Executive snapshot
By Allison Annis, Associate Editor

Branan Medical’s Bill Hoskins: one step ahead

Drug-testing needs: The current trend in testing for drugs of abuse is for employers, healthcare workers, and criminal-justice professionals to demand quicker results than ever before — with rapid on-site tests that can provide results in minutes. As testers learn more about different drugs that are being abused and which drugs are detectable on certain test panels, there is a demand for more specialized tests for drugs such as benzodiazepines, Oxycodone, MDMA, and tricyclic antidepressants. We have responded by developing a wide menu of specialized tests for as many as 12 different categories of drugs, and have also had certain tests for these categories reclassified from “moderately complex” to “simple” tests. This places them in the CLIA-waived test category, resulting in easier procedures for drug-treatment and clinical users.

Diverse clientele: We work with a variety of customers including workplace, criminal justice, drug treatment, and healthcare. Because each market segment has different needs and demands, we respond by providing a range of products designed specifically for certain markets. For example, criminal-justice agencies may want a simple dip urinalysis test for only two or three of the major drugs they see most often. Employers may want an all-inclusive test cup that eliminates specimen handling. Hospitals may need a test that can detect the widest range of drugs possible. We also work with a number of distributors — experts in their particular marketplace — in order to ensure that we stay current on their needs and supply them with the types of testing to best meet those needs.

Global drug testing: Outside of the United States, drug testing is still relatively new. Testing in many countries is limited to law-enforcement or military purposes. More countries are starting workplace-testing programs. Testing for drivers who may be impaired because of drug use is also being considered in Europe and Australia. Each country may have a need to test for different types of drugs. Many may need to test for buprenorphine, which until recently was seldom tested for in America. Others may place more emphasis on methamphetamine or MDMA and less on marijuana. We believe this is an important emerging market; we place great emphasis on our international business. Not only will we be attending the Medica Conference in Germany, we also plan to be at the TIAFT Conference in Slovenia. Earlier this year, we exhibited at the Arab Health Conference in Dubai.

Future of drug testing: Drug testing, including on-site testing, is far more advanced and accurate than ever before. Drug users, however, have become more sophisticated in methods to defeat or alter testing outcomes. The Internet is filled with hundreds of products promoting their ability to adulterate drug-testing results. We have been at the forefront in the development of adulteration detection, with the expectation of adding an eighth adulterant category later this year. Oral-fluid testing minimizes the adulteration problem and eliminates the need to handle a urine specimen. Improving existing methods to detect drugs in oral fluids will be the major change and driving force in the drug-testing industry in the next five years.

Recruiting interested students: We are always looking for qualified personnel in the areas of R&D, QC, and manufacturing. To recruit students with chemistry or lab training, we work with university placement programs. We also provide financial and resource support to nine professional organizations, which include the American Association of Clinical Chemistry, American Staffing Association, and American Corrections Association. Through our website, we offer product-training guides and certification tests to further enhance continuing education for professionals in the field.

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