

Dow opens new skin biology lab

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PETALUMA – With the opening of its new skin biology lab this month, contract research company Dow Pharmaceutical Sciences is able to bring a topical drug from formulation development all the way through clinical trials and application to the FDA.

Under the leadership of new president and CEO Bhaskar Chaudhuri, PhD, the company expects revenues to increase at least 10% this year following a 30% increase to nearly \$10 million last year.

"This year is turning out to be a year of change for Dow," says Dr. Chaudhuri. "We are focusing on integration while expanding our capabilities."

Taking a drug from A to Z

Dow is a niche player, focusing primarily on serving dermatological and other topical product companies. With the opening of the new lab, Dow has become a full-service contract research company specializing in topi-



Dow employees Steve Smith, RPh (left) and Daniel Bucks, PhD

cal formulations and one of a few that performs the entire development process for those types of products, according to Daniel Bucks, PhD,

director of the skin biology unit. Dr. Bucks has over 20 years' experience in skin deposition and penetration of drugs.

"We can now take a drug from A to Z," he says. "The only thing we don't do is the marketing of the product."

About 25% of Dow's contracts are full scope, meaning Dow takes the product through clinical trials. The remaining 75% are mid scope, where Dow develops, manufactures, and labels the formulation for, but does not manage, the clinical trials.

"If there is a major dermatology player, there's a good chance we work with them," says Dr. Bucks. "But we do work with smaller companies as well."

Taken by individual drug, dermatology is not a big market, at least compared to the oral drug market. A successful oral drug routinely has U.S. sales over \$300 million, while a \$100 million product is considered large for dermatology, according to vice president of marketing and business development Steve Smith.

The company performs clinical trials in Davis and Vallejo, while the Petaluma facility formulates, tests, manufactures and labels the products.

The new lab will be used for skin penetration studies to measure the rate and extent of compound transport across the skin as well as retention on and in the skin. These studies are used as part of the formulation optimization process. Bringing these services in-house allows for lower costs, faster turnaround time, and increased control over experiment integrity.

Appointment of new CEO

After 25 years as president and CEO, Founder Gordon Dow, PharmD, has



Dr. Bhaskar Chaudhuri, President and CEO

stepped into his new role as chief technical officer, where he will concentrate on bolstering the company's scientific expertise and developing new product concepts.

Dr. Chaudhuri, the new president and CEO, received his PhD in industrial pharmacy from the University of Louisiana in 1986. He served as head of research and development at South Bay-based dermatology company Penederm, and later as executive vice president when North Carolina-based Mylan Labs acquired the company.

Dow also hired six other former Penederm employees following the acquisition, including Dr. Bucks. According to Dr. Chaudhuri, "Our reputation in topical products encourages experts in our field, such as was the case with Penederm, to look at our company openings."

Dow has grown to 124 employees from 90 last year and expects to continue hiring through the end of this year.

For more information, call 707-793-2600, or visit dowpharm.com.