

Industry Spotlight

Rockwell Medical's Latest Hope

Biopharmaceutical company Rockwell Medical in Wixom, MI, reported its third quarter results for calendar year 2013. With a modest increase in sales of 3.2 percent over the same quarter in 2012, the company also had a gross profit of \$1.6 million, the same amount as in the company's 2012 third quarter.

Rockwell's latest treatment offering in the realm of ESRD and chronic kidney disease secured its trade name of Triferic in September. Triferic is a new type of iron drug for dialysis patients that is demonstrating in phase 3 clinical trials that it can safely and effec-

tively deliver sufficient iron to bone marrow, maintain hemoglobin, and not increase iron stores (ferritin). The drug also can reduce the amount of erythropoietin-stimulating agent a dialysis patient needs—a property that has business analysts interested. Triferic is in the later stages of approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration,

“Rockwell's research shows that Triferic reduces the need for expensive erythropoiesis-stimulating agent, or ESA. . . by 35%,” the financial site Motley Fool reported. “The impact of this on dialysis providers is enor-

mous.” The report said that dialysis providers spend about \$2 billion each year on erythropoiesis-stimulating agents, and a 35 percent reduction in that number would be about \$700 million in yearly cost savings. The article also noted that because DaVita and Fresenius, the two largest global providers, have about 71 percent of the industry market, it would be fairly easy to enter the United States market with a new dialysis treatment. The two dialysis powerhouses participated in Rockwell's phase 3 trials.

Forbes magazine also covered Triferic's

abilities and concluded that the drug would assist patients because of its more natural effects in the body. The drug gradually delivers iron directly to the bone marrow in a more physiologic way and “helps to maintain hemoglobin levels without the rapid changes in iron levels that occur with intravenous administration,” wrote Robert Glatter, in the Pharma pages of *Forbes*. “Most importantly, by improving the effectiveness of iron delivery, Triferic may help to prevent iron induced liver damage, which is quite important for patients with pre-existing liver disease.” ●

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