Offering freedom from China on Foreign Medical Imaging Supplies, Voyageur Pharmaceuticals announces another key milestone

written by Bob Hanes | November 30, 2022

Barium and iodine-based radiographic contrast media (RCM) are types of RCM used in diagnostic imaging. Both work by attenuating X-rays to create clearer images of the body's internal structures. Barium-based RCM is injested orally and used most often for gastrointestinal (GI) radiography and CT , while iodine-based RCM is injected and used primarily for gastrointestinal (GI) radiography and computed tomography (CT) and vascular radiography. These materials are critical for diagnostics and testing in the medical industry.

The Canadian radiology pharmaceutical industry is highly reliant on foreign suppliers, particularly in China. Geopolitical and supply chain issues can drive prices up significantly. Canada is vulnerable to disruptions in the Chinese supply chain. Moreover, quality control issues and intellectual property concerns have also been raised with respect to Chinese-made products.

As a result, the Canadian government has been working on a national strategy to de-couple from China for critical minerals and pharmaceuticals. In order to reduce reliance on foreign suppliers, the industry needs more low-cost producers. One of the companies that is working to reduce this reliance is Voyageur Pharmaceuticals Ltd. (TSXV: VM).

This company has recently hit a large milestone that will help the company achieve its long-term goals. They recently finished a production test batch of their barium contrast suspension for computed tomography imaging, known as SmoothX. This testing batch was completed with their contract manufacturer, who recently received their FDA site registration.

The production test batch is an essential milestone in the development of Voyageur's barium contrast agent, which is being developed as a potential alternative to current products on the market. Barium contrast agents are used in CT scanning to improve the visibility of certain structures and tissues. The successful production of SmoothX opens up the possibility of commercialization in Canada.

Achieving commercial volumes is a key milestone for the company as it looks to establish itself as a major player in the radiology pharmaceutical industry. The company is excited about the potential of SmoothX and believes that it has the potential to be a best-in-class contrast agent. Voyageur is committed to bringing this important new product to market and will continue to invest in its development and commercialization.

The company also holds Health Canada-approved licenses for a total of five barium contrast media products. These licenses give it a great opportunity to expand in the Canadian market. The long-term goal is to develop a fully integrated supply chain for barium and iodine contrast media in Canada. The company has the scale and scope to achieve this. It has a strong product portfolio and a robust research and development pipeline. These capabilities will enable the company to meet the needs of the Canadian market and potentially create shareholder value.

FDA approval is one of the next steps for Voyageur to begin sales in the US. They are also working on building a GMP barium

contrast plant to process barium sulfate that would be supplied from their own Frances Creek barium project. This capability would allow them to produce their own product instead of relying on a third party. By controlling all aspects of its carbon footprint, Voyageur will be able to offer a completely carbon-neutral product to its customers.

The company has a 100% controlling interest in three barium sulfate projects, including the Frances Creek property. The Frances Creek property is suitable in grade for the pharmaceutical barite marketplace. In addition, Voyageur has an interest in a high-grade iodine, lithium, and bromine brine project located in Utah. This capability enhances the company’s unique sourcing capability to create its products from its own mineral deposits.

Voyageur’s objective is to become a leading global provider of pharmaceutical barite and high-grade iodine products by leveraging its extensive knowledge of geology, mineral processing, and product formulation. The company plans to achieve this by expanding its production capacity to meet growing demand from the medical imaging industry and continue to explore and develop its portfolio of mineral projects.