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## Visiox Pharma – using their Innovative and Proprietary Delivery Technology to Bring Trusted Therapeutics to the Glaucoma and Cataract Markets



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**"I am very excited to build this organization out to fill a void that has been needed in eyecare. This is a very exciting time for Visiox and the best is yet to come!" Ryan S. Bleeks**

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**Interview conducted by:**  
**Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor**  
**CEOCFO Magazine**

**CEOCFO: Mr. Bleeks, what is the vision behind Visiox Pharma, LLC?**

**Mr. Bleeks:** Visiox Pharmaceuticals is a private company that is focused on developing and commercializing products that are in highly prevalent disease state markets, that just have not seen any new innovation in quite a while. Our goal, really, with both of our lead to assets, is to bring trusted molecules, that have been around for some time, that the practitioners know are safe and effective, and we are paring those with these innovative delivery systems. The first is called PDP-716 that contains the patented TearAct™ delivery technology. The second one is called SDN-037 which sits on another proprietary Tight Junction micellar modulation platform. What that basically does is that makes it easier for the patient by, instead of dosing 3 or 4 times a day, our assets would be dosed 1 or 2 times. In baseball terms we are not focused on hitting home runs. We leave that to the larger companies. Our business model is one of a very low risk, as we are looking to hit singles and doubles

Then there is a multitude of different types of categories, or classes of glaucoma medication, and we want ours to be positioned as a first line adjunct to the prostaglandins because it is also going to be dosed once a day, so you can take one of the medications, the prostaglandin in the evening, and ours in the morning. This means patients never have to leave their house with their drops. For PDP-716, it is a brimonidine, and

the only other option that contains brimonidine is that a patient has to take it 3 times a day.

**CEO CFO: *Is it just coincidental that you are working on both of these that are in ophthalmic, or is that your main focus?***

**Mr. Bleeks:** We are an eyecare company, Ophthalmology and Optometry is our focus.

**CEO CFO: *Why did this look like a good area for you? What is the impetus for starting the company, other than people need better products in this realm?***

**Mr. Bleeks:** First up, there is a big gap present in eyecare. This is a land grab opportunity. Glaucoma affects over fifty million people worldwide, and that is growing in leaps and bounds. In fact, by 2040 that number is supposed to be eighty million. This makes it a good business decision for jumping into the glaucoma market, and really the cataract arena, as well. That is because, as folks are living longer, more and more people are getting to the cataract age. It makes a lot of business sense. However again, I think there is a land grab opportunity with these lead to assets, because the competitive companies who house the market leaders, which we will compete against; they no longer put dollars into the marketing spend or promotion.

We are on the cusp of assembling a salesforce, and we will provide product medication samples that are for trials for patients, which has dried up in these two markets. However, by providing that customer service, and of course again, offering a product that is extremely effective, but at a much more convenient dosing schedule, the likelihood of success is very, very high for these lead to assets. We do not want to be just a one or two product company.

We are actively engaged in negotiations and discussions with companies that have products approved by the FDA, that are on the market, that may not be the top one, two or three priority for them, but for someone like us, it fits into our basket nicely. We could grow sales and it would complement these, and lead to assets perfectly.

**CEO CFO: *Are ophthalmologists looking for better ways?***

**Mr. Bleeks:** They are. The great part about eyecare is, and this is why I have been in it for so long, it is a very innovative specialty. They are always looking for innovations to make things better for patients. I have been in nephrology, allergy, cardiology, and a list of other specialties prior to getting into eyecare 18 years ago. There is just nothing else quite like it. A big part of that is the innovation that the surgeons, and also the optometrists are very, very immersed in.

On top of that, just as a side note, the Seed Round of capital raised that we have completed a couple of months ago. I had 24 ophthalmologists and optometrists that are part of the investment group that jumped in and wanted to be part of it, because they saw what was going on here, and they saw this as being something highly successful. I raised \$2.5 million dollars, just from the key opinion leaders, surgeons, and optometrists across the country. Therefore, I definitely think there has been a huge need and interest in what we are doing.

**CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about PDP-716? What is it, what does it do, and how is that an improvement over what might be available today?***

**Mr. Bleeks:** This will be indicated for patients with glaucoma and ocular hypertension. It is a terrible disease, and glaucoma, if left untreated will cause blindness in patients. Therefore, it is really important to make sure that glaucoma is under control. There are multiple product categories of different glaucoma medications. There are also surgical interventions for different types of treatment. However, if a patient is suffering, or has glaucoma, chances are that 80% of the patients are not just on one medication, but they are on two or three, to make sure that their pressure is under control. The number one prescribed class is a group called prostaglandins, and they are dosed one time a day.

Then there is a multitude of different types of categories, or classes of glaucoma medication, and we want ours to be positioned because it is also going to be dosed once a day, so you can take one of the medications, the prostaglandin in the evening, and ours in the morning. This means patients never have to leave their house with their drops. For PDP-716, it is a brimonidine, and the only other option that contains brimonidine is that a patient has to take it 3 times a day.

We are offering similar intra-ocular pressure reduction as the market leader, however PDP-716 is once a day, versus theirs, which are 3 times a day. It really comes down to the vehicle that is carrying the molecule. The molecule is brimonidine, and we have just engineered a novel formulation. It is called the TearAct delivery technology, and it just serves as a template. It is milled resin particles that slowly, slowly, and methodically release the brimonidine all throughout the day, and thus allows it to be used once a day.

**CEOCFO: *What is milled resin?***

**Mr. Bleeks:** That is a great question. It is basically drug resin clusters, that disintegrate into these individual drug bound resin particles, and that is due to the eye blink shear. Therefore, the vehicles for all of the drugs have different features and characteristics. As I said, this one just happens to be comprised of these fine resin particles that work as a template.

**CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about SDN-037?***

**Mr. Bleeks:** Cataract surgery, we talked about the sheer numbers of that. Cataract surgery procedures in the US are currently over 6 million a year, so it is highly prevalent, and by 2050, we are projecting that 50 million folks in the US will have cataracts, so it is another big market. With SDN-037, this is going to be a twice a day dose, topical corticosteroid for the post-surgical inflammation pain. This is difluprednate, which is the molecule, the active ingredient, .04%. The market leader is currently a difluprednate 4 time a day dose product, so we are going to be able to take what is already a good solution on the market, that patients take 4 times a day, and we are going to essentially give them the same results, but at 2 times a day.

Once again, the vehicle that carries the active ingredient, the active molecule is a proprietary delivery technology, and it is called, Tight Junction Modulation Micellar Platform technology. It takes the active and

helps it penetrate through the cornea, to the tissues where inflammation is present, quicker, and better. That is why the clinical trials show that it is extremely effective twice a day, versus 4 times a day.

**CEO CFO:** *What have you learned over the years, being in the industry, about getting products to market, about obtaining approvals from the FDA? What gives you a bit of an edge due to your experience?*

**Mr. Bleeks:** I think that surrounding myself with good people that know what they are doing, is everything, because I do not know how to do everything. I am the first to admit it. I am not always right. Therefore, I just think that surrounding and getting the right people that are part of the team and vested in the mission. I think that is a really big part, building that foundation and culture, and just doing things that you say you are going to do, recruits and attracts those types of people. That is because, if you have a reputation where there is a high level of trust and respect and transparency, you will get those good people surrounding with you. That is a big part of it.

I am not a scientist, so I cannot say that I am the one that engineered the molecule. I am not an attorney that helps put together the packages for these filings to get new products approved. However, there are many really talented individuals out there that are, and you just have to find them and bring them on as part of your team.

**CEO CFO:** *How do you find new potential candidates, whether it is delivery system, drugs, or both? What goes into that process? How active are you in looking for new potential solutions to add to the mix?*

**Mr. Bleeks:** That is a good question. With the evolution of the internet, there are many different things that are out there, that you can hunt and search, that help you identify different opportunities, that you might be able to work out a deal and bring on board. That is one part.

Another one that has actually probably been even more effective, is really just knowing the ophthalmologists and optometrists so well of the past 18 years, and many opportunities are brought to my desk through the doctors, through the ophthalmologists and optometrists. It may be something that they are aware of that another company is doing that they think might be a good fit.

Many of them were the innovators of these new technologies, so they are looking for support of a company to provide the capital and the infrastructure, to bring these products to the market, and of course sell to the public. I would say the larger and more important one that I have probably come across more is just ophthalmologists and optometrists coming to me with these different innovative products and technologies.

**CEO CFO:** *You mentioned a recent funding. How far will that take you? What are your next steps?*

**Mr. Bleeks:** That is a great question. With the recent funding, the total was \$7 million dollars in the seed round. This can take us through most of 2023, but that is more operating with things that we already have committed to, low head count, which is not going to be a reality, that is

not our plan. The next round, our Series A, I am going to need \$30 million dollars. That will complete the entire commercial infrastructure build. It will cover manufacturing of products, that will cover contracting through market access and managed care, establish a headquarters, and it will really outfit the entire commercial team and bring these first two products to market.

**CEOCFO: *Why pay attention to Visiox Pharma?***

**Mr. Bleeks:** We are just going to be a very disruptive company, very edgy company, that is reliable, and we are committed to bringing things that patients and practitioners actually want and need. We are really going to be a great business partner with each of the eyecare practices out there. You do not hear this very much, but it we are very, very centered around excellent customer service, and high-level trusting partnerships with the practices, to make them more valuable and helpful for their patients.

