Executive snapshot

By Amy Haigh, Associate Editor

Paul Touhey: FDI focuses on health

Developmental timeline: Some of the main challenges of developing oncology diagnostic products are the time, commitment, and investment required to improve on an available test or to identify and build a solution for an entirely new diagnostic area. The typical timeline from conception to approval ranges from four to five years. This covers development, manufacturing, testing, clinical trials, regulatory review and approval, and, finally, launch. Our mesothelioma test is currently in the regulatory review stage at the FDA, and it took us four years to get here. We hope to have approval later this year and launch soon thereafter.

Commitment to innovation: Mesothelioma is an aggressive, asbestos-related cancer for which there are no known reliable serum tumor markers. With more than 100 million people exposed to asbestos in the last 50 years, and 10% of this population at risk for developing the cancer, we believe our new, noninvasive blood test for mesothelioma will play a crucial role in helping physicians and patients better manage and monitor the disease. This product is central to our commitment of providing innovative diagnostic tests.

Role of automation: A significant change in the industry has been the conversion from manual assay tests to large automated platforms. Advances in technology have changed how diagnostic and medical labs analyze serum samples and provide results to physicians and oncologists. In the past, most tests involved careful pipetting of patient samples, mixing in test tubes, and using a spectrophotometer to analyze these samples. With automation, this manual process is no longer required, allowing lab techs to perform more tests and other duties.

In the pipeline: We are currently developing several new products that address pressing needs, including a new PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test for bladder cancer; a panel of new biomarkers for the monitoring, management, and detection of lung cancers; and an early-detection test for ovarian cancer. We also continue to provide physicians, oncolgists, and their patients with highly innovative, industry-trusted biomarkers. These include CA 125-II, the most widely used tumor marker for ovarian cancer worldwide; CA 15-3 for detecting breast cancer recurrence; and CA 19-9 for monitoring pancreatic cancer.

Careers that make a difference: Working in this industry is very rewarding. One of the best ways to encourage young people to pursue a career in laboratory medicine is to show them they can make a difference in patients’ lives. Medical lab professionals are core members of any medical team, and they play a key role in collecting critical information that impacts patient care. The career is satisfying, rewarding, and challenging in that you are helping others and saving lives. For the more than 25 years that I have been part of this industry, I cannot think of a single day when I did not believe I was making a difference in someone’s life.

Our company name, Fujirebio, symbolizes “restoration of health.” Our people work hard every day toward achieving this mission.

Paul Touhey

Professional

President and COO of Fujirebio Diagnostics Inc. Joined FDI in 1985. Responsible for the company’s growth in the in vitro diagnostics industry. More than 27 years of industry experience, including previous management positions at Johnson & Johnson. Immediate past chairman of the Medical Device Manufacturers Association (MDMA). Member of FDA/Industry Grass Roots Task Force. Member of boards of Pennsylvania Biotech Association and Community Volunteers in Medicine (CVIM), an organization that provides medical care to the working poor.

Education

Earned BA in political science from Temple University in 1978.

Personal

Spends free time with wife, Carol, their two children, and two grandchildren. Enjoys playing golf and relaxing with family at their Sea Isle City, NJ, beach house.