

CBSA NEWS IN REVIEW



A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF COLORADO'S MEDICAL DEVICE AND BIOPHARMA INDUSTRIES

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COMPANY SPOTLIGHT

- **Gilead-Colorado** (Westminster), formerly Myogen, released initial financial data for Letairis® (ambrisentan) who received FDA orphan drug approval in 2007 as a once daily treatment for pulmonary arterial hypertension. For three and six months ended 30 June 2008 reported sales of \$24.7M and \$45.0M. GlaxoSmithKline who has Ex-US rights to ambrisentan, marketed as Volibris®, recently received marketing authorization from the European Commission – EMEA.
- **HepQuant** (Boulder) optioned a proprietary technology developed by Dr. Gregory Everson, Professor and Director of Hepatology at the School of Medicine at UC Denver (Anschutz Medical Campus). HepQuant plans to further develop and internationally commercialize the technology, a method to measure hepatic function in humans.
- **Insmed** (Boulder) announced that INS-19, their generic version of the Amgen drug Neupogen®, used to boost white blood cells, showed human bioequivalence in a small study, thereby moving the company closer to developing the first approved generic form of the biotechnology drug or “follow-on biologic”. The company is hoping to correlate a product commercialization date when the Neupogen® patents begin expiring in 2012.

FINANCE

- **Affinity BioReagents** (Golden) supplier of over 35,000 antibody and protein products to medical, biotech and academic research institutions who reported 2007 revenues north of \$6M has been acquired by Thermo Fisher Scientific for an undisclosed amount. Recall Thermo Fisher acquired RNAi research product supplier **Dharmacon** (Lafayette) in 2004 in a transaction north of \$80M.
- **Precision Biopsy** (Boulder) a University of Colorado start-up who is developing an optical biopsy needle to be used for the accurate diagnosis of prostate cancer via the measurement of cancerous tissue has closed an undisclosed seed round with Boston-based Allied Minds. The optical biopsy needle invented by Dr. Priya Werahera and Dr. John Daily incorporate spectroscopy techniques into the tip of a standard biopsy needle that may detect the difference between healthy and malignant tissue in real-time. The technology may be adapted for use in other types of diagnosis where tissue morphology is critical.

PEOPLE

- CSU Ventures named **Dr. Ronald Marler** as their new CEO replacing **Mark Wdowik**, the entities inaugural chief executive who is now spearheading the launch of a new for-profit seed fund to invest in Colorado State University start-ups. CSU Ventures is the university's not-for-profit corporation that houses a business development engine designed to connect industry with the Superclusters (MicroRx, NeoTREX and Cenergy) who focus on discoveries in infectious disease, cancer and green energy.
- CBSA recently launched a new six-week paid externship program. The first teacher to take part in the pilot program is Bear Creek High School biology teacher **Tamra Miaja**. Working at Array Biopharma (Boulder) Tara is gaining hands-on experience with the molecular biology and protein chemistry groups, crystallizing proteins and determining their structure. The externship program is

designed to focus on the promotion of bioscience careers within Colorado schools; by educating the educators about career bioscience options is believed to then enable greater exposure to larger numbers of potential future scientists.

- Researchers at the University of Colorado Cancer Center in a paper published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* demonstrated that a gene screening test, EGFR FISH, developed by UCCC, may assist in the identification of non small cell lung cancer patients who will benefit from adding a second cancer drug to standard chemotherapy. The Colorado group, which includes **Fred Hirsch, MD, Ph.D.**, **Paul Bunn, MD**, and UC Denver Professors **Wilbur Franklin, MD**, and **Marileila Varella-Garcia, Ph.D.**, previously found similar results using the EGFR FISH test to predict which patients would respond well to Tarceva®, another EGFR inhibitor drug.

SQUARE PEGS

- The **Rocky Mountain Regional Center of Excellence for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases Research** (RMRCEB) and **Front Range Community College** (FRCC) both received Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grants for workforce development in the bioscience field. A \$100,000 WIRED grant for RMRCEB will be allocated to the launch of a three course business development certificate program. A \$250,000 WIRED grant for FRCC will offer a three-tiered certification program for the training for laboratory technicians. Combined the two grants address a key element to Larimer County's bioscience plan to focus upon the emerging issues of addressing bioscience industry workforce needs.
- You don't want to miss the next **BioBeers** networking opportunity...so be certain to sign-up for email alerts at <http://BioBeers.com>. Events to start again in early September.