

# Organogenesis picks up another biotech company

Canton company thinks purchase could be catalyst for big growth

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CANTON -

Organogenesis Inc. has acquired a much smaller regenerative medicine firm as part of the Canton-based company's expansion plans.

Organogenesis said on Monday that it has purchased NanoMatrix Inc., a spinoff from Virginia Commonwealth University that has created a technology to improve the delivery of regenerative cells to a patient.

The technology essentially uses a technique known as "electrospinning" to assemble minuscule fibers into three-dimensional scaffolds that mimic the structure of human tissues. The scaffolding would be used to deliver cells for soft tissue repairs.

Organogenesis declined to say how much it paid for the firm, which it acquired from majority owner William Fioretti and other investors. Fewer than 10 people worked at the firm before it was acquired. Only one person, former vice president of research Gary Cadd, has joined Organogenesis from the previous company.

But Organogenesis CEO Geoff MacKay views the acquisition as a catalyst for growth, potentially leading to dozens of new jobs in Canton to accommodate research involving NanoMatrix's technology.

"It definitely means more jobs here in Canton," MacKay said. "It gives us a whole second technology platform and more versatility. In order to properly take this to market, we need to build a lab that's unique to the requirements of this 'electrospinning' technology."

MacKay said he doesn't expect the NanoMatrix technology would be used in Organogenesis' primary product, a bioengineered cell therapy called Apligraf that uses skin patches to treat patients who have diabetic foot ulcers and venous leg ulcers. Instead, the new technology could be used to broaden the regenerative treatments that Organogenesis eventually will be able to offer.

MacKay said he had been in talks to buy Baton Rouge-based NanoMatrix for as long as 18 months. The acquisition figured into his longstanding plans to seek a new site for a 250,000-square-foot headquarters in or near Canton.

The company recently bought an 85,000-square-foot property across the street from its similarly sized headquarters building on Dan Road, and MacKay said he is still considering using those two properties as a long-term real estate solution. The firm currently employs about 320 people, including about 220 people in Canton.