

Hanley buys Mallinckrodt patents for MediBeacon

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Despite all of the advances in modern medicine, there is one vital organ physicians can't monitor in real time.

MediBeacon LLC, a new optical diagnostics startup in St. Louis, is hoping to change that, with technology that would allow doctors and nurses to get instant feedback on kidney function.

MediBeacon CEO and Co-founder Steve Hanley said the company acquired 22 patents from Mallinckrodt's optical diagnostic agent development program earlier this year and will commercialize the technology.

Hanley spent 18 years working for Covidien, the last five years as president of company's imaging business. Hazelwood-based Mallinckrodt is the pharmaceuticals business of Covidien, which is in the process of spinning off Mallinckrodt as a separate public company.

The kidney monitoring technology MediBeacon is developing uses a combination of patented fluorescent dyes with an optical sensor attached to a patient's forehead or finger.

Such a system would be more accurate and useful than the current method doctors rely on, which requires blood and urine samples that take hours to process, said Dr. Kevin Martin, the director of the Division of Nephrology at Saint Louis University.

"They have the ability to measure overall kidney function on a real time basis without taking blood samples," Martin said. "I think that would be a great advance in terms of monitoring kidney function."

Hanley started MediBeacon earlier this year with Co-founder Rick Dorshow, a research physicist with 25 years of experience working in research and development, who led the optical diagnostics and therapeutics program at Mallinckrodt.

The company was founded with an undisclosed loan from the St. Louis Development Corp., \$100,000 in seed funding from the BioGenerator, a nonprofit investment fund and bioscience accelerator program, and \$45,000 from the Missouri Technology Corp.

Hanley would not disclose how much the patents cost, but said MediBeacon got the patents along with some equipment, research files and prototypes in the deal.

Covidien spokesperson Lynn Phillips also



MARK GILLILAND
MediBeacon Co-founders Steve Hanley (left) and Rick Dorshow (right) plan to start human kidney diagnostic trials by early 2013.

declined to comment on the deal. "This was a development project, which we did not commercialize," Phillips said. "It was not at the core of our ongoing imaging business."

The kidney monitoring system is the first commercial product MediBeacon hopes to bring to market, Hanley said. He has met with U.S. Food and Drug Administration officials and said the company plans to start human trials in early 2013.

Other products the company plans to develop based on the patents include fluorescent dyes that can be used to visualize anatomical structures in surgery. For example, in many abdominal surgeries there is a high risk of damage to the ureter, which could be illuminated using the dyes.

Hanley left Covidien in 2009 and started Neem LLC, a pharmaceutical and medical device consulting practice in Chesterfield.

The third member of MediBeacon's team is Terence Stern, the vice president of business development. Stern teamed up with Hanley at Neem in 2011 and previously served in management and corporate development roles at Novus International.

Hanley said MediBeacon will work out of offices at the CORTEX Center for Emerging Technologies in Midtown.

CORRECTIONS

THE ORTHOPEDIC CENTER OF ST. LOUIS

The Orthopedic Center of St. Louis in Chesterfield is not relocating as was incorrectly stated in a story in the Aug. 17 issue.

ASCENSION HEALTH

Ascension Health has nine members on its board. The total number of board members was incorrect in a story on women and minority board membership at area health-care systems in the Aug. 17 issue.

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