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Innately Adaptive™

Q&A with Kirk Look, CA, CFO, Oncolytics Biotech® Inc. with their REOLYSIN® product being the First Virus to show Statistically Significant Overall Survival Benefits in Metastatic Breast Cancer



Kirk Look, CA, CFO

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Interview conducted by: Bud Wayne, Editorial Executive CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Look, you joined Oncolytics Biotech® Inc. in 2003 as Controller and assumed the role of CFO in 2012. What attracted you to Oncolytics and what is your role today? Has it expanded beyond the average CFO role?

Mr. Look: Originally, I was attracted to the idea of helping people with cancer and the idea of using a virus to treat the disease. I felt it was a novel concept. At the time I thought it was also a good opportunity to advance my career by stepping away from my role at a large accounting firm and step into a senior role with a different company. I never expected the CFO opportunity to happen at Oncolytics, but I was fortunate to be appointed in 2012. I am not

sure I would describe my role as CFO as beyond average, but it is somewhat different in the biotech sector, as we have been operating since inception without any revenue, and our only real source of cash coming from Public Markets in Canada and the US, which has presented us with some unique hurdles and challenges. It has required us to run a lean operation that is sensitive to changes in the capital markets, as well as changes in the operating environment.

CEOCFO: Would you give us a brief look at Oncolytics, its origins and its purpose? Why the focus on cancer?

Mr. Look: Oncolytics is focused solely on REOLYSIN®, a product coming out of the work Dr. Matt Coffey did at the University of Calgary in the late 1990's. Based on his early research, Dr. Coffey surmised that the reovirus, from which REOLYSIN is derived, would replicate in cancer cells and create cell death and he was ultimately successful with proving his theory in mouse models. With some advice from friends and family, Dr. Coffey had the foresight to apply for a patent, and he ultimately started a private company in an effort to fund the patent application. That private company ultimately became Oncolytics Biotech and REOLYSIN now has the potential to treat metastatic breast cancer.

CEOCFO: Before we discuss REOLYSIN, it seems to be the only product in your pipeline. Is that a deliberate strategy and will that be the same going forward?

Mr. Look: The company was founded on the one product, but REOLYSIN has been studied in many different cancer indications. We became a company with a single product, but we have tested it now in more than 10 different indications and in combination with over six different approved cancer therapies. While we are currently a single product company, we have a multi-indication pipeline and a product that that could potentially impact many different indications and hundreds of thousands of cancer patients. Looking forward we are likely to stay focused on REOLYSIN in the near term. With the advent of immunotherapies, including the immune checkpoint inhibitors and the targeted therapies such as IMiDS, future development opportunities for REOLYSIN alone are not at all limiting.