Jill Clark, Chief Financial Officer
Bruce Eaton, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer

i2 Pharmaceuticals: Boulder Based, Global Reach

PIONEERING RESEARCH TO SOLVE THE DRUG DISCOVERY PUZZLE

i2 Pharmaceuticals

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

FOUNDED
2014

LOCATION
BOULDER
4909 NAUTILUS COURT N,
BOULDER, COLORADO 80301

GRANTED PATENTS
47

Creating an effective drug to treat disease is a bit of a puzzle. Researchers shape many molecular pieces and fit them together into a therapeutic product to target diseased cells, such as cancerous ones, and shut them down. The scientific team at Boulder-based i2 Pharmaceuticals collaborates with drug companies and draws upon its own intellectual property to design those pieces.

To do so, i2 Phamaceuticals uses its proprietary suite of directed evolution technologies to discover next generation therapeutics, including antibodies, which are immune system proteins that neutralize pathogens; nucleic acids such as RNA, a cousin to DNA; and even small molecules that will be used either alone or in combination. That combination inspired the '2' in i2 Pharmaceuticals.

Directed evolution is a process that mimics natural selection to evolve molecules. At i2 Pharmaceuticals, researchers have harnessed this powerful discovery technology for proteins, nucleic acids and small molecules. This unique combination of know-how within one company means i2 Pharmaceuticals is a Colorado company that attracts strategic partnerships worldwide.

"We have all the tools under one roof to innovate across these platforms so that we provide unique solutions for our strategic partners as a piece of their puzzle," said Jill Clark, the company's CFO.

Recently, i2 Pharmaceuticals acquired the technology of Sea Lane Biotechnologies, based in Redwood City, California, to complete its innovative suite of tools for drug discovery to include Surrobodies — proteins that can attack two different disease targets at once. In their technology pipeline, i2 Pharmaceuticals now has, among other successes, three novel Surrobody molecules being advanced through pre-clinical development as cancer therapeutics.

"Combination therapies in cancer are a hot area of research and we're right in the middle of it," said Bruce Eaton, CEO of i2 Pharmaceuticals, who began his biotech career in the Bay Area more than 30 years ago and has been a part of Colorado's biotech sector since 1994.

That a Colorado-based biosciences company was able to attract and acquire the technology of a Bay-Area biotechnology company was a real biotech coup for i2 Pharmaceuticals. "Historically, technology has moved the other way," said Eaton, "out of Colorado typically to the Bay Area or Boston/Cambridge." However, as Colorado asserts itself as a hub of bioscience innovation, change is underway.

"YOU CAN COME HERE, AND IF YOU'RE MOTIVATED, CONFIDENT AND SKILLED, YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF IN THIS ENVIRONMENT," EATON SAID.

Historically, the state has had a pioneering spirit, said Clark. "We're at the forefront of directed evolution in the discovery of therapeutics," she said. "For those who know, we are exploring new horizons in biotechnology in Colorado."

The biotechnology workplace is undergoing change. Young, ambitious researchers that are entrepreneurs have a certain mindset, said Clark. "They want to work at a biotech startup and be a part of a company where they get to wear different hats and potentially make a meaningful difference for the organization. At i2 Pharmaceuticals, we borrow cultural elements from the tech community in how we nurture and develop our employees," she said.

In the last few years, Eaton said, a nucleus of successful biotech companies has started to coalesce around a supportive community of entrepreneurs. Many people come to Colorado for the lifestyle — for the biking, the hiking, the camping and the great outdoors. They are also coming because of the innovative spirit and collaborative environment they know is the future for successful companies.

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