FORM 4

## UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

| Washington, | D.C. | 20549 |
|-------------|------|-------|
|-------------|------|-------|

| Check this box if no longer subjec |
|------------------------------------|
| to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5    |
| obligations may continue. See      |
| Instruction 1(h)                   |

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

OMB APPROVAL 3235-0287 Estimated average burden hours per response: 0.5

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

| 1. Name ar   | <u>10</u>   | 2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol IONIS PHARMACEUTICALS INC [IONS] |              |   |                       |   |  |  |   |                      | all app  |          |   | 10% O  | wner                                      |   |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--------------|---|-----------------------|---|--|--|---|----------------------|--|----------|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| (Last) (First) (Middle) C/O IONIS PHARMACEUTICALS, INC. 2855 GAZELLE COURT       |   |  |              |   |                       | 3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year) 12/15/2020 |  |  |   |                      |  |          |   |  | belov                                     | er (give title<br>v)<br>ec Chairma  | an of                                   | Other (<br>below)  | `  |
| (Street) CARLSI (City)   |   |  | 201(<br>Zip) | )   | 4. If                 | Amend   | ment, I  | Date                                       | of Ori                                  | iginal Fi            | iled (Month/D  | ay/Year) |   | 6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing (Check Applicable Line)  X Form filed by One Reporting Person Form filed by More than One Reporting Person |   |   |   |  | son  |
| Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned |   |  |              |   |                       |   |  |  |   |                      |  |          |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |
| 1. Title of Security (Instr. 3)  2. Transact Date (Month/Day                     |   |  |              |   | Execution ear) if any |   | on Date,   |  | 3.<br>Transaction<br>Code (Instr.<br>8) |                      | 4. Securities Acquired (A) or<br>Disposed Of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 at |          |   | Beneficial   |   | ties<br>cially<br>I Following   | es For<br>ially (D)<br>Following (I) (I |  | 7. Nature<br>of Indirect<br>Beneficial<br>Ownership                |
|  |   |  |              |   |                       |   | Code   | v  | Amount                                  | (A) or<br>(D)        | Price  |          | Transa  | Transaction(s)<br>(Instr. 3 and 4)   |   |   | (Instr. 4)                              |  |  |
| Common Stock 12/15   |   |  |              |   | 20 12/15              |   | 5/2020   |  | S                                       |                      | 39,000(1)  | D        | \$49.77   | <sup>'5(2)</sup> 600,39  |   | 0,391   |   | I  | by trust   |
| Common   | Common Stock 12/17/20   |  |              |   |                       | 0 12/17/2   |  | 7/2020                                     |   |                      | 1,407(3)   | D        | \$50.   | .5   |   | 174   |   | I  | by wife  |
| Common Stock   |   |  |              |   |                       |   |  |  |   |                      |  |          |   |  | 2,021                                     |   |   | D  |  |
|  |   | Tal  | ble I        | II - Derivati<br>(e.g., pι                    |                       |   |  |  |   |                      | posed of,<br>convertil   |          |   |  | Owne                                      | d   |   |  |  |
| 1. Title of<br>Derivative<br>Security<br>(Instr. 3)                              | 2.<br>Conversion<br>or Exercise<br>Price of<br>Derivative<br>Security | 3. Transaction<br>Date<br>(Month/Day/Year)                                   | Exe<br>if an | Deemed<br>cution Date,<br>ry<br>nth/Day/Year) |                       | action<br>(Instr.   | 5. Nu<br>of<br>Deriv<br>Secu<br>Acqu<br>(A) or<br>Dispo<br>of (D)<br>(Instr<br>and 5 | rative<br>rities<br>ired<br>r<br>osed<br>) | Exp<br>(Mo                              | oiration<br>onth/Day |  | 3 and    | nt of<br>ities<br>lying<br>ative<br>ity (Instr. | Der<br>Sec   | Price of<br>rivative<br>curity<br>str. 5) | 9. Number of derivative Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transactior (Instr. 4) | Owi<br>Fori<br>Dire<br>or li<br>(I) (I  | 10.<br>Ownership<br>Form:<br>Direct (D)<br>or Indirect<br>(I) (Instr. 4) | 11. Nature<br>of Indirect<br>Beneficial<br>Ownership<br>(Instr. 4) |
|  |   |  |              |   | Code                  | code V (A) (D   |  | (D)  | Date<br>Exercisabl                      |                      |  | Title    | Shares  |  |   |   |   |  |  |

## **Explanation of Responses:**

- 1. Shares sold pursuant to a Rule 10b5-1 Trading Plan adopted by the reporting person on January 2, 2020.
- 2. The price reported in column 4 is a weighted average price. These shares were sold in multiple transactions at prices ranging from \$49.50 to \$50.00, inclusive. The reporting person undertakes to provide to Ionis Pharmaceuticals, Inc., any security holder of Ionis Pharmaceuticals, Inc. or the staff of the Securities and Exchange Commission, upon request, full information regarding the number of shares sold at each separate price within the ranges set forth in footnote (2) of this Form 4.
- 3. Shares sold pursuant to a Rule 10b5-1 Trading Plan adopted by the reporting person's wife on January 2, 2020.

## Remarks:

/s/Patrick R. O'Neil, attorneyin-fact

12/17/2020

\*\* Signature of Reporting Person

Date

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

- \* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see Instruction 4 (b)(v).
- \*\* Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations See 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure.

Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB Number.