Lantheus Medical imaging, Inc. Takes Proactive Steps to Mitigate Impact of Global Molybdenum-99 Supply Crisis on Operations

May 20, 2009 3:42 PM ET

Company Implements Supply Chain Diversification Strategy to Increase Reliable Access to Key Medical Isotope, Demonstrates Commitment to New Solutions

N. BILLERICA, Mass. (May 20, 2009) – Lantheus Medical Imaging, Inc., a worldwide leader in diagnostic imaging, today announced that it has signed an agreement with NTP Radioisotopes (Pty) Ltd., a subsidiary of the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation (NECSA), to manufacture and supply Lantheus with an ongoing volume of molybdenum-99 (Mo-99), a key isotope used in medical imaging procedures. This agreement underlines Lantheus' commitment to investing in a supply chain diversification strategy and providing new solutions to address the limited and fragile global Mo-99 supply chain, as evidenced by the current NRU reactor shutdown in Canada.[1] Under the terms of this agreement, Lantheus will receive a specified supply of Mo-99 at regular intervals from NTP, enhancing the company's ability to meet and/or exceed customer demand. NTP has, in turn, partnered with Belgian radiochemical producer IRE to co-supply the Lantheus requirement and thereby maximize security of ongoing regular supplies of Mo-99 to Lantheus. IRE and NTP have a long and successful relationship as reliable and consistent suppliers of Mo-99 to key customers.

Global shortfalls of Mo-99 have recently impacted the availability of critical diagnostic imaging procedures, causing concern within the medical imaging industry. Mo-99 is the parent isotope of technetium-99m (Tc99m), the most widely utilized radioisotope in the world for molecular and nuclear diagnostic imaging procedures. There are only a few major suppliers of nuclear-reactor generated Mo-99 in the world. Mo-99 is primarily imported into the U.S. from aging and increasingly less reliable nuclear reactors. Recent problems within the global reactor structure have created instability in the supply of Mo-99, affecting the availability of the medical isotope to technetium generator manufacturers. Without adequate supply of Mo-99, crucial imaging tests must be canceled or postponed with potentially negative consequences for patients.

"Partnering with NTP Radioisotopes as a reliable supplier of Mo-99 will provide us with expanded access within a limited supply chain. This partnership will bring our complementary skillsets and commitment to quality and reliability together to ensure patients have uninterrupted, timely access to needed medical imaging procedures that can diagnose life-threatening conditions such as heart disease and cancer," said Don Kiepert, president and CEO, Lantheus Medical Imaging, Inc. "Diversification of our supply chain and the introduction of new solutions in the marketplace to address the frequent worldwide medical isotope shortages is one of our foremost priorities as a company."

"As one of the top global producers of radioisotopes, NTP is pleased to enter into this mutual alliance with Lantheus Medical Imaging to ensure continued supply of Mo-99 for use in important diagnostic tests," said Don Robertson, managing director of NTP Radioisotopes (Pty) Ltd. "For more than 17 years, NTP has played a significant role in its contribution towards the diagnosis and treatment of illnesses. We hold a world-class record for reliability in terms of delivery and quantity of radioisotopes, and strive to work with our partners to minimize any risks to the routine supply of Mo-99."

About Molybdenum-99 and Technetium-99m

Over 22.5 million doses of diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals were injected into patients in the United States during 2008. Of these, nearly two-thirds were for cardiac exams, with the remaining for oncology, neurology and other applications. Technetium-99m (Tc99m), which is the decay product of molybdenum-99 (Mo-99), is the most commonly used medical radioisotope in the United States. At over 18.5 million doses, Tc99m accounted for 82% of all diagnostic radiopharmaceutical injections.[2] Tc99m is used in Lantheus Medical Imaging's TechneLite® (Technetium Tc99m Generator) generators, which are distributed to hospitals and radiopharmacies as a source of Tc99m for diagnostic imaging procedures. Tc99m is also used with Cardiolite® (Kit for the Preparation of Technetium Tc99m Sestamibi for Injection), one of the world's most widely-used cardiac imaging agents and the only technetium labeled myocardial perfusion agent that has been used to image more than 40 million patients. In diagnostic use, the Tc99m is attached to a specific molecule and injected into the patient. The diagnostic medicine then travels to the site or organ of interest and a special camera is used to pick up the gamma rays emitted from the radioactive material in the body and create images for diagnostic evaluation

About Lantheus Medical Imaging, Inc.

Lantheus Medical Imaging, Inc., a worldwide leader in diagnostic medicine for the past 50 years, is committed to advancing and investing in the field of diagnostic imaging. The company's proven success in discovering, developing and marketing innovative medical imaging agents provides a solid platform from which to bring forward breakthrough new tools for the diagnosis and management of disease. The company is home to leading cardiac imaging brands, including Cardiolite® (Kit for the Preparation of Technetium Tc99m Sestamibi for Injection), DEFINITY® Vial For (Perflutren Lipid Microsphere) Injectable Suspension, and

TechneLite® (Technetium Tc99m Generator) and has nearly 700 employees worldwide with headquarters in North Billerica, Massachusetts, and offices in Puerto Rico, Canada, and Australia. For more information, visit www.lantheus.com.

About the NTP Radioisotopes Ltd.
NTP Radioisotopes (Pty) Ltd.'s business is focused on the production and marketing of nuclear technology based products, used principally in the fields of healthcare, life sciences, industry and mining. NTP products are distributed across five different continents to customers in more than 50 countries including the USA, UK, Australia and the major European and Asian nations.

NTP's operations are based at the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation's (Necsa) Pelindaba site, near Pretoria, South Africa, which is equipped with a range of facilities and services supportive of nuclear technology product development and production. For more information on the company, please visit www.ntp.co.za

[1] http://www.aecl.ca/NewsRoom/Community_Bulletins/090518.htm

[2] Source: Arlington Medical Resources, Inc., The Imaging Market Guides – United States Edition, 2008