

Novartis gets US nod for cancer drug

ANDREW POLLACK & ANNA
EDNEY

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SAN FRANCISCO: Novartis won US approval of its treatment for patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer.

The drug, ceritinib, gained marketing clearance about four months ahead of the expected decision date because it has the potential to offer substantial improvement over existing therapies, the food and drug administration said on Wednesday in a statement. Ceritinib, to be marketed by Basel, Switzerland-based Novartis as Zykadia, blocks proteins that promote the development of cancer cells, the agency said.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the US, the FDA said. An estimated 224,210 new cases will be diagnosed this year and more than 159,000 Americans will die from the disease, according to the National Cancer Institute. Zykadia is approved for a small number of patients.

Regulatory