share shown in the table above, assuming all of our common stock in the aggregate amount of approximately \$24 million is sold at that price, would decrease our adjusted net tangible book value per share after the offering by less than \$0.01 per share and would decrease the dilution in net tangible book value per share to new investors in this offering by less than \$0.01 per share, after deducting commissions and estimated aggregate offering expenses payable by us. This information is supplied for illustrative purposes only.

Table of Contents

The above discussion and table are based on 20,317,625 shares of our common stock issued and outstanding as of June 30, 2013 and excludes the following, all as of June 30, 2013:

- 1,914,245 shares of our common stock issuable upon the exercise of outstanding stock options at a weighted average exercise price of \$16.56 per share;
- an aggregate of 81,512 additional shares of common stock reserved for future issuance under our Employee Stock Purchase Plan; and
- 20,788 shares of common stock issuable upon the vesting of outstanding restricted stock.

To the extent that options or restricted stock outstanding as of June 30, 2013 have been or are exercised or vest, as applicable, or other shares are issued, investors purchasing shares in this offering could experience further dilution. In addition, we may choose to raise additional capital due to market conditions or strategic considerations, even if we believe we have sufficient funds for our current or future operating plans. To the extent that additional capital is raised through the sale of equity or convertible debt securities, the issuance of these securities could result in further dilution to our stockholders.

S-9

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We have entered into separate sales agreements, dated as of October 11, 2013, with each of MLV & Co. LLC and Myers Associates L.P. (doing business as Brinson Patrick, a division of Myers Associates, L.P.), under which we may issue and sell shares of our common stock having aggregate sales proceeds of up to \$24,000,000 from time to time through the sales agents. We refer to the sales agent selected by us for a sale as the Designated Agent. The sales agents may sell the common stock by any method that is deemed to be an “at the market” equity offering as defined in Rule 415 promulgated under the Securities Act, including sales made directly on or through The NASDAQ Global Market, the existing trading market for our common stock, sales made to or through a market maker other than on an exchange or otherwise, in negotiated transactions at market prices prevailing at the time of sale or at prices related to such prevailing market prices, and/or any other method permitted by law.

As our sales agents, the Designated Agents will not engage in any transactions that stabilize the price of our common stock.

Each time we wish to issue and sell common stock under the sales agreement, we will notify the Designated Agent of the number of shares to be issued, the dates on which such sales are anticipated to be made and any minimum price below which sales may not be made. Once we have so instructed the Designated Agent, unless the Designated Agent declines to accept the terms of such notice, the Designated Agent has agreed to use its commercially reasonable efforts consistent with its normal trading and sales practices to sell such shares up to the amount specified on such terms. The obligations of the Designated Agent under the sales agreements to sell our common stock is subject to a number of conditions that we must meet.

The settlement between us and the Designated Agent is generally anticipated to occur on the third trading day following the date on which the sale was made. Sales of our common stock as contemplated in this prospectus supplement will be settled through the facilities of The Depository Trust Company or by such other means as we and the Designated Agent may agree upon. There is no arrangement for funds to be received in an escrow, trust or similar arrangement.

We will pay the Designated Agent a commission equal to an aggregate of 2% of the gross proceeds we receive from the sales of our common stock. Because there is no minimum offering amount required as a condition to close this offering, the actual total public offering amount, commissions and proceeds to us, if any, are not determinable at this time. In connection with the sale of the common stock on our behalf, the Designated Agent may be deemed to be an “underwriter” within the meaning of the Securities Act, and the compensation of the Designated Agent may be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts. We have agreed to provide indemnification and contribution to the Designated Agent with respect to certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. In addition, we have agreed, under certain circumstances, to reimburse a portion of the sales agents’ expenses, including legal fees, in connection with this offering up to a maximum of \$80,000. We estimate that the total expenses for the offering, excluding compensation payable to the sales agents under the terms of the sales agreements, will be approximately \$150,000.

The offering of our common stock pursuant to the sales agreements will terminate upon the earlier of (i) the sale of all of our common stock provided for in this prospectus supplement, or (ii) termination of the sales agreements as permitted therein.

Table of Contents

This summary of the material provisions of the sales agreements does not purport to be a complete statement of its terms and conditions. A copy of each sales agreement is filed with the Commission and is incorporated by reference into the registration statement of which this prospectus supplement is a part. See “Where You Can Find More Information” and “Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference” below.

To the extent required by Regulation M under the Exchange Act, the sales agents will not engage in any market making activities involving our common stock while the offering is ongoing under this prospectus supplement.

S-11

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

Latham & Watkins LLP, San Diego, California, will pass upon the validity of the securities offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. LeClairRyan, A Professional Corporation, New York, New York, is counsel for MLV and Ropes & Gray LLP, San Francisco, is counsel for Brinson Patrick in connection with this offering.

EXPERTS

The financial statements, schedules, and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting of Ligand Pharmaceuticals Incorporated as of December 31, 2012 incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and elsewhere in the registration statement have been so incorporated by reference in reliance upon the reports of Grant Thornton LLP, independent registered public accountants, upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing in giving said reports.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are part of the registration statement on Form S-3 we filed with the Commission under the Securities Act and do not contain all the information set forth in the registration statement. Whenever a reference is made in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus to any of our contracts, agreements or other documents, the reference may not be complete and you should refer to the exhibits that are a part of the registration statement or the exhibits to the reports or other documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus for a copy of such contract, agreement or other document. Because we are subject to the information and reporting requirements of the Exchange Act, we file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the Commission. Our filings with the Commission are available to the public over the Internet at the Commission's website at <http://www.sec.gov>. You may also read and copy any document we file at the Commission's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the Commission at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the operation of the Public Reference Room.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

The Commission allows us to "incorporate by reference" the information we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents instead of having to repeat the information in this prospectus supplement. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and information contained in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and later information that we file with the Commission will automatically update and supersede prior information. We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and any future filings (other than Current Reports on Form 8-K furnished under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 and exhibits filed on such form that are related to such items) we

Table of Contents

make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act after the date of the prospectus supplement and before the sale of all the securities covered by this prospectus supplement:

- our annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012;
- our quarterly report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2013;
- our quarterly report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2013;
- our current reports on Form 8-K filed on January 22, 2013 (as amended by the Form 8-K/A filed on January 22, 2013), March 14, 2013, March 25, 2013, April 12, 2013, April 30, 2013, May 8, 2013 (other than Items 2.02 and 7.01 and the related portions of the Item 9.01 exhibits), May 20, 2013, June 4, 2013, June 12, 2013, June 20, 2013, July 22, 2013, July 24, 2013, August 14, 2013, and October 16, 2013;
- our definitive proxy statement on Schedule 14A filed on April 26, 2013 (as amended by the Form DEFA14A filed on June 4, 2013);
- the description of our common stock contained in our registration statement on Form 8-A filed on November 21, 1994, and any amendment or report filed for the purposes of updating such description;
- the description of our preferred shares purchase rights contained in our registration statement on Form 8-A filed on October 17, 2006, and any amendment or report filed for the purpose of updating such description; and
- all documents filed by us with the Commission under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act after the date of this prospectus supplement and before termination of this offering.

To the extent that any information contained in any filings we have made or will make with the Commission under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, or any exhibit thereto, was furnished, rather than filed with the Commission, such information or exhibit is specifically not incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement.

These documents may also be accessed on our website at www.ligand.com. Except as otherwise specifically incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement, information contained in, or accessible through, our website is not a part of this prospectus supplement.

We will furnish without charge to you, upon written or oral request, a copy of any or all of the documents incorporated by reference, including exhibits to these documents by writing or telephoning us at the following address:

Ligand Pharmaceuticals Incorporated
11119 North Torrey Pines Rd., Suite 200
La Jolla, California 92037
(858) 550-7500

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

Ligand Pharmaceuticals Incorporated

\$30,000,000

Debt Securities

Preferred Stock

Common Stock

Debt Warrants

Equity Warrants

We may from time to time offer to sell any combination of debt securities, preferred stock, common stock, debt warrants and equity warrants described in this prospectus in one or more offerings. The aggregate initial offering price of all securities sold under this prospectus will not exceed \$30,000,000.

This prospectus provides a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell securities, we will provide specific terms of the securities offered in a supplement to this prospectus. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement carefully before you invest in any securities. This prospectus may not be used to consummate a sale of securities unless accompanied by the applicable prospectus supplement.

We will sell these securities directly to our stockholders or to purchasers, through agents on our behalf or through underwriters or dealers as designated from time to time. If any agents or underwriters are involved in the sale of any of these securities, the applicable prospectus supplement will provide the names of the agents or underwriters and any applicable fees, commissions or discounts.

Our common stock is listed for trading on the Nasdaq Global Market under the symbol "LGND." On October 13, 2011, the closing price of our common stock on the Nasdaq Global Market was \$13.76 per share.

Investing in our securities involves risks. See "Risk Factors" on page 3.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is October 26, 2011

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS	<u>1</u>
ABOUT LIGAND	<u>2</u>
RISK FACTORS	<u>3</u>
SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS	<u>4</u>
USE OF PROCEEDS	<u>5</u>
RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES	<u>6</u>
PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION	<u>7</u>
DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES	<u>9</u>
DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK	<u>16</u>
DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK	<u>19</u>
DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS	<u>21</u>
GLOBAL SECURITIES	<u>23</u>
CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF DELAWARE LAW AND OF THE COMPANY'S CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION AND BYLAWS	<u>26</u>
LEGAL MATTERS	<u>28</u>
EXPERTS	<u>28</u>
LIMITATION ON LIABILITY AND DISCLOSURE OF COMMISSION POSITION ON INDEMNIFICATION FOR SECURITIES ACT LIABILITIES	<u>28</u>
WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION	<u>28</u>
INFORMATION INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE	<u>29</u>

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is a part of a registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the Commission, utilizing a “shelf” registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we may offer to sell any combination of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings up to a total dollar amount of \$30,000,000. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell securities under this shelf registration, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. To the extent that any statement that we make in a prospectus supplement is inconsistent with statements made in this prospectus, the statements made in this prospectus will be deemed modified or superseded by those made in the prospectus supplement. You should read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, including all documents incorporated herein or therein by reference, together with additional information described under “Where You Can Find More Information.” We may only use this prospectus to sell the securities if it is accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

We have not authorized any dealer, salesman or other person to give any information or to make any representation other than those contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement. You must not rely upon any information or representation not contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or the accompanying prospectus supplement. This prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement do not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any securities other than the registered securities to which they relate, nor do this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy securities in any jurisdiction to any person to whom it is unlawful to make such offer or solicitation in such jurisdiction. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement is accurate on any date subsequent to the date set forth on the front of the document or that any information we have incorporated by reference is correct on any date subsequent to the date of the document incorporated by reference, even though this prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplement is delivered or securities are sold on a later date.

Unless the context requires otherwise, in this prospectus and the information incorporated herein by reference, the terms “Ligand,” “we,” “us” and “our” refer to Ligand Pharmaceuticals Incorporated, a Delaware corporation. References to “Ligand Pharmaceuticals Incorporated,” “Ligand,” the “Company,” “we” or “our” include our wholly owned subsidiaries—Ligand JVR, Allergan Ligand Retinoid Therapeutics, Seragen, Inc., or Seragen; Pharmacoepia, LLC, or Pharmacoepia; Neurogen Corporation, CyDex Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Metabasis Therapeutics, and Nexus Equity VI LLC, or Nexus.

Table of Contents

ABOUT LIGAND

We are a biotechnology company focused on developing or acquiring revenue generating assets and coupling them to a lean corporate cost structure. Our goal is to create a sustainably profitable business and generate meaningful value for our stockholders. Since our business model is based on the goal of partnering with other pharmaceutical companies to commercialize and market our assets, the revenue that supports our business is based largely on payments made to us by partners for royalties, milestones, license fees and our material sales of Captisol®. We expect to receive revenue from eight partner-marketed products in 2011 and have a portfolio of over fifty additional programs that are in various stages of development with the potential to become future revenue generating assets. This portfolio of assets is highly diversified across numerous technology types, therapeutic areas, drug targets, and industry partners, offering investors a unique and, we believe, lower risk portfolio opportunity in which to invest in the increasingly complicated and unpredictable pharmaceutical industry. These programs address the unmet medical needs of patients for a broad spectrum of diseases including hepatitis, muscle wasting, Alzheimer's disease, dyslipidemia, diabetes, anemia, COPD, asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, oncology and osteoporosis. We have established multiple alliances with the world's leading pharmaceutical companies including GlaxoSmithKline, Merck, Pfizer, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Onyx and Celgene.

We were incorporated in Delaware in 1987. Our principal executive offices are located at 11085 North Torrey Pines Road, Suite 300, La Jolla, California, 92037, and our telephone number is (858) 550-7500. Our website address is www.ligand.com. The information on, or accessible through, our website is not part of this prospectus.

Our trademarks, trade names and service marks referenced herein include Ligand and Captisol. All other trademarks, trade names and service marks appearing in this prospectus are the property of their respective owners. Use or display by us of other parties' trademarks, trade dress or products is not intended to and does not imply a relationship with, or endorsement or sponsorship of, us by the trademark or trade dress owners.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

You should carefully consider the specific risks set forth under “Risk Factors” in the applicable prospectus supplement, under “Risk Factors” under Item 1A of Part I of our most recent annual report on Form 10-K, and under “Risk Factors” under Item 1A of Part II of subsequent quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, as updated by our subsequent filings under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, or the Exchange Act, each of which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus, before making an investment decision.

Table of Contents

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus, any accompanying prospectus supplement, the documents incorporated by reference herein and therein and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this prospectus contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 that involve risks and uncertainties, as well as assumptions, that, if they never materialize or prove incorrect, could cause our results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements generally are identified by the words “may,” “will,” “project,” “might,” “expects,” “anticipates,” “believes,” “intends,” “estimates,” “should,” “could,” “would,” “strategy,” “plan,” “continue,” “pursue,” or the negative of these words or other words or expressions of similar meaning. All statements other than statements of historical fact are statements that could be deemed forward-looking statements. For example, forward-looking statements include statements about our future financial and operating results, plans, expectations for potential research and development payments, milestone payments, royalty payments, cash burn rates, timing of achieving positive cash flow, potential revenue and profits of a combined company, costs and expenses, interest rates, outcome of contingencies, financial condition, liquidity, business strategies and cost savings, any statements of the plans, strategies and objectives of management for future operations, any statements concerning our product candidates and product development, any statements regarding future economic conditions or performance, statements of belief and any statement of assumptions underlying any of the foregoing. The risks, uncertainties and assumptions referred to above include other risks and uncertainties that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus. We may not actually achieve the plans, intentions or expectations disclosed in our forward-looking statements and you should not place undue reliance on our forward-looking statements.

If any of these risks or uncertainties materializes or any of these assumptions proves incorrect, our results could differ materially from the expectations in these statements. The forward-looking statements included in this prospectus are made only as of the date of this prospectus, and we are not under any obligation to update our respective forward-looking statements and do not intend to do so.

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, we intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of the securities by us under this prospectus for general corporate purposes, including capital expenditures and working capital, and repayment of one or more credit lines. We may also use a portion of the net proceeds from the sale of the securities by us under this prospectus to acquire or invest in complementary businesses, technologies, product candidates or other intellectual property, although we have no present commitments or agreements to do so. Pending the uses described above, we intend to invest the net proceeds in interest-bearing, investment-grade securities.

Table of Contents

RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

The following summary is qualified by the more detailed information appearing in the computation table found in Exhibit 12.1 to the registration statement of which this prospectus is part and the historical financial statements, including the notes to those financial statements, incorporated by reference in this prospectus. Our ratio of earnings to fixed charges for each of the years ended December 31, 2006 to 2010 and for the six months ended June 30, 2011 was as follows:

	Year Ended December 31,					Six Months
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Ended June 30, 2011
	(in thousands)					
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges(1)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Deficiency of earnings available to cover fixed charges	\$(72,169)	\$(50,930)	\$(95,557)	\$(7,537)	\$(14,115)	\$(3,624)

For purposes of computing this ratio of earnings to fixed charges, fixed charges consist of interest expense and estimated interest component of rent, and earnings consist of loss before income taxes plus fixed charges. In each (1) of the periods presented, earnings were insufficient to cover fixed charges. We have not included a ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends because we do not have any preferred stock outstanding as of the date of this prospectus.

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities from time to time pursuant to underwritten public offerings, negotiated transactions, block trades or a combination of these methods. We may sell the securities separately or together:

through one or more underwriters or dealers in a public offering and sale by them;

through agents; and/or

directly to one or more purchasers.

We may distribute the securities from time to time in one or more transactions:

at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed;

at market prices prevailing at the time of sale;

- at prices related to such prevailing market prices; or

at negotiated prices.

We may solicit directly offers to purchase the securities being offered by this prospectus. We may also designate agents to solicit offers to purchase the securities from time to time. We may sell the securities being offered by this prospectus by any method permitted by law, including sales deemed to be an “at the market” offering as defined in Rule 415(a)(4) of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, including without limitation sales made directly on the Nasdaq Global Market, on any other existing trading market for our securities or to or through a market maker. We will name in a prospectus supplement any agent involved in the offer or sale of our securities.

If we utilize a dealer in the sale of the securities being offered by this prospectus, we will sell the securities to the dealer, as principal. The dealer may then resell the securities to the public at varying prices to be determined by the dealer at the time of resale.

If we utilize an underwriter in the sale of the securities being offered by this prospectus, we will execute an underwriting agreement with the underwriter at the time of sale and we will provide the name of any underwriter in the prospectus supplement that the underwriter will use to make resales of the securities to the public. In connection with the sale of the securities, we or the purchasers of securities for whom the underwriter may act as agent, may compensate the underwriter in the form of underwriting discounts or commissions. The underwriter may sell the securities to or through dealers, and the underwriter may compensate those dealers in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions.

We will provide in the applicable prospectus supplement any compensation we will pay to underwriters, dealers or agents in connection with the offering of the securities, and any discounts, concessions or commissions allowed by underwriters to participating dealers. In compliance with guidelines of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, or FINRA, the maximum consideration or discount to be received by any FINRA member or independent broker dealer may not exceed 8% of the aggregate amount of the securities offered pursuant to this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement. Underwriters, dealers and agents participating in the distribution of the securities may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act, and any discounts and commissions received by them and any profit realized by them on resale of the securities may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions. We may enter into agreements to indemnify underwriters, dealers and agents against civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribute to payments they may be required to make in respect thereof. In the event that an offering made pursuant to this prospectus is subject to FINRA Rule 5121, the prospectus supplement will comply with the prominent disclosure provisions of that rule.

The securities may or may not be listed on a national securities exchange. To facilitate the offering of securities, certain persons participating in the offering may engage in transactions that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the price of the securities. This may include over-allotments or short sales of the securities,

Table of Contents

which involves the sale by persons participating in the offering of more securities than we sold to them. In these circumstances, these persons would cover such over-allotments or short positions by making purchases in the open market or by exercising their over-allotment option. In addition, these persons may stabilize or maintain the price of the securities by bidding for or purchasing securities in the open market or by imposing penalty bids, whereby selling concessions allowed to dealers participating in the offering may be reclaimed if securities sold by them are repurchased in connection with stabilization transactions. The effect of these transactions may be to stabilize or maintain the market price of the securities at a level above that which might otherwise prevail in the open market. These transactions may be discontinued at any time.

We may authorize underwriters, dealers or agents to solicit offers by certain purchasers to purchase the securities from us at the public offering price set forth in the prospectus supplement pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. The contracts will be subject only to those conditions set forth in the prospectus supplement, and the prospectus supplement will set forth any commissions we pay for solicitation of these contracts.

We may enter into derivative transactions with third parties, or sell securities not covered by this prospectus to third parties in privately negotiated transactions. If the applicable prospectus supplement so indicates, in connection with any derivative transaction, the third parties may sell securities covered by this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, including in short sale transactions. If so, the third party may use securities pledged by us or borrowed from us or others to settle those sales or to close out any related open borrowings of stock, and may use securities received from us in settlement of those derivatives to close out any related open borrowings of stock. The third party in such sale transactions will be an underwriter and, if not identified in this prospectus, will be identified in the applicable prospectus supplement or a post-effective amendment to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. In addition, we may otherwise loan or pledge securities to a financial institution or other third party that in turn may sell the securities short using this prospectus. Such financial institution or other third party may transfer its economic short position to investors in our securities or in connection with a concurrent offering of other securities.

The underwriters, dealers and agents may engage in transactions with us, or perform services for us, in the ordinary course of business.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following description, together with the additional information we include in any applicable prospectus supplement, summarizes certain general terms and provisions of the debt securities that we may offer under this prospectus. When we offer to sell a particular series of debt securities, we will describe the specific terms of the series in a supplement to this prospectus. We will also indicate in the prospectus supplement the extent to which the general terms and provisions described in this prospectus apply to a particular series of debt securities.

We may issue debt securities either separately, or together with, or upon the conversion or exercise of or in exchange for, other securities described in this prospectus. Debt securities may be our senior, senior subordinated or subordinated obligations and, unless otherwise specified in a supplement to this prospectus, the debt securities will be our direct, unsecured obligations and may be issued in one or more series.

The debt securities will be issued under an indenture between us and a trustee to be identified in the applicable prospectus supplement. We have summarized select portions of the indenture below. The summary is not complete. The form of the indenture has been filed as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus forms a part and you should read the indenture for provisions that may be important to you. In the summary below, we have included references to the section numbers of the indenture so that you can easily locate these provisions. Capitalized terms used in the summary and not defined herein have the meanings specified in the indenture.

As used in this section only, “Ligand,” “we,” “our” or “us” refer to Ligand Pharmaceuticals Incorporated excluding our subsidiaries, unless expressly stated or the context otherwise requires.

General

The terms of each series of debt securities will be established by or pursuant to a resolution of our board of directors and set forth or determined in the manner provided in a resolution of our board of directors, in an officer’s certificate or by a supplemental indenture. (Section 2.2) The particular terms of each series of debt securities will be described in a prospectus supplement relating to such series (including any pricing supplement or term sheet).

We can issue an unlimited amount of debt securities under the indenture that may be in one or more series with the same or various maturities, at par, at a premium, or at a discount. (Section 2.1) We will set forth in a prospectus supplement (including any pricing supplement or term sheet) relating to any series of debt securities being offered, the aggregate principal amount and the following terms of the debt securities, if applicable:

- the title and ranking of the debt securities (including the terms of any subordination provisions);
- the price or prices (expressed as a percentage of the principal amount) at which we will sell the debt securities;
- any limit on the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities;
- the date or dates on which the principal of the debt securities of the series is payable;
- the rate or rates (which may be fixed or variable) per annum or the method used to determine the rate or rates (including any commodity, commodity index, stock exchange index or financial index) at which the debt securities will bear interest, the date or dates from which interest will accrue, the date or dates on which interest will commence and be payable and any regular record date for the interest payable on any interest payment date;
- the place or places where principal of, and interest, if any, on the debt securities will be payable (and the method of such payment), where the securities of such series may be surrendered for registration of transfer or exchange, and where notices and demands to us in respect of the debt securities may be delivered;

Table of Contents

the period or periods within which, the price or prices at which and the terms and conditions upon which we may redeem the debt securities;

any obligation we have to redeem or purchase the debt securities pursuant to any sinking fund or analogous provisions or at the option of a holder of debt securities and the period or periods within which, the price or prices at which and in the terms and conditions upon which debt securities of the series shall be redeemed or purchased, in whole or in part, pursuant to such obligation;

the dates on which and the price or prices at which we will repurchase debt securities at the option of the holders of debt securities and other detailed terms and provisions of these repurchase obligations;

the denominations in which the debt securities will be issued, if other than denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof;

whether the debt securities will be issued in the form of certificated debt securities or global debt securities;

the portion of principal amount of the debt securities payable upon declaration of acceleration of the maturity date, if other than the principal amount;

the currency of denomination of the debt securities, which may be United States Dollars or any foreign currency, and if such currency of denomination is a composite currency, the agency or organization, if any, responsible for overseeing such composite currency;

the designation of the currency, currencies or currency units in which payment of principal of, premium and interest on the debt securities will be made;

if payments of principal of, premium or interest on the debt securities will be made in one or more currencies or currency units other than that or those in which the debt securities are denominated, the manner in which the exchange rate with respect to these payments will be determined;

the manner in which the amounts of payment of principal of, premium, if any, or interest on the debt securities will be determined, if these amounts may be determined by reference to an index based on a currency or currencies other than that in which the debt securities are denominated or designated to be payable or by reference to a commodity, commodity index, stock exchange index or financial index;

any provisions relating to any security provided for the debt securities;

any addition to, deletion of or change in the Events of Default described in this prospectus or in the indenture with respect to the debt securities and any change in the acceleration provisions described in this prospectus or in the indenture with respect to the debt securities;

- any addition to, deletion of or change in the covenants described in this prospectus or in the indenture with respect to the debt securities;
- any depositaries, interest rate calculation agents, exchange rate calculation agents or other agents with respect to the debt securities;
- the provisions, if any, relating to conversion or exchange of any securities of such series, including if applicable, the conversion or exchange price and period, provisions as to whether conversion or exchange will be mandatory, the events requiring an adjustment of the conversion or exchange price and provisions affecting conversion or exchange; and

any other terms of the debt securities, which may supplement, modify or delete any provision of the indenture as it applies to that series, including any terms that may be required under applicable law or regulations or advisable in connection with the marketing of the securities. (Section 2.2)

We may issue debt securities that provide for an amount less than their stated principal amount to be due and payable upon declaration of acceleration of their maturity pursuant to the terms of the indenture. We will provide you with information on the federal income tax considerations and other special considerations applicable to any of these debt securities in the applicable prospectus supplement.

If we denominate the purchase price of any of the debt securities in a foreign currency or currencies or a foreign currency unit or units, or if the principal of and any premium and interest on any series of debt securities is payable in a foreign currency or currencies or a foreign currency unit or units, we will provide you with information on the restrictions, elections, general tax considerations, specific terms and other

Table of Contents

information with respect to that issue of debt securities and such foreign currency or currencies or foreign currency unit or units in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Transfer and Exchange

Each debt security will be represented by either one or more global securities registered in the name of The Depository Trust Company, or the Depository, or a nominee of the Depository (we will refer to any debt security represented by a global debt security as a “book-entry debt security”), or a certificate issued in definitive registered form (we will refer to any debt security represented by a certificated security as a “certificated debt security”) as set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Except as set forth under the heading “Global Debt Securities and Book-Entry System” below, book-entry debt securities will not be issuable in certificated form.

Certificated Debt Securities. You may transfer or exchange certificated debt securities at any office we maintain for this purpose in accordance with the terms of the indenture. (Section 2.4) No service charge will be made for any transfer or exchange of certificated debt securities, but we may require payment of a sum sufficient to cover any tax or other governmental charge payable in connection with a transfer or exchange. (Section 2.7)

You may effect the transfer of certificated debt securities and the right to receive the principal of, premium and interest on certificated debt securities only by surrendering the certificate representing those certificated debt securities and either reissuance by us or the trustee of the certificate to the new holder or the issuance by us or the trustee of a new certificate to the new holder.

Global Debt Securities and Book-Entry System. Each global debt security representing book-entry debt securities will be deposited with, or on behalf of, the Depository, and registered in the name of the Depository or a nominee of the Depository. Please see “Global Securities.”

Covenants

We will set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement any restrictive covenants applicable to any issue of debt securities. (Article IV)

No Protection In the Event of a Change of Control

Unless we state otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the debt securities will not contain any provisions which may afford holders of the debt securities protection in the event we have a change in control or in the event of a highly leveraged transaction (whether or not such transaction results in a change in control) which could adversely affect holders of debt securities.

Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets

We may not consolidate with or merge with or into, or convey, transfer or lease all or substantially all of our properties and assets to any person (a “successor person”) unless:

we are the surviving corporation or the successor person (if other than Ligand) is a corporation organized and validly existing under the laws of any U.S. domestic jurisdiction and expressly assumes our obligations on the debt securities and under the indenture; and
immediately after giving effect to the transaction, no Default or Event of Default, shall have occurred and be continuing;

Notwithstanding the above, any of our subsidiaries may consolidate with, merge into or transfer all or part of its properties to us. (Section 5.1)

Events of Default

“Event of Default” means with respect to any series of debt securities, any of the following:

Table of Contents

default in the payment of any interest upon any debt security of that series when it becomes due and payable, and continuance of such default for a period of 30 days (unless the entire amount of the payment is deposited by us with the trustee or with a paying agent prior to the expiration of the 30-day period);

default in the payment of principal of any debt security of that series at its maturity;

default in the performance or breach of any other covenant or warranty by us in the indenture (other than a covenant or warranty that has been included in the indenture solely for the benefit of a series of debt securities other than that series), which default continues uncured for a period of 60 days after we receive written notice from the trustee or we and the trustee receive written notice from the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series as provided in the indenture;

certain voluntary or involuntary events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of Ligand;

any other Event of Default provided with respect to debt securities of that series that is described in the applicable prospectus supplement. (Section 6.1)

No Event of Default with respect to a particular series of debt securities (except as to certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization) necessarily constitutes an Event of Default with respect to any other series of debt securities. (Section 6.1) The occurrence of certain Events of Default or an acceleration under the indenture may constitute an event of default under certain of our indebtedness or that of our subsidiaries outstanding from time to time.

If an Event of Default with respect to debt securities of any series at the time outstanding occurs and is continuing, then the trustee or the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may, by a notice in writing to us (and to the trustee if given by the holders), declare to be due and payable immediately the principal of (or, if the debt securities of that series are discount securities, that portion of the principal amount as may be specified in the terms of that series) and accrued and unpaid interest, if any, on all debt securities of that series. In the case of an Event of Default resulting from certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization, the principal (or such specified amount) of and accrued and unpaid interest, if any, on all outstanding debt securities will become and be immediately due and payable without any declaration or other act on the part of the trustee or any holder of outstanding debt securities. At any time after a declaration of acceleration with respect to debt securities of any series has been made, but before a judgment or decree for payment of the money due has been obtained by the trustee, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may rescind and annul the acceleration if all Events of Default, other than the non-payment of accelerated principal and interest, if any, with respect to debt securities of that series, have been cured or waived as provided in the indenture. (Section 6.2) We refer you to the prospectus supplement relating to any series of debt securities that are discount securities for the particular provisions relating to acceleration of a portion of the principal amount of such discount securities upon the occurrence of an Event of Default.

The indenture provides that the trustee will be under no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under the indenture unless the trustee receives indemnity satisfactory to it against any cost, liability or expense which might be incurred by it in exercising such right of power. (Section 7.1(e)) Subject to certain rights of the trustee, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series will have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee with respect to the debt securities of that series. (Section 6.12) No holder of any debt security of any series will have any right to institute any proceeding, judicial or otherwise, with respect to the indenture or for the appointment of a receiver or trustee, or for any remedy under the indenture, unless:

that holder has previously given to the trustee written notice of a continuing Event of Default with respect to debt securities of that series; and

the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have made written request, and offered reasonable indemnity or security, to the trustee to

Table of Contents

institute the proceeding as trustee, and the trustee has not received from the holders of not less than a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series a direction inconsistent with that request and has failed to institute the proceeding within 60 days. (Section 6.7)

Notwithstanding any other provision in the indenture, the holder of any debt security will have an absolute and unconditional right to receive payment of the principal of, premium and any interest on that debt security on or after the due dates expressed in that debt security and to institute suit for the enforcement of payment. (Section 6.8)

The indenture requires us, within 120 days after the end of our fiscal year, to furnish to the trustee a statement as to compliance with the indenture. (Section 4.3) If a Default or Event of Default occurs and is continuing with respect to the debt securities of any series and if it is known to a responsible officer of the trustee, the trustee shall mail to each Securityholder of the debt securities of that series notice of a Default or Event of Default within 90 days after it occurs. The indenture provides that the trustee may withhold notice to the holders of debt securities of any series of any Default or Event of Default (except in payment on any debt securities of that series) with respect to debt securities of that series if the trustee determines in good faith that withholding notice is in the interest of the holders of those debt securities. (Section 7.5)

Modification and Waiver

We and the trustee may modify and amend the indenture or the debt securities of any series without the consent of any holder of any debt security:

- to cure any ambiguity, defect or inconsistency;
- to comply with covenants in the indenture described above under the heading “Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets”;
- to provide for uncertificated securities in addition to or in place of certificated securities;
- to make any change that does not adversely affect the rights of any holder of debt securities;
- to provide for the issuance of and establish the form and terms and conditions of debt securities of any series as permitted by the indenture;
- to effect the appointment of a successor trustee with respect to the debt securities of any series and to add to or change any of the provisions of the indenture to provide for or facilitate administration by more than one trustee;
- to conform the text of the indentures to any provision of the “Description of Debt Securities” to the extent that such provision in the “Description of Debt Securities” was intended to be a verbatim recitation of a provision of the indentures; or
- to comply with requirements of the Commission in order to effect or maintain the qualification of the indenture under the Trust Indenture Act. (Section 9.1)

We may also modify and amend the indenture with the consent of the holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series affected by the modifications or amendments. We may not make any modification or amendment without the consent of the holders of each affected debt security then outstanding if that amendment will:

- reduce the amount of debt securities whose holders must consent to an amendment, supplement or waiver;
- reduce the rate of or extend the time for payment of interest (including default interest) on any debt security;
- reduce the principal of or premium on or change the fixed maturity of any debt security or reduce the amount of, or postpone the date fixed for, the payment of any sinking fund or analogous obligation with respect to any series of debt securities;
- reduce the principal amount of discount securities payable upon acceleration of maturity;
- waive a default in the payment of the principal of, premium or interest on any debt security (except a rescission of acceleration of the debt securities of any series by the holders of at least a

Table of Contents

majority in aggregate principal amount of the then outstanding debt securities of that series and a waiver of the payment default that resulted from such acceleration);

- make the principal of or premium or interest on any debt security payable in currency other than that stated in the debt security;
- make any change to certain provisions of the indenture relating to, among other things, the right of holders of debt securities to receive payment of the principal of, premium and interest on those debt securities and to institute suit for the enforcement of any such payment and to waivers or amendments; or
- waive a redemption payment with respect to any debt security. (Section 9.3)

Except for certain specified provisions, the holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may on behalf of the holders of all debt securities of that series waive our compliance with provisions of the indenture. (Section 9.2) The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may on behalf of the holders of all the debt securities of such series waive any past default under the indenture with respect to that series and its consequences, except a default in the payment of the principal of, premium or any interest on any debt security of that series; provided, however, that the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may rescind an acceleration and its consequences, including any related payment default that resulted from the acceleration. (Section 6.13)

Defeasance of Debt Securities and Certain Covenants in Certain Circumstances

Legal Defeasance. The indenture provides that, unless otherwise provided by the terms of the applicable series of debt securities, we may be discharged from any and all obligations in respect of the debt securities of any series (subject to certain exceptions). We will be so discharged upon the deposit with the trustee, in trust, of money and/or U.S. government obligations or, in the case of debt securities denominated in a single currency other than U.S. Dollars, government obligations of the government that issued or caused to be issued such currency, that, through the payment of interest and principal in accordance with their terms, will provide money in an amount sufficient in the opinion of a nationally recognized firm of independent public accountants or investment bank to pay and discharge each installment of principal, premium and interest on and any mandatory sinking fund payments in respect of the debt securities of that series on the stated maturity of those payments in accordance with the terms of the indenture and those debt securities.

This discharge may occur only if, among other things, we have delivered to the trustee an opinion of counsel stating that we have received from, or there has been published by, the United States Internal Revenue Service a ruling or, since the date of execution of the indenture, there has been a change in the applicable United States federal income tax law, in either case to the effect that, and based thereon such opinion shall confirm that, the holders of the debt securities of that series will not recognize income, gain or loss for United States federal income tax purposes as a result of the deposit, defeasance and discharge and will be subject to United States federal income tax on the same amounts and in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the deposit, defeasance and discharge had not occurred. (Section 8.3)

Defeasance of Certain Covenants. The indenture provides that, unless otherwise provided by the terms of the applicable series of debt securities, upon compliance with certain conditions:

- we may omit to comply with the covenant described under the heading “Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets” and certain other covenants set forth in the indenture, as well as any additional covenants which may be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement; and
- any omission to comply with those covenants will not constitute a Default or an Event of Default with respect to the debt securities of that series (“covenant defeasance”).

The conditions include:

Table of Contents

depositing with the trustee money and/or U.S. government obligations or, in the case of debt securities denominated in a single currency other than U.S. Dollars, government obligations of the government that issued or caused to be issued such currency, that, through the payment of interest and principal in accordance with their terms, will provide money in an amount sufficient in the opinion of a nationally recognized firm of independent public accountants or investment bank to pay and discharge each installment of principal of, premium and interest on and any mandatory sinking fund payments in respect of the debt securities of that series on the stated maturity of those payments in accordance with the terms of the indenture and those debt securities; and

delivering to the trustee an opinion of counsel to the effect that the holders of the debt securities of that series will not recognize income, gain or loss for United States federal income tax purposes as a result of the deposit and related covenant defeasance and will be subject to United States federal income tax on the same amounts and in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the deposit and related covenant defeasance had not occurred. (Section 8.4)

Covenant Defeasance and Events of Default. In the event we exercise our option to effect covenant defeasance with respect to any series of debt securities and the debt securities of that series are declared due and payable because of the occurrence of any Event of Default, the amount of money and/or U.S. government obligations or foreign government obligations on deposit with the trustee will be sufficient to pay amounts due on the debt securities of that series at the time of their stated maturity but may not be sufficient to pay amounts due on the debt securities of that series at the time of the acceleration resulting from the Event of Default. However, we shall remain liable for those payments. (Section 8.4).

Governing Law

The indenture and the debt securities, including any claim or controversy arising out of or relating to the indenture or the securities, will be governed by the laws of the State of New York without regard to conflict of law principles that would result in the application of any law other than the laws of the State of New York. (Section 10.10)

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK

The following summary of the terms of our common stock does not purport to be complete and is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to our Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation, as amended, or certificate of incorporation, and the Amended and Restated Bylaws, as amended, or bylaws, copies of which are on file with the Commission as exhibits to registration statements previously filed by us. See “Where You Can Find More Information.”

General

We have authority to issue 33,333,333 shares of common stock, \$0.001 par value per share. As of September 30, 2011, we had 20,791,915 shares of common stock outstanding. As of September 30, 2011, we had an aggregate of 1,258,246 shares of common stock reserved for issuance upon vesting of stock awards and exercise of outstanding stock options granted under our 2002 Stock Incentive Plan, as amended, or our Amended 2002 Plan, 721,123 shares of common stock reserved for issuance pursuant to future grants under our Amended 2002 Plan, 102,498 shares of common stock reserved for issuance under our Employee Stock Purchase Plan and 273,966 shares of common stock reserved for issuance upon the exercise of outstanding warrants.

Warrants

As of September 30, 2011, warrants to purchase 144,606 shares of our common stock were outstanding with an exercise price of \$51.54 per share and an expiration date of April 2012. The warrants were assumed in the acquisition of Pharmacoepia, Inc.

As of September 30, 2011, 163,568 warrants with an exercise price of \$179.40 per warrant and an expiration date of April 2013 were outstanding to purchase an aggregate of 129,360 shares of our common stock. If exercised, these warrants are also entitled to receive \$0.1 million in cash and 981,411 of each of our four contingent value rights issued to Neurogen shareholders in December 2009. The series of warrants was assumed in the acquisition of Neurogen Corporation.

Voting Rights

The holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share held of record on all matters submitted to a vote of the stockholders, including the election of directors, and do not have cumulative voting rights. Accordingly, the holders of a majority of the shares of common stock entitled to vote in any election of directors can elect all of the directors standing for election, if they so choose.

Dividends

Subject to limitations under Delaware law and preferences that may be applicable to any then outstanding preferred stock, holders of common stock are entitled to receive ratably those dividends, if any, as may be declared by our board of directors out of legally available funds.

Liquidation

Upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holders of common stock will be entitled to share ratably in the net assets legally available for distribution to stockholders after the payment of all of our debts and other liabilities of our company, subject to the prior rights of any preferred stock then outstanding.

Rights and Preferences

Holders of common stock have no preemptive or conversion rights or other subscription rights and there are no redemption or sinking funds provisions applicable to the common stock.

Table of Contents

Fully Paid and Nonassessable

All outstanding shares of our common stock are fully paid and nonassessable and the shares of common stock offered hereby will be fully paid and nonassessable.

Stockholder Rights Plan

On October 13, 2006, our board of directors adopted a stockholder rights plan. Our board of directors declared a dividend of one preferred share purchase right for each outstanding share of our common stock at the close of business on October 13, 2006. Each right entitles the registered holder thereof, after the rights become exercisable and until October 13, 2016 (or the earlier redemption, exchange or termination of the rights), to purchase from us one 1/1000th of a share of Series A Participating Preferred Stock, or Series A Preferred, at a price of \$100.00, subject to certain anti-dilution adjustments. The rights do not become exercisable until the earlier to occur of:

10 days (or such later date as may be determined by our board of directors) following a public announcement that a person or group of affiliated or associated persons has acquired, or obtained the right to acquire, beneficial ownership of 20% or more of our outstanding common stock (any such person or group is referred to as an acquiring person); or 10 days (or such later date as may be determined by our board of directors) following the commencement or announcement of an intention to make a tender offer or exchange offer the consummation of which would result in the beneficial ownership by a person or group of 20% or more of our outstanding common stock.

Each share of Series A Preferred purchasable upon exercise of the rights will be entitled to an aggregate dividend of 1,000 times the dividend declared per share of common stock. Each share of Series A Preferred will have 1,000 votes, voting together with the shares of common stock. In the event of any merger, consolidation or other transaction in which the shares of common stock are changed or exchanged, each share of Series A Preferred will be entitled to receive 1,000 times the amount received per shares of common stock. These rights are protected by customary anti-dilution provisions.

In the event that, at any time following the date on which there has been public disclosure that a person or group has become an acquiring person, we are acquired in a merger or other business combination transaction, or 50% or more of our consolidated assets or earning power are sold (other than in transactions in the ordinary course of business), proper provision shall be made so that each holder of a right which has not been exercised will thereafter have the right to receive, upon exercise, shares of common stock of the acquiring company having a value equal to two times the purchase price.

At any time after the acquisition by an acquiring person of 20% or more of our outstanding shares of common stock and prior to the acquisition by such acquiring person of 50% or more of our outstanding shares of common stock, our board of directors may exchange the rights (other than rights owned by the acquiring person), in whole or in part, at an exchange ratio of one share of common stock per right, subject to adjustment.

The rights will expire on October 13, 2016, unless earlier redeemed, exchanged or terminated. Until a right is exercised, the rights do not convey the right to vote, receive dividends or otherwise provide the holder with any rights as a stockholder.

The rights may be redeemed in whole, but not in part, at a price of \$0.01 per right at any time prior to the time that an acquiring person has become such. The redemption of the rights may be made effective at such time, on such basis and with such conditions as our board of directors in its sole discretion may establish.

Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaw Provisions

Table of Contents

See “Certain Provisions of Delaware Law and of the Company’s Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws—Anti-Takeover Effects of Provisions of Our Certificate of Incorporation, Our Bylaws and Delaware Law” for a description of provisions of our certificate of incorporation and bylaws which may have the effect of delaying changes in our control or management.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is BNY Mellon Shareowner Services.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK

We currently have authorized 5,000,000 shares of preferred stock, \$0.001 par value per share, of which 1,600,000 are designated Series A Participating Preferred Stock. As of the date of this prospectus, we did not have any shares of preferred stock outstanding.

General

Under our certificate of incorporation, our board of directors is authorized generally without stockholder approval to issue shares of preferred stock from time to time, in one or more classes or series and to fix the number of shares, designations, preferences, powers, and relative, participating, optional or other special rights and the qualifications or restrictions thereof. The preferences, powers, rights and restrictions of different series of preferred stock may differ with respect to dividend rates, amounts payable on liquidation, voting rights, conversion rights, redemption provisions, sinking fund provisions, and purchase funds and other matters. Prior to the issuance of shares of each series, our board of directors is required by the Delaware General Corporation Law and our certificate of incorporation to adopt resolutions and file a certificate of designation with the Secretary of State of the State of Delaware. The certificate of designation fixes for each class or series the designations, powers, preferences, rights, qualifications, limitations and restrictions, including, but not limited to, the following:

- the number of shares constituting each class or series;
- voting rights;
- rights and terms of redemption (including sinking fund provisions);
- dividend rights and rates;
- rights upon dissolution;
- terms concerning the distribution of assets;
- conversion or exchange terms;
- redemption prices; and
- liquidation preferences.

All shares of preferred stock offered hereby will, when issued, be fully paid and nonassessable and will not have any preemptive or similar rights. Our board of directors could authorize the issuance of shares of preferred stock with terms and conditions which could have the effect of discouraging a takeover or other transaction that might involve a premium price for holders of the shares or which holders might believe to be in their best interests.

We will set forth in a prospectus supplement relating to the class or series of preferred stock being offered the following terms:

- the title and stated value of the preferred stock;
- the number of shares of the preferred stock offered, the liquidation preference per share and the offering price of the preferred stock;
- the dividend rate(s), period(s) and/or payment date(s) or method(s) of calculation applicable to the preferred stock;
- whether dividends are cumulative or non-cumulative and, if cumulative, the date from which dividends on the preferred stock will accumulate;
- the procedures for any auction and remarketing, if any, for the preferred stock;
- the provisions for a sinking fund, if any, for the preferred stock;
- the provision for redemption or repurchase, if applicable, of the preferred stock;
- any listing of the preferred stock on any securities exchange;
- the terms and conditions, if applicable, upon which the preferred stock will be convertible into common stock, including the conversion price (or manner of calculation) and conversion period;
- voting rights, if any, of the preferred stock;
- whether interests in the preferred stock will be represented by depositary shares;

Table of Contents

• a discussion of any material and/or special United States Federal income tax considerations applicable to the preferred stock;

• the relative ranking and preferences of the preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights upon the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our affairs;

• any limitations on issuance of any class or series of preferred stock ranking senior to or on a parity with the class or series of preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our affairs; and

• any other specific terms, preferences, rights, limitations or restrictions of the preferred stock.

Rank

Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the preferred stock will rank, with respect to dividends and upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up:

• senior to all classes or series of our common stock and to all of our equity securities ranking junior to the preferred stock;

• on a parity with all of our equity securities the terms of which specifically provide that the equity securities rank on a parity with the preferred stock; and

• junior to all of our equity securities the terms of which specifically provide that the equity securities rank senior to the preferred stock.

The term “equity securities” does not include convertible debt securities.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for any series or class of preferred stock will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

We may issue debt warrants to purchase debt securities, as well as equity warrants to purchase preferred stock or common stock. The warrants may be issued independently or together with any securities and may be attached to or separate from the securities. The warrants are to be issued under warrant agreements to be entered into between us and a bank or trust company, as warrant agent, all as shall be set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to warrants being offered pursuant to such prospectus supplement. The following description of warrants will apply to the warrants offered by this prospectus unless we provide otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement. The applicable prospectus supplement for a particular series of warrants may specify different or additional terms.

Debt Warrants

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of debt warrants offered, the warrant agreement relating to the debt warrants and the debt warrant certificates representing the debt warrants, including the following:

- the title of the debt warrants;
 - the aggregate number of the debt warrants;
 - the price or prices at which the debt warrants will be issued;
 - the designation, aggregate principal amount and terms of the debt securities purchasable upon exercise of the debt warrants, and the procedures and conditions relating to the exercise of the debt warrants;
 - the designation and terms of any related debt securities with which the debt warrants are issued, and the number of the debt warrants issued with each debt security;
 - the date, if any, on and after which the debt warrants and the related debt securities will be separately transferable;
 - the principal amount of debt securities purchasable upon exercise of each debt warrant;
 - the date on which the right to exercise the debt warrants will commence, and the date on which this right will expire;
 - the maximum or minimum number of debt warrants which may be exercised at any time;
 - a discussion of any material Federal income tax considerations; and
 - any other terms of the debt warrants and terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exercise of debt warrants.
- Debt warrants may be exercised at the corporate trust office of the warrant agent or any other office indicated in the prospectus supplement. Prior to the exercise of their debt warrants, holders of debt warrants will not have any of the rights of holders of the debt securities purchasable upon exercise and will not be entitled to payment of principal or any premium, if any, or interest on the debt securities purchasable upon exercise.

Equity Warrants

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the following terms of equity warrants offered:

- the title of the equity warrants;
- the securities (i.e., preferred stock or common stock) for which the equity warrants are exercisable;
- the price or prices at which the equity warrants will be issued;
- if applicable, the designation and terms of the preferred stock or common stock with which the equity warrants are issued, and the number of equity warrants issued with each share of preferred stock or common stock;
- if applicable, the date on and after which the equity warrants and the related preferred stock or common stock will be separately transferable;
- if applicable, a discussion of any material Federal income tax considerations; and

Table of Contents

any other terms of the equity warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of equity warrants.

Prior to exercise of the equity warrants, holders of equity warrants will not be entitled, by virtue of being such holders, to vote, consent, receive dividends, receive notice as stockholders with respect to any meeting of stockholders for the election of our directors or any other matter, or to exercise any rights whatsoever as our stockholders.

The exercise price payable and the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock purchasable upon the exercise of each equity warrant will be subject to adjustment in certain events, including the issuance of a stock dividend to holders of common stock or preferred stock or a stock split, reverse stock split, combination, subdivision or reclassification of common stock or preferred stock. In lieu of adjusting the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock purchasable upon exercise of each equity warrant, we may elect to adjust the number of equity warrants. No adjustments in the number of shares purchasable upon exercise of the equity warrants will be required until cumulative adjustments require an adjustment of at least 1% thereof. We may, at our option, reduce the exercise price at any time. No fractional shares will be issued upon exercise of equity warrants, but we will pay the cash value of any fractional shares otherwise issuable. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in case of any consolidation, merger, or sale or conveyance of our property in its entirety or substantially in its entirety, the holder of each outstanding equity warrant shall have the right to the kind and amount of shares of stock and other securities and property, including cash, receivable by a holder of the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock into which the equity warrant was exercisable immediately prior to such transaction.

Exercise of Warrants

Each warrant will entitle the holder to purchase for cash such principal amount of securities or shares of stock at such exercise price as shall in each case be set forth in, or be determinable as set forth in, the prospectus supplement relating to the warrants offered thereby. Warrants may be exercised at any time up to the close of business on the expiration date set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the warrants offered thereby. After the close of business on the expiration date, unexercised warrants will become void.

The warrants may be exercised as set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the warrants offered. Upon receipt of payment and the warrant certificate properly completed and duly executed at the corporate trust office of the warrant agent or any other office indicated in the prospectus supplement, we will, as soon as practicable, forward the securities purchasable upon such exercise. If less than all of the warrants represented by such warrant certificate are exercised, a new warrant certificate will be issued for the remaining warrants.

Table of Contents

GLOBAL SECURITIES

Book-Entry, Delivery and Form

Unless we indicate differently in a prospectus supplement, the securities initially will be issued in book-entry form and represented by one or more global notes or global securities, or, collectively, global securities. The global securities will be deposited with, or on behalf of, The Depository Trust Company, New York, New York, as depository, or DTC, and registered in the name of Cede & Co., the nominee of DTC. Unless and until it is exchanged for individual certificates evidencing securities under the limited circumstances described below, a global security may not be transferred except as a whole by the depository to its nominee or by the nominee to the depository, or by the depository or its nominee to a successor depository or to a nominee of the successor depository.

DTC has advised us that it is:

- a limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law;
- a “banking organization” within the meaning of the New York Banking Law;
- a member of the Federal Reserve System;
- a “clearing corporation” within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code; and
- a “clearing agency” registered pursuant to the provisions of Section 17A of the Exchange Act.

DTC holds securities that its participants deposit with DTC. DTC also facilitates the settlement among its participants of securities transactions, such as transfers and pledges, in deposited securities through electronic computerized book-entry changes in participants’ accounts, thereby eliminating the need for physical movement of securities certificates. “Direct participants” in DTC include securities brokers and dealers, including underwriters, banks, trust companies, clearing corporations and other organizations. DTC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation, or DTCC. DTCC is the holding company for DTC, National Securities Clearing Corporation and Fixed Income Clearing Corporation, all of which are registered clearing agencies. DTCC is owned by the users of its regulated subsidiaries. Access to the DTC system is also available to others, which we sometimes refer to as indirect participants, that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a direct participant, either directly or indirectly. The rules applicable to DTC and its participants are on file with the SEC.

Purchases of securities under the DTC system must be made by or through direct participants, which will receive a credit for the securities on DTC’s records. The ownership interest of the actual purchaser of a security, which we sometimes refer to as a beneficial owner, is in turn recorded on the direct and indirect participants’ records. Beneficial owners of securities will not receive written confirmation from DTC of their purchases. However, beneficial owners are expected to receive written confirmations providing details of their transactions, as well as periodic statements of their holdings, from the direct or indirect participants through which they purchased securities. Transfers of ownership interests in global securities are to be accomplished by entries made on the books of participants acting on behalf of beneficial owners. Beneficial owners will not receive certificates representing their ownership interests in the global securities, except under the limited circumstances described below.

To facilitate subsequent transfers, all global securities deposited by direct participants with DTC will be registered in the name of DTC’s partnership nominee, Cede & Co., or such other name as may be requested by an authorized representative of DTC. The deposit of securities with DTC and their registration in the name of Cede & Co. or such other nominee will not change the beneficial ownership of the securities. DTC has no knowledge of the actual beneficial owners of the securities. DTC’s records reflect only the identity of the direct participants to whose accounts the securities are credited, which may or may not be the beneficial owners. The participants are responsible for keeping account of their holdings on behalf of their customers.

Table of Contents

So long as the securities are in book-entry form, you will receive payments and may transfer securities only through the facilities of the depository and its direct and indirect participants. We will maintain an office or agency in the location specified in the prospectus supplement for the applicable securities, where notices and demands in respect of the securities and the indenture may be delivered to us and where certificated securities may be surrendered for payment, registration of transfer or exchange.

Conveyance of notices and other communications by DTC to direct participants, by direct participants to indirect participants and by direct participants and indirect participants to beneficial owners will be governed by arrangements among them, subject to any legal requirements in effect from time to time.

Redemption notices will be sent to DTC. If less than all of the securities of a particular series are being redeemed, DTC's practice is to determine by lot the amount of the interest of each direct participant in the securities of such series to be redeemed.

Neither DTC nor Cede & Co. (or such other DTC nominee) will consent or vote with respect to the securities. Under its usual procedures, DTC will mail an omnibus proxy to us as soon as possible after the record date. The omnibus proxy assigns the consenting or voting rights of Cede & Co. to those direct participants to whose accounts the securities of such series are credited on the record date, identified in a listing attached to the omnibus proxy.

So long as securities are in book-entry form, we will make payments on those securities to the depository or its nominee, as the registered owner of such securities, by wire transfer of immediately available funds. If securities are issued in definitive certificated form under the limited circumstances described below, we will have the option of making payments by check mailed to the addresses of the persons entitled to payment or by wire transfer to bank accounts in the United States designated in writing to the applicable trustee or other designated party at least 15 days before the applicable payment date by the persons entitled to payment.

Redemption proceeds, distributions and dividend payments on the securities will be made to Cede & Co., or such other nominee as may be requested by an authorized representative of DTC. DTC's practice is to credit direct participants' accounts upon DTC's receipt of funds and corresponding detail information from us on the payment date in accordance with their respective holdings shown on DTC records. Payments by participants to beneficial owners will be governed by standing instructions and customary practices, as is the case with securities held for the account of customers in bearer form or registered in "street name." Those payments will be the responsibility of participants and not of DTC or us, subject to any statutory or regulatory requirements in effect from time to time. Payment of redemption proceeds, distributions and dividend payments to Cede & Co., or such other nominee as may be requested by an authorized representative of DTC, is our responsibility, disbursement of payments to direct participants is the responsibility of DTC, and disbursement of payments to the beneficial owners is the responsibility of direct and indirect participants.

Except under the limited circumstances described below, purchasers of securities will not be entitled to have securities registered in their names and will not receive physical delivery of securities. Accordingly, each beneficial owner must rely on the procedures of DTC and its participants to exercise any rights under the securities and the indenture.

The laws of some jurisdictions may require that some purchasers of securities take physical delivery of securities in definitive form. Those laws may impair the ability to transfer or pledge beneficial interests in securities.

DTC may discontinue providing its services as securities depository with respect to the securities at any time by giving reasonable notice to us. Under such circumstances, in the event that a successor depository is not obtained, securities certificates are required to be printed and delivered.

Table of Contents

As noted above, beneficial owners of a particular series of securities generally will not receive certificates representing their ownership interests in those securities. However, if:

DTC notifies us that it is unwilling or unable to continue as a depository for the global security or securities representing such series of securities or if DTC ceases to be a clearing agency registered under the Exchange Act at a time when it is required to be registered and a successor depository is not appointed within 90 days of the notification to us or of our becoming aware of DTC's ceasing to be so registered, as the case may be;

- we determine, in our sole discretion, not to have such securities represented by one or more global securities; or
- an Event of Default has occurred and is continuing with respect to such series of securities,

we will prepare and deliver certificates for such securities in exchange for beneficial interests in the global securities. Any beneficial interest in a global security that is exchangeable under the circumstances described in the preceding sentence will be exchangeable for securities in definitive certificated form registered in the names that the depository directs. It is expected that these directions will be based upon directions received by the depository from its participants with respect to ownership of beneficial interests in the global securities.

We have obtained the information in this section and elsewhere in this prospectus concerning DTC and DTC's book-entry system from sources that are believed to be reliable, but we take no responsibility for the accuracy of this information.

Table of Contents

CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF DELAWARE LAW AND OF THE
COMPANY'S CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION AND BYLAWS

Anti-Takeover Effects of Provisions of Our Certificate of Incorporation, Our Bylaws and Delaware Law

Some provisions of Delaware law, our certificate of incorporation and our bylaws contain provisions that could make the following transactions more difficult: acquisition of us by means of a tender offer; acquisition of us by means of a proxy contest or otherwise; or removal of our incumbent officers and directors. It is possible that these provisions could make it more difficult to accomplish or could deter transactions that stockholders may otherwise consider to be in their best interest or in our best interests, including transactions that might result in a premium over the market price of our shares.

These provisions, summarized below, are expected to discourage coercive takeover practices and inadequate takeover bids. These provisions are also designed to encourage persons seeking to acquire control of us to first negotiate with our board of directors. We believe that the benefits of increased protection of our potential ability to negotiate with the proponent of an unfriendly or unsolicited proposal to acquire or restructure us outweigh the disadvantages of discouraging these proposals because negotiation of these proposals could result in an improvement of their terms.

Undesignated Preferred Stock

The ability to authorize undesignated preferred stock makes it possible for our board of directors to issue preferred stock with voting or other rights or preferences that could impede the success of any attempt to change control of us. These and other provisions may have the effect of deferring hostile takeovers or delaying changes in control or management of our company.

Requirements for Advance Notification of Stockholder Nominations and Proposals

Our bylaws establish advance notice procedures with respect to stockholder proposals and the nomination of candidates for election as directors, other than nominations made by or at the direction of the board of directors or a committee of the board of directors.

Elimination of Stockholder Action by Written Consent

Our certificate of incorporation eliminates the right of stockholders to act by written consent without a meeting.

Delaware Anti-Takeover Statute

We are subject to Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law which prohibits persons deemed "interested stockholders" from engaging in a "business combination" with a Delaware corporation for three years following the date these persons become interested stockholders. Generally, an "interested stockholder" is a person who, together with affiliates and associates, owns, or within three years prior to the determination of interested stockholder status did own, 15% or more of a corporation's voting stock. Generally, a "business combination" includes a merger, asset or stock sale, or other transaction resulting in a financial benefit to the interested stockholder. The existence of this provision may have an anti-takeover effect with respect to transactions not approved in advance by the board of directors.

Amendment of Charter Provisions

The amendment of any of the above provisions, except for the provision making it possible for our board of directors to issue preferred stock, would require approval by holders of at least 66 2/3% of our then outstanding common stock.

Table of Contents

The provisions of Delaware law, our certificate of incorporation and our bylaws could have the effect of discouraging others from attempting hostile takeovers and, as a consequence, they may also inhibit temporary fluctuations in the market price of our common stock that often result from actual or rumored hostile takeover attempts. These provisions may also have the effect of preventing changes in our management. It is possible that these provisions could make it more difficult to accomplish transactions that stockholders may otherwise deem to be in their best interests.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

Latham & Watkins LLP, San Diego, California, will issue an opinion about certain legal matters with respect to the securities.

EXPERTS

The financial statements, schedules, and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting of Ligand Pharmaceuticals Incorporated as of December 31, 2010 incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement have been so incorporated by reference in reliance upon the reports of Grant Thornton LLP, independent registered public accountants, upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing in giving said reports.

LIMITATION ON LIABILITY AND DISCLOSURE OF COMMISSION POSITION ON
INDEMNIFICATION FOR SECURITIES ACT LIABILITIES

Our certificate of incorporation and bylaws provide that we will indemnify our directors and officers, and may indemnify our employees and other agents, to the fullest extent permitted by the Delaware General Corporation Law. Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, we have been advised that, in the opinion of the Commission, such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is therefore unenforceable.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We have filed with the Commission a registration statement on Form S-3 under the Securities Act, of which this prospectus forms a part. The rules and regulations of the Commission allow us to omit from this prospectus certain information included in the registration statement. For further information about us and our securities, you should refer to the registration statement and the exhibits and schedules filed with the registration statement. With respect to the statements contained in this prospectus regarding the contents of any agreement or any other document, in each instance, the statement is qualified in all respects by the complete text of the agreement or document, a copy of which has been filed as an exhibit to the registration statement.

We file reports, proxy statements and other information with the Commission under the Exchange Act. You may read and copy this information from the Public Reference Room of the Commission, 100 F Street, N.E., Room 1580, Washington, D.C. 20549, at prescribed rates. You may obtain information on the operation of the Public Reference Room by calling the Commission at 1-800-SEC-0330. The Commission also maintains an Internet website that contains reports, proxy statements and other information about issuers, like us, that file electronically with the Commission. The address of that website is www.sec.gov.

We also maintain a website at www.ligand.com through which you can access our filings with the SEC. The information contained in, or accessible through, our website is not a part of this prospectus.

Table of Contents

INFORMATION INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

The Commission allows us to “incorporate by reference” the information we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents instead of having to repeat the information in this prospectus. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus, and later information that we file with the Commission will automatically update and supersede this information. We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and any future filings we will make with the Commission under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, between the date of this prospectus and the termination of the offering, and also between the date of the initial registration statement and prior to effectiveness of the registration statement:

- our annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010;
- our quarterly report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2011 (as amended by the Form 10-Q/A filed on August 23, 2011);
- our quarterly report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2011;
- our current reports on Form 8-K filed on January 26, 2011 (other than Item 2.02 and related exhibits), January 28, 2011, January 31, 2011, February 9, 2011 (other than Item 7.01 and related exhibits) March 30, 2011, April 4, 2011, April 8, 2011, April 18, 2011 (other than Item 7.01 and related exhibits), April 29, 2011, June 3, 2011, June 3, 2011, June 20, 2011, September 7, 2011, September 7, 2011, September 9, 2011, September 30, 2011, October 11, 2011 and October 13, 2011 and our current report on Form 8-K/A filed on September 28, 2011;
- our definitive proxy statement on Schedule 14A filed on April 29, 2011;
- the description of our common stock contained in our registration statement on Form 8-A filed on November 21, 1994, and any amendment or report filed for the purposes of updating such description;
- the description of our preferred shares purchase rights contained in our registration statement on Form 8-A filed on October 17, 2006, and any amendment or report filed for the purpose of updating such description; and
- all documents filed by us with the Commission under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act after the date of this prospectus and before termination of this offering.

To the extent that any information contained in any filings we have made or will make with the Commission under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, or any exhibit thereto, was furnished, rather than filed with the Commission, such information or exhibit is specifically not incorporated by reference in this prospectus.

These documents may also be accessed on our website at www.ligand.com. Except as otherwise specifically incorporated by reference in this prospectus, information contained in, or accessible through, our website is not a part of this prospectus.

We will furnish without charge to you, upon written or oral request, a copy of any or all of the documents incorporated by reference, including exhibits to these documents by writing or telephoning us at the following address:

Ligand Pharmaceuticals Incorporated
11085 North Torrey Pines Rd., Suite 300
La Jolla, California 92130
(858) 550-7500

Table of Contents

\$24,000,000
Common Stock

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

October 16, 2013

MLV & Co.
Brinson Patrick
