

NORTHSTAR MEDICAL RADIOISOTOPES HAS BIG PLANS IN BELOIT

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Austin Montgomery/Beloit Daily News From left: NorthStar Medical Radioisotopes CEO George Messina and VP/COO Stephen Merrick stand near the company's training area in the production facility located at its corporate headquarters in Beloit. The company will look to shift focus following its recent approval from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration.

BELOIT - After receiving vital federal approval for proprietary technology last week, NorthStar Medical Radioisotopes looks to expand its presence in Beloit and pursue cancer and HIV therapies, according to company executives.

NorthStar got a green light from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Feb. 8 to market its patented RadioGenix system to radiopharmacies to help in the fight against cancer, heart disease and other ailments.

The federal approval marked the first domestic production of medical radioisotope molybdenum-99 (Mo-99) in more than 25 years. The company's technology can be used to separate Mo-99 from Technetium-99 (Tc-99m), the most widely used isotope in radio-medical imaging.

NorthStar CEO George Messina said the company had been working on drug therapies when its scientific team realized the company's tech could provide the "keys to the kingdom" in the race to move away from using low-enriched uranium and the development of streamlined point-of-care offerings.

"We're looking to enhance RadioGenix and find ways to reduce the cost of its production while pursuing those therapies," Messina said Monday in an interview with the *Beloit Daily News*. "Pursuing these therapies would not be as difficult now."

Tc-99 is used in around 40 million procedures worldwide each year to diagnose and stage cancer, heart disease, infection and inflammation. The U.S. accounts for 50 percent of all Mo-99 and Tc-99m used in the global health care market, officials said, with 40,000 injections used daily across the U.S. in the diagnosis and treatment monitoring of heart, lung, thyroid, bone and other tissue-related diseases.

Federal approval served as a final step ahead of production, and the approval has paved the way for the company to offer on-site customer training.

By the end of this year, NorthStar will look to supply 10 percent of its possible market, with projections estimating in a few years time the company could supply up to two-thirds of the domestic supply of the valuable isotopes, according to top company officials.

The company will add a 20,000 square-foot production facility to its campus in the Gateway Business Park, while looking to hire 25 new staff to the 180-employee roster, spread across Beloit, Madison and Columbia, Missouri near a reactor used in NorthStar's production process.

As part of the company's plan to improve its RadioGenix system to align for future federal approvals related to other isotopes, NorthStar will add facilities to accompany its HIV and cancer therapy development.

"As a small company, we want to stay nimble," Messina said.

The campus will expand incrementally over the next decade in multiple phases, with the company spending in excess of \$100 million towards research and development through private and public investment, including \$50 million from the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) agency within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) for two cooperative grants. Hendricks Holding Company also has been instrumental in funding the company's development.

"We are very grateful for their support," Messina said.

For more information on the company, see northstarm.com