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Ireland's Creganna plots growth at local beachhead

BY MARK HOLLMER
JOURNAL STAFF

An Irish medical device manufacturer that landed in Massachusetts less than two years ago is already doubling its space and adding employees, reflecting a small victory in the state's bid to grow more life sciences jobs.

Creganna, a contract manufacturer of catheters and specialty needles, is expanding its research and manufacturing facility in Marlborough from 10,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet.

Employee levels are also projected to rise, doubling from 15 to about 30 people over the next year and slated to hit 100 workers by 2011.

That growth is expected to come as the company works to increase its medical device client base in the Bay State and elsewhere.

"Medical devices is ... a slow and steady growing industry," said Randall Sword, director of Creganna's Marlborough facility. "And we expect it to be that way for many, many years."

The state played a central role in recruiting Creganna to locate here. The company employs 450 people globally and generates around \$65 million in

annual revenue.

Sword and Creganna spokeswoman Maura Leahy said the Massachusetts Office Of International Trade and Investment helped the company find a local site and navigate its way through expansion.

The state has also told Creganna it may qualify for grants as the company grows.

"Their assistance has been invaluable," Leahy said.

The state hasn't landed any large life sciences companies in recent months, but MOITI has helped or is helping at least three international life sciences companies, in addition to Creganna, find locations in Massachusetts.

Those projects include Variaton, a Canadian vaccine developer that already has an employee based in Waltham, and Progenika, a Spanish startup that has incubator space at Boston University.

The company is designing and developing tools for personalized medicine. Both outfits are seeking research and development operations in Massachusetts.

Another foreign life sciences company, SmartMed, a Northern Ireland



BY MARC BERGQUI | BUSINESS JOURNAL

Randall Sword is director of Creganna's Marlborough location where the company plans to expand its manufacturing of medical devices.

health care software startup, plans to open its U.S. headquarters in Massachusetts by midyear. The office will house sales, marketing and adminis-

trative employees.

Meanwhile, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development has been working with Instrumentation Laboratories Inc. in Lexington to persuade it to expand locally rather than consolidate its diagnostic instruments business in New York.

Kofi Jones, spokeswoman for MOBD, said the company worked with her department over time to find possible sites before finally deciding to stay at its existing location and expand. In doing so, Instrumentation Laboratories will spend \$20 million and add another 150 jobs to its existing 500-person workforce, Jones said.

The company could not be reached for comment.

Though companies such as Creganna are starting small here, the local expansions are still important, said Thomas Sommer, president of the Massachusetts Medical Device Industry Council.

"They see the strength of the U.S. market and have chosen to locate and grow here, and that's very good news," Sommer said.

MARK HOLLMER can be reached at mhollmer@bizjournals.com.