

ZIOPHARM ONCOLOGY INC
 Form 424B5
 February 02, 2015
Table of Contents

Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)
 Registration No. 333-201826

The information contained in this preliminary prospectus supplement is not complete and may be changed. This preliminary prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are not an offer to sell these securities and we are not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where such offer or sale is not permitted.

Subject to completion, dated February 2, 2015

Prospectus supplement

(To prospectus dated February 2, 2015)

\$75,000,000

Common stock

We are offering \$75,000,000 of shares of our common stock.

Shares of our common stock trade on the NASDAQ Capital Market under the symbol ZIOP. The last reported sale price on January 30, 2015 was \$8.95 per share.

	Per share	Total
Public offering price	\$	\$
Underwriting discounts and commissions	\$	\$
Proceeds, before expenses, to us	\$	\$

We have granted the underwriters an option for a period of up to 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement to purchase up to \$11,250,000 of additional shares of common stock at the public offering price less the underwriting discounts and commissions.

INVESTING IN OUR COMMON STOCK INVOLVES RISK. SEE RISK FACTORS BEGINNING ON PAGE S-14.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the adequacy or accuracy of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

Intrexon Corporation, or Intrexon, which is affiliated with Randal J. Kirk, who serves as one of our directors, has indicated an interest in purchasing up to \$11,685,000 of shares of our common stock in this offering at the public offering price. Because this indication of interest is not a binding agreement or commitment to purchase, Intrexon may elect to purchase fewer shares than they have indicated an interest in purchasing or may elect not to purchase shares in this offering. In addition, the underwriters may elect not to sell to Intrexon some or all of the

Edgar Filing: ZIOPHARM ONCOLOGY INC - Form 424B5

shares that Intrexon has indicated an interest in purchasing. The underwriters will receive the same discount from any shares of our common stock so sold as they will from any other shares of our common stock sold to the public in this offering.

The underwriters expect to deliver the shares on or about February , 2015.

Book-running manager

J.P. Morgan

Senior lead manager

BMO Capital Markets

February , 2015

Table of Contents

This prospectus contains references to our trademarks and to trademarks belonging to other entities. Solely for convenience, trademarks and trade names referred to in this prospectus, including logos, artwork and other visual displays, may appear without the ® or ™ symbols, but such references are not intended to indicate, in any way, that their respective owners will not assert, to the fullest extent under applicable law, their rights thereto. We do not intend our use or display of other companies' trade names or trademarks to imply a relationship with, or endorsement or sponsorship of us by, any other companies.

Table of contents**Prospectus supplement**

<u>About this prospectus supplement</u>	S-ii
<u>Prospectus supplement summary</u>	S-1
<u>Risk factors</u>	S-14
<u>Special note regarding forward-looking statements</u>	S-47
<u>Use of proceeds</u>	S-49
<u>Dilution</u>	S-50
<u>Material United States federal income and estate tax consequences for non-U.S. holders</u>	S-52
<u>Underwriting</u>	S-56
<u>Legal matters</u>	S-64
<u>Experts</u>	S-64
<u>Where you can find more information</u>	S-64
<u>Incorporation of information by reference</u>	S-65
Prospectus	

<u>About this prospectus</u>	i
<u>Prospectus summary</u>	1
<u>Risk factors</u>	10
<u>Special note regarding forward-looking statements</u>	11
<u>Ratio of earnings to fixed charges and to combined fixed charges and preference dividends</u>	12
<u>Use of proceeds</u>	13
<u>Dilution</u>	13
<u>Description of capital stock</u>	14
<u>Description of debt securities</u>	17
<u>Description of warrants</u>	24
<u>Certain provisions of Delaware law, the certificate of incorporation and bylaws</u>	26
<u>Plan of distribution</u>	28
<u>Legal matters</u>	30
<u>Experts</u>	30
<u>Where you can find more information</u>	30
<u>Incorporation of information by reference</u>	31

Table of Contents

About this prospectus supplement

This document is in two parts. The first part is this prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of this common stock offering and also adds to and updates information contained in the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein. The second part, the accompanying prospectus, provides more general information, some of which may not apply to this offering. Generally, when we refer to this prospectus, we are referring to both parts of this document combined. To the extent there is a conflict between the information contained in this prospectus supplement and the information contained in the accompanying prospectus or any document incorporated by reference therein filed prior to the date of this prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in this prospectus supplement; provided that if any statement in one of these documents is inconsistent with a statement in another document having a later date for example, a document incorporated by reference in the accompanying prospectus the statement in the document having the later date modifies or supersedes the earlier statement.

We further note that the representations, warranties and covenants made by us in any agreement that is filed as an exhibit to any document that is incorporated by reference herein were made solely for the benefit of the parties to such agreement, including, in some cases, for the purpose of allocating risk among the parties to such agreements, and should not be deemed to be a representation, warranty or covenant to you. Moreover, such representations, warranties or covenants were accurate only as of the date specified in the relevant agreement. Accordingly, such representations, warranties and covenants should not be relied on as accurately representing the current state of our affairs.

You should rely only on the information contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, or any free writing prospectus authorized by us, or incorporated by reference herein. We have not authorized, and the underwriters have not authorized, anyone to provide you with information that is different. The information contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, or any free writing prospectus authorized by us, or incorporated by reference herein is accurate only as of the respective dates thereof, regardless of the time of delivery of this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, and any free writing prospectus authorized by us or of any sale of our common stock. It is important for you to read and consider all information contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, and any free writing prospectus authorized by us, including the documents incorporated by reference herein and therein, in making your investment decision. You should also read and consider the information in the documents to which we have referred you in the sections entitled *Where you can find more information* and *Incorporation of information by reference* in this prospectus supplement and in the accompanying prospectus.

We are offering to sell, and seeking offers to buy, shares of our common stock only in jurisdictions where offers and sales are permitted. The distribution of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and the offering of the common stock in certain jurisdictions may be restricted by law. Persons outside the United States who come into possession of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus must inform themselves about, and observe any restrictions relating to, the offering of the common stock and the distribution of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus outside the United States. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus do not constitute, and may not be used in connection with, an offer to sell, or a solicitation of an offer to buy, any securities offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus by any person in any jurisdiction in which it is unlawful for such person to make such an offer or solicitation.

Investors Outside the United States. No action is being taken in any jurisdiction outside the United States to permit a public offering of our common stock or possession or distribution of this prospectus in that

Table of Contents

jurisdiction. Persons who come into possession of this prospectus in jurisdictions outside the United States are required to inform themselves about and to observe any restrictions as to this offering and the distribution of this prospectus applicable to that jurisdiction.

Unless otherwise stated, all references in this prospectus to we, us, our, ZIOPHARM, the Company and similar designations refer to ZIOPHARM Oncology, Inc.

S-iii

Table of Contents

Prospectus supplement summary

This summary highlights certain information about us, this offering and selected information contained elsewhere in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement. This summary is not complete and does not contain all of the information that you should consider before deciding whether to invest in our common stock. For a more complete understanding of our company and this offering, we encourage you to read and consider carefully the more detailed information in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including the information referred to under the heading "Risk factors" in this prospectus supplement beginning on page S-14 the information incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and the information included in any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering.

Company overview

ZIOPHARM Oncology, Inc. is a biopharmaceutical company that seeks to acquire, develop and commercialize, on its own or with commercial partners, a diverse portfolio of cancer therapies that can address unmet medical needs through synthetic biology. Pursuant to an exclusive channel agreement with Intrexon Corporation, or Intrexon, we obtained rights to Intrexon's synthetic biology platform for use in the field of oncology, which included a clinical stage product candidate, Ad-RTS-IL-12 used with the oral activator veledimex. The synthetic biology platform is an industrialized engineering approach for molecular and cell biology and gene control. It employs an inducible gene-delivery system that enables controlled in vivo expression of genes that produce therapeutic proteins to treat cancer. Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex uses this gene delivery system to produce Interleukin-12, or IL-12, a potent, naturally occurring anti-cancer protein. We have completed two Phase 2 studies evaluating Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex, the first for the treatment of metastatic melanoma, and the second for the treatment of metastatic breast cancer; data from these Phase 2 studies was presented in December 2014. We are continuing to pursue intratumoral injection of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in breast cancer and brain cancer.

In addition to our synthetic biology programs, we recently obtained an exclusive, worldwide license to certain immuno-oncology technologies owned and licensed by The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, or MD Anderson, including technologies relating to novel chimeric antigen receptors, or CARs, natural killer, or NK cells and T cell receptors, or TCRs. Combining these technologies with Intrexon's technology suite and clinically tested RheoSwitch Therapeutic System[®], or RTS[®], IL-12 modules, we plan to develop CAR-T and other immune cells that will target and kill cancer cells. We plan to leverage the synergy between the platforms to accelerate a promising synthetic immuno-oncology pipeline, with up to five CAR-T therapies expected to enter the clinic in 2015 and programs for the development of allogeneic CAR-T therapies that can be used off-the-shelf expected to be initiated in 2016.

We plan to continue to combine Intrexon's technology suite with our capabilities to translate science to the patient to identify and develop additional products to stimulate or inhibit or stimulate key pathways, including those used by the body's immune system, to treat cancer.

We also have a portfolio of small molecule drug candidates, which are no longer a strategic focus of our development activities and for some of which we are seeking partners to pursue further development and potential commercialization.

Table of Contents

Enabling technologies

Synthetic biology

Synthetic biology entails the application of engineering principles to biological systems for the purpose of designing and constructing new biological systems or redesigning/modifying existing biological systems. Biological systems are governed by DNA, the building block of gene programs, which control cellular processes by coding for the production of proteins and other molecules that have a functional purpose and by regulating the activities of these molecules. This regulation occurs via complex biochemical and cellular reactions working through intricate cell signaling pathways, and control over these molecules modifies the output of biological systems. Synthetic biology has been enabled by the application of information technology and advanced statistical analysis, also known as bioinformatics, to genetic engineering, as well as by improvements in DNA synthesis. Synthetic biology aims to engineer gene-based programs or codes to modify cellular function to achieve a desired biological outcome. Its application is intended to allow more precise control of drug concentration and dose, thereby improving the therapeutic index associated with the resulting drug.

On January 6, 2011, we entered into an Exclusive Channel Partner Agreement with Intrexon, which we refer to as the Channel Agreement, to develop and commercialize novel DNA-based therapeutics in the field of cancer treatment by combining Intrexon's synthetic biology platform with our capabilities to translate science to the patient. As a result, our DNA synthetic biology platform employs an inducible gene-delivery system that enables regulated and controlled delivery of genes that produce therapeutic proteins to treat cancer. The first example of this regulated controlled delivery is achieved by producing IL-12, a potent, naturally occurring anti-cancer protein, under the control of Intrexon's proprietary biological switch to turn on and off (and on and off repeatedly) the therapeutic protein expression at the tumor site. We and Intrexon refer to this switch as the RheoSwitch Therapeutic System[®] or RTS[®] platform. Our initial drug candidate being developed using the synthetic biology platform is Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex.

More detailed descriptions of our clinical development for each are set forth in this report under the caption "Product candidates" below.

Immuno-oncology

Immuno-oncology, which utilizes a patient's own immune system to treat cancer, is one of the most actively pursued areas of research by biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies today. Cancer cells contain mutated proteins and may overexpress other proteins usually found in the body at low levels. The immune system typically recognizes unusual or aberrant cell protein expression and eliminates these cells in a highly efficient process known as immune surveillance. A central player in immune surveillance is a type of white blood cell known as the T cell. In healthy individuals, T cells identify and kill infected or abnormal cells, including cancer cells. Cancer cells develop the ability to evade immune surveillance, which is a key factor in their growth, spread, and persistence. In the last five years, there has been substantial scientific progress in countering these evasion mechanisms using immunotherapies, or therapies that activate the immune system.

On January 13, 2015, we, together with Intrexon, entered into a license agreement with MD Anderson, which we refer to as the MD Anderson License. Pursuant to the MD Anderson License, we and Intrexon hold an exclusive, worldwide license to certain technologies owned and licensed by MD Anderson including technologies relating to novel CAR-T cell therapies arising from the laboratory of Laurence Cooper, M.D., Ph.D., professor of pediatrics at MD Anderson, as well as either co-exclusive or non-exclusive licenses under certain related technologies.

Table of Contents

Combining the non-viral genetic engineering technologies we licensed from MD Anderson together with Intrexon's industrialized approach to gene engineering and cell control, we believe we can rapidly and efficiently reprogram T cells to express a particular CAR or TCR construct that will enable the T cell to recognize and target cancer cells. CAR-T cells target cell surface tumor antigens, such as CD-19, that exist on cancer cells and that are independent of human leukocyte antigens, or HLAs, and which we refer to as public antigens. TCRs target tumor antigens that are dependent on HLAs and which we refer to as private antigens. Natural killer cells target tumors with loss of HLAs, or tumors with no antigens. Most CAR-T cell and TCR products currently being developed by competitors are autologous, or derived from the patient's own blood, and gene engineered with viral technology. As a result, the patient's blood must be harvested, shipped to a manufacturing facility where it is modified using a retrovirus to express the CAR or TCR, and then shipped back to be infused into the patient. The process can take several weeks to a month and is very labor intensive and costly. Currently, this complex technique can only be done in very sophisticated laboratories. We believe we will be able to manufacture our CAR-T cells and TCRs using non-viral methods, which we expect will enable a simpler process requiring only days or hours and result in a lower cost of manufacturing. Our non-viral methods could also potentially enable autologous point of care treatment, where a patient's own T cells would be modified at or near the point of care, for example, utilizing a local blood bank, to express the CAR-T or TCR construct and then infused back into the patient, potentially during the same visit. In addition, we intend to use our non-viral methods to develop allogeneic treatments that can be used off-the-shelf. An allogeneic off-the-shelf treatment would enable a patient to be treated with a CAR-T or TCR construct that is created from a separate healthy donor, personalized for that patient, and then distributed to the point of care. Our non-viral methods, which we believe are nimble, fast and less costly than other approaches, together with our industrialized, scalable engineering approach are expected to enable highly efficient and less costly manufacturing approaches to gene engineered cell-based therapy. In addition, our proprietary RheoSwitch Therapeutic System[®] may give us the ability to control in vivo gene expression (on-off-on-off etc.) in CAR-T or TCR cells, which we believe could result in significantly lower toxicity compared to other products currently in development.

Product candidates

The following chart identifies our current synthetic biology product candidates and their stage of development, each of which are described in more detail below.

Table of Contents

Synthetic biology programs

Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex

Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex has been evaluated in two Phase 2 studies, the first for the treatment of metastatic melanoma, and the second for the treatment of unresectable recurrent or metastatic breast cancer. Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex is our lead product candidate, which uses our gene delivery system to produce IL-12, a potent, naturally occurring anti-cancer protein.

More specifically, IL-12 is a potent immunostimulatory cytokine which activates and recruits dendritic cells that facilitate the cross-priming of tumor antigen-specific T cells. Intratumoral administration of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex, which allows for adjustment of IL-12 gene expression upon varying the dose of veledimex, is designed to reduce the toxicity elicited by systemic delivery of IL-12, and increase efficacy through high intratumoral expression.

We reported the controlled local expression of IL-12 as an immunotherapeutic treatment of glioma (brain cancer) in animal models through the use of the RTS® at the October 2013 AACR-NCI-EORTC conference. Veledimex brain penetration was demonstrated in normal mice and monkeys with intact blood brain barriers. Treatment with Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex and DC-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex both demonstrated dose-related increase in survival in the mouse GL-261 glioma model with no adverse clinical signs observed. In December 2013, we announced the unanimous approval of the Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee of the National Institutes of Health, or the RAC/NIH, for the initiation of a Phase 1 study of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex, in subjects with recurrent or progressive high grade gliomas. The U.S Food and Drug Administration, or FDA, has requested additional nonclinical information to support the Phase 1 study and this data has been generated. Subject to reaching agreement with the FDA, we anticipate initiation of the Phase 1 study during the first half of 2015. Glioblastoma is by far the most frequent malignant brain tumor and is associated with a particularly aggressive course and dismal prognosis. The current standard of care is based on surgical resection to the maximum feasible extent, followed by radiotherapy and concomitant adjuvant temozolomide. Such aggressive treatment, however, is associated with only modest improvements in survival resulting in a very high unmet medical need.

At the American Association for Cancer Research, or AACR, 2014 Annual Meeting, in April 2014, we presented data from a preclinical study conducted jointly by us and Intrexon demonstrating the anti-tumor effects and tolerability of Ad-RTS-mIL-12 in a glioblastoma murine model. Veledimex was found to effectively cross the blood brain barrier, with dose-related increases in plasma and brain tissue exposure, and no accumulation in brain tissue following repeat dosing. The study data demonstrated that administration of Ad-RTS-mIL-12 + veledimex resulted in dose-related increases in survival of four- to five-fold, without exhibiting an adverse safety profile, when compared to median survival in vehicle control groups.

At the 17th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy, or ASGCT, in May 2014, we presented results demonstrating the potent anti-tumor and anti-cancer stem cell effects of Ad-RTS-IL-12 in a preclinical glioma model. Results from human and laboratory studies of Ad-RTS-IL-12 demonstrated that precise control of IL-12 gene expression levels can be achieved using Intrexon's RTS®. Rapid, tight modulation of in vivo expression of IL-12 using the activator ligand, veledimex, was demonstrated across these studies. When IL-12 expression was switched on it rapidly led to expression and an immune response. This immune response was characterized by an increase in tumor infiltrating lymphocytes with system wide immune activation. The data presented in May 2014 further demonstrated that Ad-RTS-IL-12 has potent anti-cancer effects in a glioma model, showing both a reduction in tumor mass and prolonged survival when compared to existing treatment standards. The data also showed a significant reduction in cancer stem cells, as measured by dramatically reduced nestin levels. Cancer stem cells are thought to play a critical role in recurrence and metastasis.

Table of Contents

At the AACR 2014 Immunology and Immunotherapy Meeting in December 2014, together with Intrexon, we presented clinical results from the Ad-RTS-hIL-12 + veledimex studies in patients with advanced breast cancer and melanoma demonstrating local and systemic IL-12-mediated anti-cancer activity, as well as safety and control of both immune- and IL-12-mediated toxicity with use of the RTS[®] gene switch. In two open-label Phase 2 clinical studies, twelve patients with metastatic advanced stage breast cancer and twenty-six patients with metastatic melanoma were administered Ad-RTS-hIL-12. Following intra-tumoral injection of Ad-RTS-hIL-12, expression of IL-12 within patients was controlled by the RTS[®] gene switch using the oral activator ligand, veledimex, at doses ranging from 5mg to 160mg. All subjects had heavy tumor burden and disease progression at the time of enrollment, with mean number of prior therapies at 14 and 10 for breast cancer and melanoma patients, respectively. Treatment with Ad-RTS-hIL-12 + veledimex resulted in an increase in the immune cytokine IL-12 and downstream cytokines, IFN- γ , IP-10 and IL-10, resulting in a significant increase in the number of CD8+ T-cells. Among seven evaluable subjects in the Phase 2 clinical study of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in patients with recurrent or metastatic breast cancer, three had stable disease, including one triple negative breast cancer subject who crossed the primary endpoint of 16 week progression free survival, for a disease control rate (stable disease or better) of 43%. Target lesions and tumor burden were significantly reduced in approximately 40% of patients. In the Phase 1/2 study of Ad-RTS-hIL-12 + veledimex in subjects with unresectable stage III/IV melanoma, of eighteen evaluable subjects, one had a partial response and six had stable disease, for a disease control rate of 39%. In melanoma patients for whom a response was observed, there was evidence of local and systemic anti-cancer activity. The adverse event profile of Ad-RTS-hIL-12 + veledimex in both melanoma and breast cancer was predictable, reversible and characteristic of immune activation. The most common ³ Grade 3 treatment emergent adverse events, or TEAEs, in breast cancer and melanoma included neutropenia and electrolyte abnormalities (21%) each, LFTs increased (16%), leukopenia (13%) and pyrexia, hypotension, lymphopenia, anemia, and cytokine release syndrome (11%) each. Importantly, all TEAEs and SAEs ³ Grade 3 reversed rapidly upon discontinuation of veledimex oral dosing.

Also at the AACR 2014 Immunology and Immunotherapy Meeting in December 2014, together with Intrexon, we presented preclinical data supporting the potential for cytolytic activity against solid tumor targets with allogeneic, genetically-modified stem cells enabled for controlled release of cell-linking moieties, or CLMs, within the tumor micro-environment and preclinical data describing the development of a novel, high-throughput screening technology for rapidly identifying bi-specific antibodies capable of inducing targeted immunologic activity through the activation of T-cells or other immune cells against tumors. CLMs are small bi-specific antibody fragments capable of directing potent T-cell mediated tumor lysis by bridging the immunologic synapses of T-cells and surface targets on tumor cells. Previous studies have shown that the systemic distribution and pharmacokinetic profile of bi-specific antibodies limit their utility for many target/effector combinations. In two preclinical studies, Intrexon and Ziopharm researchers interrogated a large number of CLM-based effectors for their ability to activate white blood cells from peripheral blood and lyse receptor target-positive tumor cells. Allogeneic, tumor targeting stem cells were then genetically modified to express CLMs within the tumor microenvironment using the RTS[®] platform as a mechanism for providing spatial and temporal control. The first study demonstrated the ability of Intrexon's proprietary image-based screening systems and rapid DNA assembly to screen a large number of EGFR and HER2 receptor-targeted CLM variants for their ability to recruit CD3+ T-cells and mediate selective cell killing against target positive cells in peripheral blood co-cultures. The image-based screening platform allowed for real time target cell killing information to be obtained, as well as kinetic cell morphologic analyses to understand the dynamics of killing activity, thereby shortening the developmental timeline to lead candidate selection. The second study validated these CLM candidates in scalable, allogeneic endometrial regenerative cells, or ERCs, genetically modified to express an anti-CD3-anti-EGFR CLM under RTS[®] ligand inducible control. Expression of CLMs under the RTS[®] inducible promoter provided effective control of CLM secretion and modulation of killing activity, with

Table of Contents

veledimex-dependent cytotoxicity of greater than 80% against an EGFR+ KRAS mutant lung cancer cell model. CLM-expressing ERCs were found to be effective in co-culture killing assays at cellular doses as low as 1% of target cells. These data supported the feasibility of localized cytolytic activity of CLM-secreting allogeneic cell therapy products against EGFR+ KRAS mutant solid tumor malignancies.

We have completed the Phase 2 monotherapy studies in melanoma and breast cancer using Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex. Additionally, we expect a future trial with IL-12 in combination therapies with standard of care for breast cancer. As the treatment of advanced melanoma has undergone and continues to undergo a rapid evolution with the introduction and approval of highly promising new single and combination agents, the standard of care in this indication has become uncertain, resulting in a much more competitive and commercially unpredictable environment. As a result, we are pursuing intratumoral injection of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in brain cancer and breast cancer, and will pause further development of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in melanoma with intratumoral injection. However, through current strategic initiatives, we expect to utilize RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in cell based immunotherapy of melanoma and other cancers. We plan to initiate a Phase 1 trial to evaluate Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex as a single agent in the treatment of patients with brain cancer in the first half of 2015.

CAR-T/cytokine programs

We are actively pursuing non-viral, genetic engineering technologies to develop novel CAR-T, NK and TCR cells. Combining this technology with Intrexon's industrialized synthetic biologic engineering and clinically tested and validated RTS IL-12 modules, represents a differentiated approach to genetically modified CAR-T cell and other immune cells. Employing novel cell engineering techniques and multigenic gene programs, we expect to implement next-generation non-viral adoptive cellular therapies based on designer cytokines and CARs under control of RTS® technology targeting both hematologic malignancies and solid tumors. We plan to leverage the synergy between the platforms to accelerate a promising synthetic immuno-oncology pipeline, with up to five CAR-T therapies expected to enter the clinic in 2015 and programs for the development of allogeneic CAR-T therapies that can be used off-the-shelf expected to be initiated in 2016.

Research suggests that T cells can be re-programmed to have a very strong anti-cancer therapeutic effect through the expression of CARs to redirect specificity to tumors without HLA restrictions. The signature event within this field has resulted from the infusion of T cells expressing CARs into patients with B cells leukemias and lymphomas. Many of these patients have responded to these new therapies with a durable and dramatic anti-tumor effect after infusing CD19-specific T cells. Despite the highly promising results that have been demonstrated by early researchers in the field, current technologies and approaches have shown a number of serious drawbacks, including toxicity, manufacturing complexity and expense. A particular problem is that infusions of T cells into patients with large amounts of disease have invariably led to significant issues of toxicity for recipient patients. These toxicities primarily involve three major, potentially catastrophic side-effects:

1. The rapid killing of tumor cells releases a large number intracellular constituents that are very toxic to various organs and is called tumor lysis syndrome that can be fatal,
2. the supra-physiologic release of cytokines (cytokine storm) that causes fever, instability of blood pressure, mental status changes and on occasion, death, and
3. on-target, and off-tissue toxicity represented by the concomitant damage of normal B cells and loss of humoral (antibody) immunity.

Table of Contents

We expect to be able to tightly control expansion and activation of CAR-T cells in the body, which has the potential to alleviate or abrogate these toxicities.

MD Anderson's platform, which uses the exclusive Sleeping Beauty system, or SB system, generates and characterizes new CAR-T designs, which enables a high throughput approach to evaluate the CAR-T. This EZ-CAR-T non-viral system is used to fashion immuno-receptors that differ in specificity and ability to activate T cells. These CAR-T molecules are evaluated in a go/no go system based on serial killing and protection of T cells from activation-induced cell death. Non-viral gene transfer using the SB system is unique in the field of oncology. Examples of cell engineering techniques that we expect to employ with the SB system are induced pluripotent stem cell (iPSC) processing technologies combined with Laser-enabled Analysis and Processing, or LEAP[®], which consists of computerized image-based selection and laser processing for very rapid cell identification and purification as well as AttSite[®] Recombinases, which involves stable, targeted gene integration and expression with proprietary serine recombinases. We believe the advanced DNA vectors derived from SB can be used to avoid the expense and manufacturing difficulty associated with creating CAR-T cells using viral vectors. After electroporation, the transposon/transposase improves the efficiency of integration of plasmids used to express CAR and other transgenes in T cells. Propagation of genetically modified T cells on activating and propagating cells, or AaPC, provide a competitive advantage over other non-viral methods of modification. The SB system combined with artificial antigen-presenting cells can selectively propagate and thus retrieve CAR+ T cells suitable for human application. T cells can also be genetically modified using these technologies to target a panel (several) cancer antigen targets. We are on the verge of implementing technology to manufacture minimally-manipulated T cells within days of gene transfer by electroporation.

We expect this platform will rapidly integrate with Intrexon's RTS[®] and multigenic control gene programs. The programs are also designed and built for rapid transition to universal donor products or minimally manipulated point of care products. Dr. Laurence Cooper and colleagues at MD Anderson recently published research which demonstrated that transformed, primary, and pluripotent stem cells can be permanently modified to eliminate HLA-A expression, demonstrating how to generate *a priori* cells from one allogeneic donor for infusion into multiple recipients representing a significant step towards our goal of on-demand therapy that can be pre-deployed at multiple sites and infused when needed. The primary factor limiting the development of a universal donor product is the existence of graft-vs-host response, or GVHD. GVHD occurs because the newly transplanted cells regard the recipient's body as foreign. When this happens, the newly transplanted cells attack the recipient's body. Additional research from Dr. Cooper and colleagues at MD Anderson suggests that universal allogeneic T cells generated from one donor could be administered to multiple recipients. This is achieved by genetically editing CD19-specific CAR+ T cells to eliminate expression of the endogenous α TCR, the gene responsible for triggering GVHD, without compromising CAR-dependent effector functions. Genetically modified T cells are generated using the SB system to stably introduce the CD19-specific CAR with subsequent permanent deletion of α or β TCR chains with nucleases. The translation of the SB system and AaPC for use in clinical trials highlights how a nimble and cost-effective approach to developing genetically modified T cells can be used to implement clinical trials infusing next-generation T cells with improved therapeutic potential. We are expanding our initial trials targeting CD19 and planning to conduct additional trials with re-designed CAR-Ts expanding beyond CD19+ tumor cells.

Anticipated Milestones

We expect the following milestones to occur in 2015 and 2016:

Intra-tumoral IL-12 RheoSwitch[®] programs:

Table of Contents

Early data is expected in the fourth quarter of 2015 for our Phase 1/2 study in Breast Cancer with standard of care.

Early data is expected in the fourth quarter of 2015 for our Phase 1 study of Glioblastoma multiforme (GBM).

CAR-T programs:

We expect to initiate two Phase 1 studies of next-generation CD19 CARs in the second quarter of 2015.

We expect to initiate a Phase 1 study of next-generation CAR with an inducible cytokine in the fourth quarter of 2015.

We expect to initiate a novel CAR for myeloid malignancies in the fourth quarter of 2015.

We expect to receive interim data on two Phase 1 CARs studies in advanced leukemia and lymphomas in the fourth quarter of 2015.

We expect to initiate other leukemia and solid tumor CAR-T cell studies in 2016.

We expect to initiate allogeneic, off-the-shelf T-cell studies in 2016.

Data from all programs is expected in 2015 and 2016. We are also evaluating additional potential preclinical candidates and continuing discovery efforts aimed at identifying other potential product candidates under our Channel Agreement with Intrexon. In addition, we may seek to enhance our pipeline in synthetic biology through focused strategic transactions, which may include acquisitions, partnerships and in-licensing activities. We are actively seeking to out-license some or all of our small molecule programs to further support our synthetic biology efforts.

Small molecule programs

In addition to our synthetic biology programs discussed above, we have certain rights to three small molecule programs, palifosfamide (or isophosphoramidate mustard), darinaarsin and indibulin, all of which we are no longer actively pursuing. With respect to palifosfamide, in March 2013, we announced that the pivotal Phase 3 study, PICASSO 3, did not meet its primary endpoint of progression-free survival, and that we would terminate our development program in metastatic soft tissue sarcoma. In addition, we recently received the overall survival endpoint data from our study of palifosfamide in combination with carboplatin and etoposide chemotherapy versus carboplatin and etoposide alone in chemotherapy naïve patients with metastatic small cell lung cancer, which we refer to as MATISSE, which data will be submitted for presentation at a scientific forum during the first half of 2015.

We are seeking transactions with third parties for the possible out-license of palifosfamide. With respect to darinaarsin, we have entered into an amended and restated global licensing agreement with Solasia Pharma K.K., or Solasia, on July 31, 2014 granting Solasia an exclusive worldwide license to develop and commercialize darinaarsin, and related organoarsenic molecules, in both intravenous and oral forms in all indications for human use. In exchange, we will be eligible to receive from Solasia development-and sales-based milestones, a royalty on net sales of darinaarsin, once commercialized, and a percentage of any sublicense revenues generated by Solasia. During 2014, we determined to no longer pursue clinical development of indibulin.

Table of Contents

Recent developments

Expected cash as of December 31, 2014

Based upon preliminary estimates, we expect to have approximately \$43 million in cash and cash equivalents as of December 31, 2014. We have not yet completed our year-end financial close process for the year ended December 31, 2014. This estimate of our cash and cash equivalents as of December 31, 2014 is based on preliminary estimates of our financial results that we expect to report for the period. These estimates are subject to completion of our financial closing procedures. Our independent registered public accounting firm, McGladrey LLP, has not audited, reviewed or compiled these estimates. These estimates are not a comprehensive statement of our financial results for the year ended December 31, 2014 and our actual results may differ materially from these estimates as a result of the completion of our financial closing procedures, final adjustments and other developments arising between now and the time that our financial results for this period are finalized.

Development plans

Our current plan is to raise additional capital to support further development activities for our strategic product candidates. Based upon our current plans and without taking into account the net proceeds of this offering, we anticipate that our cash resources will be sufficient to fund our operations into the third quarter of 2015. This forecast of cash resources is forward-looking information that involves risks and uncertainties, and the actual amount of our expenses could vary materially and adversely as a result of a number of factors, including the factors discussed in the

Risk Factors section of this prospectus supplement and the uncertainties applicable to our forecast for the overall sufficiency of our capital resources. We have based our estimates on assumptions that may prove to be wrong, and our expenses could prove to be significantly higher than we currently anticipate. In particular, pursuant to the MD Anderson License, MD Anderson agreed to transfer to us certain existing research programs described in the MD Anderson License and we, together with Intrexon, agreed to enter into a research and development agreement pursuant to which we will provide funding for certain research and development activities of MD Anderson for a period of three years from the date of the MD Anderson License, in an amount between \$15 and \$20 million per year. In addition, we also expect to enter into additional collaboration and technology transfer agreements with MD Anderson and Intrexon to accelerate technology and clinical development of these product candidates. We expect to increase the level of our overall research and development expenses significantly going forward as a result of each of these items. Further, in light of our entry into the MD Anderson License, we expect to establish operations in Houston, Texas that will enable us to join and collaborate with the MD Anderson academic and medical community, which may require that we add headcount in the future, and which could add to our general and administrative expenses going forward. Although our forecasts for expenses and the sufficiency of our capital resources takes into account our plans to develop the technology licensed from MD Anderson and our obligations under the MD Anderson License, the MD Anderson License was entered into on January 13, 2015 and is only beginning to be implemented, therefore the actual costs associated therewith may be significantly in excess of forecasted amounts.

Table of Contents

Risk factors

An investment in our common stock is subject to a number of risks and uncertainties. Before investing in our common stock, you should carefully consider the following, as well as the more detailed discussion of risk factors and other information included in this prospectus supplement.

Our plans to develop and commercialize, pursuant to the MD Anderson License with MD Anderson and Intrexon and our Channel Agreement with Intrexon, non-viral adoptive cellular therapies based on designer cytokines and novel CAR-T cell therapies are new approaches to cancer treatment that present significant challenges in a competitive landscape.

We will require additional financial resources in order to continue on-going development of our product candidates; if we are unable to obtain these additional resources, we may be forced to delay or discontinue clinical testing of our product candidates.

We need to raise additional capital to fund our operations. The manner in which we raise any additional funds may affect the value of your investment in our common stock.

Clinical trials are very expensive, time-consuming, and difficult to design and implement, and may not support our product candidate claims.

Our product candidates may cause undesirable side effects or have other properties that could delay or prevent their regulatory approval, limit the commercial profile of an approved label, or result in significant negative consequences following any potential marketing approval.

We may not be able to obtain the necessary U.S. or worldwide regulatory approvals, commercialize any products, generate significant revenues, or attain profitability.

The technology underlying our Channel Arrangement with Intrexon is based in part on early stage technology in the field of human oncologic therapeutics, which makes it difficult to predict the time and cost of product candidate development and subsequently obtaining regulatory approval.

Currently, no gene therapy products have been approved in the United States and only one product has been approved in Europe.

Our use of synthetic biology to develop product candidates may become subject to increasing regulation, or may be limited by ethical, legal and social concerns about synthetic biologically engineered products.

Because we currently neither have nor intend to establish internal research capabilities, we are dependent upon pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies and academic and other researchers to sell or license us their product candidates and technology.

We are dependent on third parties for clinical testing, research and development activities and the formulation and manufacture of our product candidates, which exposes us to risks that may delay the development, regulatory approval and commercialization of our products or result in higher product costs.

Edgar Filing: ZIOPHARM ONCOLOGY INC - Form 424B5

If we or our licensors fail to adequately protect or enforce our intellectual property rights or secure rights to patents of others, the value of our intellectual property rights would diminish and our ability to successfully commercialize our products may be impaired.

We have a limited operating history upon which to base an investment decision.

S-10

Table of Contents

Corporate information

We originally incorporated in Colorado in September 1998 (under the name Net Escapes, Inc.) and later changed our name to EasyWeb, Inc. in February 1999. We re-incorporated in Delaware on May 16, 2005 under the same name. On September 13, 2005, we completed a reverse acquisition of privately held ZIOPHARM, Inc., a Delaware corporation. To effect this transaction, we caused ZIO Acquisition Corp., our wholly-owned subsidiary, to merge with and into ZIOPHARM, Inc., with ZIOPHARM, Inc. surviving as our wholly owned subsidiary. In accordance with the terms of the merger, the outstanding common stock of ZIOPHARM, Inc. automatically converted into the right to receive an aggregate of approximately 97.3% of our outstanding common stock (after giving effect to the transaction). Following the merger, we caused ZIOPHARM, Inc. to merge with and into us and we changed our name to ZIOPHARM Oncology, Inc. Although EasyWeb, Inc. was the legal acquirer in the transaction, we accounted for the transaction as a reverse acquisition under generally accepted accounting principles. As a result, ZIOPHARM, Inc. became the registrant with the Commission and the historical financial statements of ZIOPHARM, Inc. became our historical financial statements.

Our principal executive offices are located at One First Avenue, Parris Building 34, Navy Yard Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts 02129, and our telephone number is (617) 259-1970. Our internet site is www.ziopharm.com. Information found on, or accessible through, our website is not a part of, and is not incorporated into, this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus, and you should not consider it part of this prospectus supplement or part of the accompanying prospectus.

Table of Contents

The offering

Common stock offered by us in this offering \$75,000,000 of shares of our Common Stock

Option to purchase additional shares We have granted the underwriters an option for a period of up to 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement to purchase up to \$11,250,000 of additional shares of common stock at the public offering price less the underwriting discounts and commissions.

Common stock to be outstanding immediately after this offering 111,063,872 shares (or 112,320,856 shares if the underwriters exercise in full their option to purchase additional shares)

Use of proceeds We intend to use the net proceeds from this offering for general corporate and working capital purposes, including clinical development of our pipeline and development of the technologies licensed from MD Anderson. See Use of Proceeds.

Risk factors See Risk factors beginning on page S-14 for a discussion of some of the factors you should carefully consider before deciding to invest in shares of our common stock.

NASDAQ Capital Market symbol ZIOP

The number of shares of common stock to be outstanding immediately after this offering is based on 102,683,984 shares of common stock outstanding as of September 30, 2014, and assumes the sale of \$75,000,000 of shares of common stock at \$8.95 per share, the last reported sale price of our common stock on the NASDAQ Capital Market on January 30, 2015. A 5% increase or decrease in an assumed public offering price of \$8.95 per share would decrease or increase the number of shares of our common stock issued in this offering by approximately 5%. This number of shares excludes:

5,792,428 shares of our common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options outstanding as of September 30, 2014, having a weighted average exercise price of \$3.94 per share;

5,555,864 shares of our common stock available as of September 30, 2014 for future issuance pursuant to our 2012 Equity Incentive Plan;

1,755,845 shares of our common stock issued upon the exercise of warrants since September 30, 2014; and

11,722,163 shares of our common stock to be issued to MD Anderson within sixty days of the execution of the MD Anderson License, pursuant to the terms of the MD Anderson License, a letter agreement that we and Intrexon entered into with MD Anderson on January 9, 2015, or the Letter Agreement, and the securities issuance agreements and registration rights agreement entered into in connection therewith, which we collectively refer to as the MD Anderson Equity Agreements.

Except as otherwise indicated, all information in this prospectus supplement assumes no exercise by the underwriters of their option to purchase additional shares.

Table of Contents

Indication of interest

Intrexon Corporation, or Intrexon, which is affiliated with Randal J. Kirk, who serves as one of our directors, has indicated an interest in purchasing up to \$11,685,000 of shares of our common stock in this offering at the public offering price. Because this indication of interest is not a binding agreement or commitment to purchase, Intrexon may elect to purchase fewer shares than they have indicated an interest in purchasing or may elect not to purchase shares in this offering. In addition, the underwriters may elect not to sell to Intrexon some or all of the shares that Intrexon has indicated an interest in purchasing. The underwriters will receive the same discount from any shares of our common stock so purchased as they will from any other shares of our common stock sold to the public in this offering.

S-13

Table of Contents

Risk factors

An investment in our common stock involves a high degree of risk. Before deciding whether to invest in our common stock, you should consider carefully the risks described below and discussed under the section captioned "Risk Factors" contained in our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended September 30, 2014, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, in its entirety, together with other information in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, the information and documents incorporated by reference, and in any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering. If any of these risks actually occurs, our business, financial condition, results of operations or cash flow could be harmed. This could cause the trading price of our common stock to decline, resulting in a loss of all or part of your investment. The risks described below and in the documents referenced above are not the only ones that we face. Additional risks not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial may also affect our business.

Risks related to our business

Our plans to develop and commercialize, through the MD Anderson License with MD Anderson and Intrexon and our Channel Agreement with Intrexon, nonviral adoptive cellular therapies based on designer cytokines and novel chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapies are new approaches to cancer treatment that present significant challenges in a competitive landscape and the success of our efforts depends in large part on our owned and licensed intellectual property, and our efforts may be affected by litigation and developments in intellectual property law outside of our control.

We intend to employ technologies licensed from MD Anderson pursuant to the MD Anderson License described above in "Summary Recent developments", and from Intrexon, pursuant to our existing Channel Agreement with Intrexon, to pursue the development and commercialization of nonviral adoptive cellular therapies based on cytokines and CARs under control of the RTS[®] technology targeting both hematologic and solid tumor malignancies. Because this is a new approach to cancer immunotherapy and cancer treatment generally, developing and commercializing product candidates subjects us to a number of challenges, including:

obtaining regulatory approval from the FDA and other regulatory authorities that have very limited experience with the commercial development of genetically modified T-cell therapies for cancer;

developing and deploying consistent and reliable processes for engineering a patient's T-cells ex vivo and infusing the engineered T-cells back into the patient;

possibly conditioning patients with chemotherapy in conjunction with delivering each of the potential products, which may increase the risk of adverse side effects of the potential products;

educating medical personnel regarding the potential side effect profile of each of the potential products, such as the potential adverse side effects related to cytokine release;

developing processes for the safe administration of these potential products, including long-term follow-up for all patients who receive the potential products;

sourcing additional clinical and, if approved, commercial supplies for the materials used to manufacture and process the potential products;

developing a manufacturing process and distribution network with a cost of goods that allows for an attractive return on investment;

establishing sales and marketing capabilities after obtaining any regulatory approval to gain market acceptance;

S-14

Table of Contents

developing therapies for types of cancers beyond those addressed by the current potential products; and

not infringing the intellectual property rights, in particular, the patent rights, of third parties, including competitors developing alternative CAR-T cell therapies.

We cannot be sure that T-cell immunotherapy technologies that we intend to develop in partnership with MD Anderson and Intrexon will yield satisfactory products that are safe and effective, scalable, or profitable. Moreover, public perception of therapy safety issues, including adoption of new therapeutics or novel approaches to treatment, may adversely influence the willingness of subjects to participate in clinical trials, or if approved, of physicians to subscribe to the novel treatment mechanics. Physicians, hospitals and third-party payors often are slow to adopt new products, technologies and treatment practices that require additional upfront costs and training. Physicians may not be willing to undergo training to adopt this novel and personalized therapy, may decide the therapy is too complex to adopt without appropriate training and may choose not to administer the therapy. Based on these and other factors, hospitals and payors may decide that the benefits of this new therapy do not or will not outweigh its costs.

Our CAR-T product candidates are supported by limited clinical data, all of which has been generated through trials conducted by MD Anderson, not by us. We plan to assume control of the overall clinical and regulatory development of our CAR-T product candidates, and any failure to obtain, or delays in obtaining, sponsorship of investigational new drug applications, or INDs, or in filing new INDs sponsored by us for these or any other product candidates we determine to advance could negatively affect the timing of our potential future clinical trials. Such an impact on timing could increase research and development costs and could delay or prevent obtaining regulatory approval for our product candidates, either of which could have a material adverse effect on our business. Further, we did not control the design or conduct of the previous trials. It is possible that the FDA will not accept these previous trials as providing adequate support for future clinical trials, whether controlled by us or third parties, for any of one or more reasons, including the safety, purity, and potency of the product candidate, the degree of product characterization, elements of the design or execution of the previous trials or safety concerns, or other trial results. We may also be subject to liabilities arising from any treatment-related injuries or adverse effects in patients enrolled in these previous trials. As a result, we may be subject to unforeseen third-party claims and delays in our potential future clinical trials. We may also be required to repeat in whole or in part clinical trials previously conducted by MD Anderson, which will be expensive and delay the submission and licensure or other regulatory approvals with respect to any of our product candidates.

In addition, the results of the limited clinical trials conduct by MD Anderson to date may not be replicated in future clinical trials. Our CAR-T product candidates may fail to show the desired safety and efficacy in clinical development and we cannot assure you that the results of any future trials will demonstrate the value and efficacy of our product candidates. Moreover, there are a number of regulatory requirements that we must satisfy before we can continue clinical trials of CAR-T or other cellular therapy product candidates in the United States. Satisfaction of these requirements will entail substantial time, effort and financial resources. Any time, effort and financial resources we expend on our CAR-T and other early-stage product candidate development programs may adversely affect our ability to continue development and commercialization of our synthetic biology product candidates.

The biopharmaceutical industry, and the rapidly evolving market for developing genetically engineered T-cells in particular, is characterized by intense competition and rapid innovation. Genetically engineering T-cells faces significant competition in the CAR technology space from multiple companies and their collaborators, such as Novartis/University of Pennsylvania, Bluebird bio/Celgene/Baylor College of Medicine, Kite Pharma/National Cancer Institute, Juno Therapeutics/Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center/Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center/Seattle Children's Research Institute, Cellectis/Pfizer and Adaptimmune/GSK. We face competition from non-cell based treatments offered by other companies such as Amgen, AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers, Incyte,

Table of Contents

Merck, and Roche. Even if we obtain regulatory approval of potential products, we may not be the first to market and that may affect the price or demand for our potential products. Additionally, the availability and price of our competitors' products could limit the demand and the price we are able to charge for our potential products. We may not be able to implement our business plan if the acceptance of our potential products is inhibited by price competition or the reluctance of physicians to switch from existing methods of treatment to our potential products, or if physicians switch to other new drug or biologic products or choose to reserve our potential products. Additionally, a competitor could obtain orphan product exclusivity from the FDA with respect to such competitor's product. If such competitor product is determined to be the same product as one of our potential products, that may prevent us from obtaining approval from the FDA for such potential products for the same indication for seven years, except in limited circumstances.

We are dependent on patents, know-how, and proprietary technology that are licensed from others, particularly MD Anderson and Intrexon. Any termination of these licenses could result in the loss of significant rights and could harm our ability to commercialize our product candidates. Disputes may also arise between us and these licensors regarding intellectual property subject to a license agreement, including those relating to:

the scope of rights granted under the applicable license agreement and other interpretation-related issues;

whether and the extent to which our technology and processes, and the technology and processes of Intrexon, MD Anderson and our other licensors, infringe on intellectual property of the licensor that is not subject to the applicable license agreement;

our right to sublicense patent and other rights to third parties pursuant to our relationships with our licensors and partners;

whether we and/or Intrexon are complying with our diligence obligations with respect to the use of the licensed technology in relation to our development and commercialization of our potential products under the MD Anderson License; and

the allocation of ownership of inventions and know-how resulting from the joint creation or use of intellectual property by our licensors and by us.

If disputes over intellectual property that we have licensed prevent or impair our ability to maintain our current licensing arrangements, particularly with MD Anderson, on acceptable terms, we may be unable to successfully develop and commercialize the affected potential products. We are generally also subject to all of the same risks with respect to protection of intellectual property that we license as we are for intellectual property that we own. If we or our licensors fail to adequately protect this intellectual property, our ability to commercialize potential products under our applicable licenses could suffer.

There is a substantial amount of litigation involving patents and other intellectual property rights in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries, as well as administrative proceedings for challenging patents, including interference, derivation, and reexamination proceedings before the United States Patent and Trademark Office, or U.S. PTO, or oppositions and other comparable proceedings in foreign jurisdictions. Recently, due to changes in U.S. law referred to as patent reform, new procedures including inter partes review and post-grant review have been implemented, which adds uncertainty to the possibility of challenge to our or our licensors' patents in the future.

Table of Contents

We will require additional financial resources in order to continue ongoing development of our product candidates; if we are unable to obtain these additional resources, we may be forced to delay or discontinue clinical testing of our product candidates.

We have not generated significant revenue and have incurred significant net losses in each year since our inception. For the nine months ended September 30, 2014, we had a net loss of \$21.4 million, and, as of September 30, 2014, we had incurred approximately \$362.2 million of cumulative net losses since our inception in 2003. We expect to continue to incur significant operating expenditures and net losses. Further development of our product candidates, including product candidates that we may develop under our Channel Agreement with Intrexon and/or pursuant to the MD Anderson License, will likely require substantial increases in our expenses as we:

continue to undertake clinical trials for product candidates;

scale-up the formulation and manufacturing of our product candidates;

seek regulatory approvals for product candidates;

work with regulatory authorities to identify and address program related inquiries;

implement additional internal systems and infrastructure;

hire additional personnel;

begin to advance candidates pursuant to the MD Anderson License; and

commence providing funding for certain research and development activities of MD Anderson pursuant to the terms of the MD Anderson License.

We continue to seek additional financial resources to fund the further development of our product candidates. If we are unable to obtain sufficient additional capital, one or more of these programs could be placed on hold. Because we are currently devoting a significant portion of our resources to the development of synthetic biology, further progress with the development of our other candidates may be significantly delayed and may depend on the licensing of those compounds to third parties.

We anticipate that our cash resources, without giving effect to the proceeds of this offering, will be sufficient to fund our operations into the third quarter of 2015, and we have no current committed sources of additional capital. We do not know whether additional financing will be available on terms favorable or acceptable to us when needed, if at all. Our business is highly cash-intensive and our ability to continue operations after our current cash resources are exhausted depends on our ability to obtain additional financing and/or achieve profitable operations, as to which no assurances can be given. If adequate additional funds are not available when required, or if we are unsuccessful in entering into partnership agreements for the further development of our products, we will be required to delay, reduce or eliminate planned preclinical and clinical trials and may be forced to terminate the approval process for our product candidates from the FDA or other regulatory authorities. In addition, we could be forced to discontinue product development, forego attractive business opportunities or pursue merger or divestiture strategies. In the event we are unable to obtain additional financing, we may be forced to cease operations altogether.

We need to raise additional capital to fund our operations. The manner in which we raise any additional funds may affect the value of your investment in our common stock.

We expect to have approximately \$43 million of cash and cash equivalents as of December 31, 2014. We anticipate that our cash resources, without giving effect to the proceeds of this offering, will be sufficient to

Table of Contents

fund our operations into the third quarter of 2015. However, changes may occur that would consume our existing capital prior to the third quarter of 2015, including expansion of the scope of, and/or slower than expected progress of, our research and development efforts and changes in governmental regulation. Actual costs may ultimately vary from our current expectations, which could materially impact our use of capital and our forecast of the period of time through which our financial resources will be adequate to support our operations. We have estimated the sufficiency of our cash resources based in part on the discontinuation of the PICASSO 3 pivotal trial for first-line metastatic STS and our adaptive Phase 3 trial for first-line SCLC for IV palifosfamide. Also our estimates include the advancement of our synthetic biology product candidates in the clinic under our Channel Agreement with Intrexon and our increased expenses as we begin to advance candidates pursuant to the MD Anderson License and commence providing funding for certain research and development activities of MD Anderson pursuant to the terms of the MD Anderson License, and we expect that the costs associated with these and additional product candidates will increase the level of our overall research and development expenses significantly going forward.

In addition to above factors, our actual cash requirements may vary materially from our current expectations for a number of other factors that may include, but are not limited to, changes in the focus and direction of our development programs, competitive and technical advances, costs associated with the development of our product candidates, our ability to secure partnering arrangements, and costs of filing, prosecuting, defending and enforcing our intellectual property rights. If we exhaust our capital reserves more quickly than anticipated, regardless of the reason, and we are unable to obtain additional financing on terms acceptable to us or at all, we will be unable to proceed with development of some or all of our product candidates on expected timelines and will be forced to prioritize among them.

The unpredictability of the capital markets may severely hinder our ability to raise capital within the time periods needed or on terms we consider acceptable, if at all. Moreover, if we fail to advance one or more of our current product candidates to later-stage clinical trials, successfully commercialize one or more of our product candidates, or acquire new product candidates for development, we may have difficulty attracting investors that might otherwise be a source of additional financing.

Our need for additional capital and limited capital resources may force us to accept financing terms that could be significantly dilutive to existing stockholders. To the extent that we raise additional capital by issuing equity securities, our stockholders may experience dilution. In addition, we may grant future investors rights superior to those of our existing stockholders. If we raise additional funds through collaborations and licensing arrangements, it may be necessary to relinquish some rights to our technologies, product candidates or products, or grant licenses on terms that are not favorable to us. If we raise additional funds by incurring debt, we could incur significant interest expense and become subject to covenants in the related transaction documentation that could affect the manner in which we conduct our business.

Clinical trials are very expensive, time-consuming, and difficult to design, initiate and implement.

Human clinical trials are very expensive and difficult to design, initiate and implement, in part because they are subject to rigorous regulatory requirements. The clinical trial start up and process itself is also time-consuming and results are inherently uncertain. We estimate that clinical trials of our product candidates will take at least several years to complete. Furthermore, failure can occur at any stage of the trials, and we could encounter problems that cause us to delay the start of, abandon or repeat clinical trials. The commencement and completion of clinical trials may be delayed by several factors, including:

additional nonclinical data requests by regulatory agencies;

unforeseen safety issues;

Table of Contents

determination of dosing issues;

lack of effectiveness during clinical trials;

slower than expected rates of patient recruitment and enrollment;

inability to monitor patients adequately during or after treatment;

inability or unwillingness of medical investigators to follow our clinical protocols; and

regulatory determinations to temporarily or permanently cease enrollment for other reasons not related to patient safety.

Success in preclinical testing and early clinical trials does not ensure that later clinical trials will be successful. For example, despite positive findings in earlier clinical trials, our product candidate palifosfamide failed to meet the primary endpoint of the Phase 3 PICASSO 3 trial. In addition, we or the FDA may suspend our clinical trials at any time if it appears that we are exposing participants to unacceptable health risks or if the FDA finds deficiencies in our Investigational New Drug, or IND, submission or in the conduct of these trials.

See also *Risks relating to the clinical testing, regulatory approval and manufacturing of our product candidates* Our product candidates are in various stages of clinical trials, which are very expensive and time-consuming. We cannot be certain when we will be able to submit an NDA or BLA, to the FDA and any failure or delay in completing clinical trials for our product candidates could harm our business.

We may not be able to obtain or maintain orphan drug exclusivity for our product candidates.

We have received Orphan Drug designations for darinaparsin for the treatment of peripheral T-cell lymphoma in both the United States and Europe, and we may be able to receive additional Orphan Drug designation from the FDA and the European Medicines Agency, or EMA, for other product candidates. In the United States, orphan designation is available to drugs intended to treat, diagnose or prevent a rare disease or condition that affects fewer than 200,000 people in the United States at the time of application for orphan designation. Orphan designation qualifies the sponsor of the product for a tax credit and marketing incentives. The first sponsor to receive FDA marketing approval for a drug with an orphan designation is entitled to a seven-year exclusive marketing period in the United States for that product for that indication and, typically, a waiver of the prescription drug user fee for its marketing application. However, a drug that the FDA considers to be clinically superior to, or different from, the approved orphan drug, even though for the same indication, may also obtain approval in the United States during the seven-year exclusive marketing period. Orphan drug exclusive marketing rights may also be lost if the FDA later determines that the request for designation was materially defective or if the manufacturer is unable to assure sufficient quantity of the drug. There is no guarantee that any of our other product candidates will receive Orphan Drug designation or that, even if such product candidate is granted such status, the product candidate's clinical development and regulatory approval process will not be delayed or will be successful.

We may not be able to commercialize any products, generate significant revenues, or attain profitability.

To date, none of our product candidates have been approved for commercial sale in any country. The process to develop, obtain regulatory approval for, and commercialize potential drug candidates is long, complex, and costly. Unless and until we receive approval from the FDA and/or other regulatory authorities for our product candidates, we cannot sell our drugs and will not have product revenues. Even if we obtain regulatory approval for one or more of our product candidates, if we are unable to successfully commercialize our products, we may

Table of Contents

not be able to generate sufficient revenues to achieve or maintain profitability, or to continue our business without raising significant additional capital, which may not be available. Our failure to achieve or maintain profitability could negatively impact the trading price of our common stock.

Ethical, legal and social concerns about synthetic biologically engineered products could limit or prevent the use of our product candidates.

Our products candidates use a synthetic biology platform. Public perception about the safety and environmental hazards of, and ethical concerns over, genetically engineered products could influence public acceptance of our product candidates. If we and our collaborators are not able to overcome the ethical, legal and social concerns relating to synthetic biological engineering, our product candidates may not be accepted. These concerns could result in increased expenses, regulatory scrutiny, delays or other impediments to the public acceptance and commercialization of our product candidates. Our ability to develop and commercialize products could be limited by public attitudes and governmental regulation.

The subject of genetically modified organisms has received negative publicity, which has aroused public debate. This adverse publicity could lead to greater regulation and trade restrictions on the development and commercialization of genetically altered products. Further, there is a risk that our product candidates could cause adverse health effects or other adverse events, which could also lead to negative publicity.

The synthetic biological platform that we use may have significantly enhanced characteristics compared to those found in naturally occurring organisms, enzymes or microbes. While we believe we produce synthetic biological technologies only for use in a controlled laboratory and industrial environment, the release of such synthetic biological technologies into uncontrolled environments could have unintended consequences. Any adverse effect resulting from such a release could have a material adverse effect on our business and financial condition, and we may have exposure to liability for any resulting harm.

Our use of synthetic biology to develop product candidates may become subject to increasing regulation in the future.

Most of the laws and regulations concerning synthetic biology relate to the end products produced using synthetic biology, but that may change. For example, the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues in December 2010 recommended that the federal government oversee, but not regulate, synthetic biology research. The Presidential Commission also recommended that the government lead an ongoing review of developments in the synthetic biology field and that the government conduct a reasonable risk assessment before the field release of synthetic organisms. Synthetic biology may become subject to additional government regulations as a result of the recommendations, which could require us to incur significant additional capital and operating expenditures and other costs in complying with these laws and regulations.

The technology on which our Channel Agreement with Intrexon Corporation is based in part on early stage technology in the field of human oncology therapeutics.

Our Channel Agreement with Intrexon contemplates our using Intrexon's advanced transgene engineering platform for the controlled and precise cellular production of anti-cancer effectors. The synthetic biology effector platform in which we have acquired rights represents early-stage technology in the field of human oncology biotherapeutic, with Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex having completed two Phase 2 studies, in melanoma and breast cancer. The Company is continuing to pursue intratumoral injection of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in brain cancer and breast cancer. Although we plan to leverage Intrexon's synthetic biology platform for additional products targeting key pathways used by cancers to grow and metastasize, we may not be successful

Table of Contents

in developing and commercializing these products for a variety of reasons. The risk factors set forth herein that apply to our small molecule drug candidates, which are in various stages of development, also apply to product candidates that we seek to develop under our Channel Agreement with Intrexon.

We will incur additional expenses in connection with our Channel Agreement with Intrexon Corporation.

The synthetic biology platform, in which we have acquired rights for cancer indications from Intrexon, includes two existing product candidates, Ad-RTS-IL-12+ veledimex and DC-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex. Upon entry into the Channel Agreement with Intrexon, we assumed responsibility for the clinical development of these product candidates, which we expect will increase the level of our overall research and development expenses significantly going forward. Although all human clinical trials are expensive and difficult to design and implement, we believe that due to complexity, costs associated with clinical trials for synthetic biology products are greater than the corresponding costs associated with clinical trials for small molecule candidates. In addition to increased research and development costs, prior to the adoption of our April 2013 workforce reduction plan, we added headcount in part to support our Channel Agreement endeavors, and we may need to do so again in the future which would add to our general and administrative expenses going forward.

Although our forecasts for expenses and the sufficiency of our capital resources takes into account our plans to develop the Intrexon products, the actual costs associated therewith may be significantly in excess of forecasted amounts. In addition to the amount and timing of expenses related to the clinical trials, our actual cash requirements may vary materially from our current expectations for a number of other factors that may include, but are not limited to, changes in the focus and direction of our development programs, competitive and technical advances, costs associated with the development of our product candidates and costs of filing, prosecuting, defending and enforcing our intellectual property rights. If we exhaust our capital reserves more quickly than anticipated, regardless of the reason, and we are unable to obtain additional financing on terms acceptable to us or at all, we will be unable to proceed with development of some or all of our product candidates on expected timelines and will be forced to prioritize among them.

We may not be able to retain the exclusive rights licensed to us by Intrexon Corporation to develop and commercialize products involving DNA administered to humans for expression of anti-cancer effectors for the purpose of treatment or prophylaxis of cancer.

Under the Channel Agreement, we use Intrexon's technology directed towards in vivo expression of effectors in connection with the development of Ad-RTS-IL-12+ veledimex and generally to research, develop and commercialize products, in each case in which DNA is administered to humans for expression of anti-cancer effectors for the purpose of treatment or prophylaxis of cancer, which we collectively refer to as the Cancer Program. The Channel Agreement grants us a worldwide license to use patents and other intellectual property of Intrexon in connection with the research, development, use, importing, manufacture, sale, and offer for sale of products involving DNA administered to humans for expression of anti-cancer effectors for the purpose of treatment or prophylaxis of cancer, which we refer to collectively as the ZIOPHARM Products. Such license is exclusive with respect to any clinical development, selling, offering for sale or other commercialization of ZIOPHARM Products, and otherwise is non-exclusive. Subject to limited exceptions, we may not sublicense the rights described without Intrexon's written consent. Under the Channel Agreement, and subject to certain exceptions, we are responsible for, among other things, the performance of the Cancer Program, including development, commercialization and certain aspects of manufacturing of ZIOPHARM Products.

Intrexon may terminate the Channel Agreement if we fail to use diligent efforts to develop and commercialize ZIOPHARM Products or if we elect not to pursue the development of a Cancer Program identified by Intrexon

Table of Contents

that is a Superior Therapy as defined in the Channel Agreement. We may voluntarily terminate the Channel Agreement upon 90 days written notice to Intrexon. Upon termination of the Channel Agreement, we may continue to develop and commercialize any ZIOPHARM Product that, at the time of termination:

is being commercialized by us;

has received regulatory approval;

is a subject of an application for regulatory approval that is pending before the applicable regulatory authority; or

is the subject of at least an ongoing Phase 2 clinical trial (in the case of a termination by Intrexon due to an uncured breach or a voluntary termination by us), or an ongoing Phase 1 clinical trial in the field (in the case of a termination by us due to an uncured breach or a termination by Intrexon following an unconsented assignment by us or our election not to pursue development of a Superior Therapy).

Our obligation to pay 50% of net profits or revenue as described further in our Annual Report on Form 10-K under the heading *Business License Agreements, Intellectual Property and Other Agreements Exclusive Channel Partner Agreement with Intrexon Corporation* with respect to these retained products will survive termination of the Channel Agreement.

There can be no assurance that we will be able to successfully perform under the Channel Agreement and if the Channel Agreement is terminated it may prevent us from achieving our business objectives.

We will incur additional expenses in connection with our License Agreement with The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

Pursuant to the MD Anderson License, we, together with Intrexon, obtained an exclusive, worldwide license to certain technologies owned and licensed by MD Anderson including technologies relating to novel CAR-T cell, T-NK and TCR cell therapies arising from the laboratory of Laurence Cooper, M.D., Ph.D., professor of pediatrics at MD Anderson, as well as either co-exclusive or non-exclusive licenses under certain related technologies. Pursuant to the MD Anderson License, MD Anderson agreed to transfer to us certain existing research programs described in the MD Anderson License and we, together with Intrexon, agreed to enter into a research and development agreement pursuant to which we will provide funding for certain research and development activities of MD Anderson for a period of three years from the date of the MD Anderson License, in an amount between \$15 and \$20 million per year. In addition, we also expect to enter into additional collaboration and technology transfer agreements with MD Anderson and Intrexon to accelerate technology and clinical development of these product candidates. We expect to increase the level of our overall research and development expenses significantly going forward as a result of each of these items.

In addition, in light of our entry into the MD Anderson License, we expect to build a base of operations in Houston, Texas to join and collaborate with the MD Anderson academic and medical community, which may require that we add headcount in the future, and which could add to our general and administrative expenses going forward.

Although our forecasts for expenses and the sufficiency of our capital resources takes into account our plans to develop the technology licensed from MD Anderson and our obligations under the MD Anderson License, the MD Anderson License was entered into on January 13, 2015 and is only beginning to be implemented, therefore the actual costs associated therewith may be significantly in excess of forecasted amounts. In addition to the amount and timing of expenses related to our relationship with MD Anderson, our actual cash requirements may vary materially from our current expectations for a number of other factors that may include, but are not limited to, the final terms and conditions of the research and development agreement contemplated by the MD

Table of Contents

Anderson License, costs associated with opening a new operational facility in Houston, Texas, changes in the focus and direction of our development programs, competitive and technical advances, costs associated with the development of our product candidates and costs of filing, prosecuting, defending and enforcing our intellectual property rights. If we exhaust our capital reserves more quickly than anticipated, regardless of the reason, and we are unable to obtain additional financing on terms acceptable to us or at all, we will be unable to proceed with development of some or all of our product candidates on expected timelines and will be forced to prioritize among them.

We may not be able to retain the rights licensed to us and Intrexon by The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center to technologies relating to novel chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapies and other related technologies.

Under the MD Anderson License, we, together with Intrexon, received an exclusive, worldwide license to certain technologies owned and licensed by MD Anderson including technologies relating to novel CAR-T cell, T-NK and TCR cell therapies arising from the laboratory of Laurence Cooper, M.D., Ph.D., professor of pediatrics at MD Anderson, as well as either co-exclusive or non-exclusive licenses under certain related technologies. When combined with Intrexon's technology suite and ZIOPHARM's clinically tested RheoSwitch Therapeutic System interleukin-12 modules, the resulting proprietary methods and technologies may help realize the promise of genetically modified CAR-T cell and other immune cells by tightly controlling cell expansion and activation in the body, minimizing off-target and unwanted on-target effects and toxicity while maximizing therapeutic efficacy. The term of the MD Anderson License expires on the last to occur of (a) the expiration of all patents licensed thereunder, or (b) the twentieth anniversary of the date of the MD Anderson License; provided, however, that following the expiration of the term, the Company and Intrexon shall then have a fully-paid up, royalty free, perpetual, irrevocable and sublicensable license to use the licensed intellectual property thereunder.

After 10 years from the date of the MD Anderson License and subject to a 90 day cure period, MD Anderson will have the right to convert the MD Anderson License into a non-exclusive license if we and Intrexon are not using commercially reasonable efforts to commercialize the licensed intellectual property on a case-by-case basis. After five years from the date of the MD Anderson License and subject to a 180-day cure period, MD Anderson will have the right to terminate the MD Anderson License with respect to specific technology(ies) funded by the government or subject to a third party contract if we and Intrexon are not meeting the diligence requirements in such funding agreement or contract, as applicable. Subject to a 30-day cure period, MD Anderson has the right to terminate the MD Anderson License if we and Intrexon fail to timely deliver the shares due in consideration for the MD Anderson License. MD Anderson may also terminate the agreement with written notice upon material breach by us or Intrexon, if such breach has not been cured within 60 days of receiving such notice. In addition, the MD Anderson License will terminate upon the occurrence of certain insolvency events for both us or Intrexon and may be terminated by the mutual written agreement of us, Intrexon and MD Anderson.

There can be no assurance that we will be able to successfully perform under the MD Anderson License and if the MD Anderson License is terminated it may prevent us from achieving our business objectives.

We have a limited operating history upon which to base an investment decision.

We have not demonstrated an ability to perform the functions necessary for the successful commercialization of any product candidates. The successful commercialization of any product candidates will require us to perform a variety of functions, including:

continuing to undertake preclinical development and clinical trials;

Table of Contents

participating in regulatory approval processes;
formulating and manufacturing products; and
conducting sales and marketing activities.

Our operations have been limited to organizing and staffing our company, acquiring, developing and securing our proprietary product candidates, and undertaking preclinical and clinical trials of our product candidates. These operations provide a limited basis for you to assess our ability to commercialize our product candidates and the advisability of investing in our securities.

Because we currently neither have nor intend to establish internal research capabilities, we are dependent upon pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies and academic and other researchers to sell or license us their product candidates and technology.

Proposing, negotiating, and implementing an economically viable product acquisition or license is a lengthy and complex process. We compete for partnering arrangements and license agreements with pharmaceutical, biopharmaceutical, and biotechnology companies, many of which have significantly more experience than we do, and have significantly more financial resources. Our competitors may have stronger relationships with certain third parties including academic research institutions, with whom we are interested in collaborating and may have, therefore, a competitive advantage in entering into partnering arrangements with those third parties. We may not be able to acquire rights to additional product candidates on terms that we find acceptable, or at all.

We expect that any product candidate to which we acquire rights will require significant additional development and other efforts prior to commercial sale, including extensive clinical testing and approval by the FDA and applicable foreign regulatory authorities. All drug product candidates are subject to the risks of failure inherent in pharmaceutical product development, including the possibility that the product candidate will not be shown to be sufficiently safe or effective for approval by regulatory authorities. Even if our product candidates are approved, they may not be economically manufactured or produced, or be successfully commercialized.

We actively evaluate additional product candidates to acquire for development. Such additional product candidates, if any, could significantly increase our capital requirements and place further strain on the time of our existing personnel, which may delay or otherwise adversely affect the development of our existing product candidates. We must manage our development efforts and clinical trials effectively, and hire, train and integrate additional management, administrative, and sales and marketing personnel. We may not be able to accomplish these tasks, and our failure to accomplish any of them could prevent us from successfully growing.

We may not be able to successfully manage our growth.

In the future, if we are able to advance our product candidates to the point of, and thereafter through, clinical trials, we will need to expand our development, regulatory, manufacturing, marketing and sales capabilities or contract with third parties to provide for these capabilities. Any future growth will place a significant strain on our management and on our administrative, operational, and financial resources. Therefore, our future financial performance and our ability to commercialize our product candidates and to compete effectively will depend, in part, on our ability to manage any future growth effectively. To manage this growth, we must expand our facilities, augment our operational, financial and management systems, and hire and train additional qualified personnel. If we are unable to manage our growth effectively, our business may be harmed.

Our business will subject us to the risk of liability claims associated with the use of hazardous materials and chemicals.

Our contract research and development activities may involve the controlled use of hazardous materials and chemicals. Although we believe that our safety procedures for using, storing, handling and disposing of these

Table of Contents

materials comply with federal, state and local laws and regulations, we cannot completely eliminate the risk of accidental injury or contamination from these materials. In the event of such an accident, we could be held liable for any resulting damages and any liability could have a materially adverse effect on our business, financial condition, and results of operations. In addition, the federal, state and local laws and regulations governing the use, manufacture, storage, handling and disposal of hazardous or radioactive materials and waste products may require our contractors to incur substantial compliance costs that could materially adversely affect our business, financial condition, and results of operations.

We rely on key executive officers and scientific and medical advisors, and their knowledge of our business and technical expertise would be difficult to replace.

We are highly dependent on Dr. Jonathan Lewis, our Chief Executive Officer, Caesar J. Belbel, our Executive Vice President and Chief Legal Officer and our principal scientific, regulatory, and medical advisors. Mr. Belbel's employment is governed by a written employment agreement, while our previously effective written employment agreement with Dr. Lewis expired in accordance with its terms in January 2015. Dr. Lewis and Mr. Belbel may terminate their employment with us at any time, subject, however, to certain non-compete and non-solicitation covenants which, in Dr. Lewis's case, survive the expiration of his written employment agreement in certain circumstances. The loss of the technical knowledge and management and industry expertise of Dr. Lewis and Mr. Belbel, or any of our other key personnel, could result in delays in product development, loss of customers and sales, and diversion of management resources, which could adversely affect our operating results. We do not carry key person life insurance policies on any of our officers or key employees.

If we are unable to hire additional qualified personnel, our ability to grow our business may be harmed.

We will need to hire additional qualified personnel with expertise in preclinical and clinical research and testing, government regulation, formulation and manufacturing, and eventually, sales and marketing. We compete for qualified individuals with numerous biopharmaceutical companies, universities, and other research institutions. Competition for such individuals is intense and we cannot be certain that our search for such personnel will be successful. Attracting and retaining qualified personnel will be critical to our success. If we are unable to hire additional qualified personnel, our ability to grow our business may be harmed.

We may incur substantial liabilities and may be required to limit commercialization of our products in response to product liability lawsuits.

The testing and marketing of medical products entail an inherent risk of product liability. If we cannot successfully defend ourselves against product liability claims, we may incur substantial liabilities or be required to limit commercialization of our products, if approved. Even a successful defense would require significant financial and management resources. Regardless of the merit or eventual outcome, liability claims may result in:

- decreased demand for our product candidates;
- injury to our reputation;
- withdrawal of clinical trial participants;
- withdrawal of prior governmental approvals;
- costs of related litigation;
- substantial monetary awards to patients;
- product recalls;
- loss of revenue; and
- the inability to commercialize our product candidates.

Table of Contents

We currently carry clinical trial insurance and product liability insurance. However, an inability to renew our policies or to obtain sufficient insurance at an acceptable cost could prevent or inhibit the commercialization of pharmaceutical products that we develop, alone or with collaborators.

Our business and operations would suffer in the event of system failures.

Despite the implementation of security measures, our internal computer systems and those of our current and future contractors and consultants are vulnerable to damage from computer viruses, unauthorized access, natural disasters, terrorism, war and telecommunication and electrical failures. While we are not aware of any such material system failure, accident or security breach to date, if such an event were to occur and cause interruptions in our operations, it could result in a material disruption of our development programs and our business operations. For example, the loss of clinical trial data from completed or future clinical trials could result in delays in our regulatory approval efforts and significantly increase our costs to recover or reproduce the data. Likewise, we rely on third parties to manufacture our drug candidates and conduct clinical trials, and similar events relating to their computer systems could also have a material adverse effect on our business. To the extent that any disruption or security breach were to result in a loss of, or damage to, our data or applications, or inappropriate disclosure of confidential or proprietary information, we could incur liability and the further development and commercialization of our drug candidates could be delayed.

Risks related to the clinical testing, regulatory approval and manufacturing of our product candidates

If we are unable to obtain the necessary U.S. or worldwide regulatory approvals to commercialize any product candidate, our business will suffer.

We may not be able to obtain the approvals necessary to commercialize our product candidates, or any product candidate that we may acquire or develop in the future for commercial sale. We will need FDA approval to commercialize our product candidates in the United States and approvals from regulatory authorities in foreign jurisdictions equivalent to the FDA to commercialize our product candidates in those jurisdictions. In order to obtain FDA approval of any product candidate, we must submit to the FDA a New Drug Application, or NDA, or Biologics License Application, or BLA, demonstrating that the product candidate is safe for humans and effective for its intended use. This demonstration requires significant research and animal tests, which are referred to as preclinical studies, as well as human tests, which are referred to as clinical trials. Satisfaction of the FDA's regulatory requirements typically takes many years, depending upon the type, complexity, and novelty of the product candidate, and will require substantial resources for research, development, and testing. We cannot predict whether our research, development, and clinical approaches will result in drugs that the FDA will consider safe for humans and effective for their intended uses. The FDA has substantial discretion in the drug approval process and may require us to conduct additional preclinical and clinical testing or to perform post-marketing studies. The approval process may also be delayed by changes in government regulation, future legislation, or administrative action or changes in FDA policy that occur prior to or during our regulatory review. Delays in obtaining regulatory approvals may:

- delay commercialization of, and our ability to derive product revenues from, our product candidates;
- impose costly procedures on us; and
- diminish any competitive advantages that we may otherwise enjoy.

Even if we comply with all FDA requests, the FDA may ultimately reject one or more of our NDAs or BLAs. We cannot be sure that we will ever obtain regulatory approval for any of our product candidates. Failure to obtain FDA approval for our product candidates will severely undermine our business by leaving us without a saleable

Table of Contents

product, and therefore without any potential revenue source, until another product candidate can be developed. There is no guarantee that we will ever be able to develop or acquire another product candidate or that we will obtain FDA approval if we are able to do so.

In foreign jurisdictions, we similarly must receive approval from applicable regulatory authorities before we can commercialize any drugs. Foreign regulatory approval processes generally include all of the risks associated with the FDA approval procedures described above.

Our product candidates are in various stages of clinical trials, which are very expensive and time-consuming. We cannot be certain when we will be able to submit an NDA or BLA to the FDA and any failure or delay in completing clinical trials for our product candidates could harm our business.

Our product candidates are in various stages of development and require extensive clinical testing. Notwithstanding our current clinical trial plans for each of our existing product candidates, we may not be able to commence additional trials or see results from these trials within our anticipated timelines. As such, we cannot predict with any certainty if or when we might submit an NDA or BLA for regulatory approval of our product candidates or whether such an NDA or BLA will be accepted. Because we do not anticipate generating revenues unless and until we submit one or more NDAs or BLAs and thereafter obtain requisite FDA approvals, the timing of our NDA or BLA submissions and FDA determinations regarding approval thereof, will directly affect if and when we are able to generate revenues.

Our product candidates may cause undesirable side effects or have other properties that could delay or prevent their regulatory approval, limit the commercial profile of an approved label, or result in significant negative consequences following any potential marketing approval.

As with many pharmaceutical and biological products, treatment with our product candidates may produce undesirable side effects or adverse reactions or events. If our product candidates or similar products or product candidates under development by third parties demonstrate unacceptable adverse events, we may be required to halt or delay further clinical development of our product candidates. The FDA, the EMA or other foreign regulatory authorities could order us to cease further development of or deny approval of our product candidates for any or all targeted indications. The product-related side effects could affect patient recruitment or the ability of enrolled patients to complete the trial or result in potential product liability claims. Any of these occurrences may harm our business, financial condition and prospects significantly.

The results of our clinical trials may not support our product candidate claims.

Even if our clinical trials are completed as planned, we cannot be certain that their results will support approval of our product candidates. The FDA normally expects two randomized, well-controlled Phase 3 pivotal studies in support of approval of an NDA or BLA. Success in preclinical testing and early clinical trials does not ensure that later clinical trials will be successful, and we cannot be certain that the results of later clinical trials will replicate the results of prior clinical trials and preclinical testing. For example, despite positive findings in earlier clinical trials, our product candidate palifosfamide failed to meet the primary endpoints of the Phase 3 PICASSO 3 trial, causing us to suspend clinical development of palifosfamide in soft tissue sarcoma. The clinical trial process may fail to demonstrate that our product candidates are safe for humans and effective for the indicated uses. This failure would cause us to abandon a product candidate and may delay development of other product candidates. Any delay in, or termination of, our clinical trials will delay the submission of our NDAs or BLAs with the FDA and, ultimately, our ability to commercialize our product candidates and generate product revenues. In addition, our clinical trials involve small patient populations. Because of the small sample size, the results of these clinical trials may not be indicative of future results.

Table of Contents

Our synthetic biology product candidates are based on a novel technology, which makes it difficult to predict the time and cost of product candidate development and subsequently obtaining regulatory approval. Currently, no gene therapy products have been approved in the United States and only one product has been approved in Europe.

We have recently focused our product research and development efforts on our synthetic biology product candidates under our Channel Agreement with Intrexon. These products, including Ad-RTS-IL-12+ veledimex, are based on gene therapy technology. Due to the novelty of this medical technology, there can be no assurance that any development problems we experience in the future related to our synthetic biology platform will not cause significant delays or unanticipated costs, or that such development problems can be solved. We may also experience unanticipated problems or delays in expanding our manufacturing capacity or transferring our manufacturing process to commercial partners, which may prevent us from completing our clinical studies or commercializing our synthetic biology product candidates on a timely or profitable basis, if at all.

In addition, the clinical study requirements of the FDA, the EMA and other regulatory agencies and the criteria these regulators use to determine the safety and efficacy of a product candidate vary substantially according to the type, complexity, novelty and intended use and market of the potential products. The regulatory approval process for novel product candidates such as ours can be more expensive and take longer than for other, better known or extensively studied pharmaceutical or other product candidates. Currently, only one gene therapy product, UniQure's Glybera, which received marketing authorization from the EMA in 2012, has been approved in Europe but has not yet been launched for commercial sale, which makes it difficult to determine how long it will take or how much it will cost to obtain regulatory approvals for our product candidates in either the United States or Europe. Approvals by the EMA may not be indicative of what the FDA may require for approval.

Regulatory requirements governing gene and cell therapy products have changed frequently and may continue to change in the future. For example, the FDA has established the Office of Cellular, Tissue and Gene Therapies within its Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, or CBER, to consolidate the review of gene therapy and related products, and the Cellular, Tissue and Gene Therapies Advisory Committee to advise CBER on its review. Gene therapy clinical studies conducted at institutions that receive funding for recombinant DNA research from the U.S. National Institutes of Health, or the NIH, are also subject to review by the NIH Office of Biotechnology Activities' Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee, or the RAC. Although the FDA decides whether individual gene therapy protocols may proceed, the RAC review process can impede the initiation of a clinical trial, even if the FDA has reviewed the trial and approved its initiation. Conversely, the FDA can put an IND on clinical hold even if the RAC has provided a favorable review. For example, our planned Phase 1 clinical trial of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex, in subjects with recurrent or progressive high grade gliomas (brain cancer) received approval from the NIH RAC in December 2013, but the FDA requested additional nonclinical information prior to permitting clinical study initiation, which we are currently generating. Also, before a clinical trial can begin at an NIH-funded institution, that institution's institutional review board, or IRB, and its Institutional Biosafety Committee will have to review the proposed clinical trial to assess the safety of the trial. In addition, adverse developments in clinical trials of gene therapy products conducted by others may cause the FDA or other regulatory bodies to change the requirements for approval of any of our product candidates.

These regulatory review committees and advisory groups and the new guidelines they promulgate may lengthen the regulatory review process, require us to perform additional studies, increase our development costs, lead to changes in regulatory positions and interpretations, delay or prevent approval and commercialization of these treatment candidates or lead to significant post-approval limitations or restrictions. As we advance our synthetic biology product candidates, we will be required to consult with these regulatory and advisory groups, and comply with applicable guidelines. If we fail to do so, we may be required to delay or discontinue development of our product candidates. These additional processes may result in a review and

Table of Contents

approval process that is longer than we otherwise would have expected for oncology product candidates. Delay or failure to obtain, or unexpected costs in obtaining, the regulatory approval necessary to bring a potential product to market could decrease our ability to generate sufficient product revenue to maintain our business.

Because we are dependent upon clinical research institutions and other contractors for clinical testing and for research and development activities, the results of our clinical trials and such research activities are, to a certain extent, beyond our control.

We materially rely upon independent investigators and collaborators, such as universities and medical institutions, to conduct our preclinical and clinical trials under agreements with us. These collaborators are not our employees and we cannot control the amount or timing of resources that they devote to our programs. These investigators may not assign as great a priority to our programs or pursue them as diligently as we would if we were undertaking such programs ourselves. If outside collaborators fail to devote sufficient time and resources to our drug development programs, or if their performance is substandard, the approval of our FDA applications, if any, and our introduction of new products, if any, will be delayed. These collaborators may also have relationships with other commercial entities, some of whom may compete with us. If our collaborators assist our competitors to our detriment, our competitive position would be harmed.

Our reliance on third parties to formulate and manufacture our product candidates exposes us to a number of risks that may delay the development, regulatory approval and commercialization of our products or result in higher product costs.

We do not have experience in drug formulation or manufacturing of drugs or biologics and do not intend to establish our own manufacturing facilities. Although we will work closely with and rely upon Intrexon on the manufacturing and scale-up of Intrexon product candidates, we lack the resources and expertise to formulate or manufacture our own product candidates. We currently are contracting for the manufacture of our product candidates. We intend to contract with one or more manufacturers to manufacture, supply, store, and distribute drug supplies for our clinical trials. If a product candidate we develop or acquire in the future receives FDA approval, we will rely on one or more third-party contractors or Intrexon to manufacture our products. Our anticipated future reliance on a limited number of third-party manufacturers exposes us to the following risks:

We may be unable to identify manufacturers on acceptable terms or at all because the number of potential manufacturers is limited and the FDA must approve any replacement contractor. This approval would require new testing and compliance inspections. In addition, a new manufacturer would have to be educated in, or develop substantially equivalent processes for, production of our products after receipt of FDA approval, if any.

Our third-party manufacturers might be unable to formulate and manufacture our products in the volume and of the quality required to meet our clinical needs and commercial needs, if any.

Our future contract manufacturers may not perform as agreed or may not remain in the contract manufacturing business for the time required to supply our clinical trials or to successfully produce, store, and distribute our products.

Drug manufacturers are subject to ongoing periodic unannounced inspection by the FDA, the Drug Enforcement Administration and corresponding state and foreign agencies to ensure strict compliance with current good manufacturing practices, or cGMP, and other government regulations and corresponding foreign standards. We do not have control over third-party manufacturers' compliance with these regulations and standards.

Table of Contents

If any third-party manufacturer makes improvements in the manufacturing process for our products, we may not own, or may have to share, the intellectual property rights to the innovation.

Our third-party manufacturers may not be able to comply with cGMP regulations or similar regulatory requirements outside the United States. Our failure, or the failure of our third-party manufacturers, to comply with applicable regulations could result in sanctions being imposed on us, including clinical holds, fines, injunctions, civil penalties, delays, suspension or withdrawal of approvals, license revocation, seizures or recalls of drug candidates or products, operating restrictions and criminal prosecutions, any of which could significantly and adversely affect supplies of our products.

Each of these risks could delay our clinical trials, the approval, if any, of our product candidates by the FDA or the commercialization of our product candidates or result in higher costs or deprive us of potential product revenues.

Any drug candidate for which we obtain marketing approval could be subject to post-marketing restrictions or withdrawal from the market and we may be subject to penalties if we fail to comply with regulatory requirements or if we experience unanticipated problems with our products, when and if any of them are approved.

Any drug candidate for which we obtain marketing approval, along with the manufacturing processes, post-approval clinical data, labeling, advertising and promotional activities for such product, will be subject to continual requirements of and review by the FDA and other regulatory authorities. These requirements include, among other things, submissions of safety and other post-marketing information and reports, registration and listing requirements, cGMP requirements relating to manufacturing, quality control, quality assurance and corresponding maintenance of records and documents, requirements regarding the distribution of samples to physicians and recordkeeping. Even if marketing approval of a drug candidate is granted, the approval may be subject to limitations on the indicated uses for which the product may be marketed or to the conditions of approval, including the requirement to implement a risk evaluation and mitigation strategy, or REMS, which could include requirements for a restricted distribution system. If any of our drug candidates receives marketing approval, the accompanying label may limit the approved use of our drug, which could limit sales of the product.

The FDA may also impose requirements for costly post-marketing studies or clinical trials and surveillance to monitor the safety or efficacy of our approved products. The FDA closely regulates the post-approval marketing and promotion of drugs to ensure drugs are marketed only for the approved indications and in accordance with the provisions of the approved labeling. The FDA imposes stringent restrictions on manufacturers' communications regarding off-label use and if we market our products outside of their approved indications, we may be subject to enforcement action for off-label marketing. Violations of the FDCA relating to the promotion of prescription drugs may lead to investigations alleging violations of federal and state health care fraud and abuse laws, as well as state consumer protection laws.

In addition, later discovery of previously unknown adverse events or other problems with our products, manufacturers or manufacturing processes, or failure to comply with regulatory requirements, may yield various results, including:

- litigation involving patients taking our drug;
- restrictions on such products, manufacturers or manufacturing processes;
- restrictions on the labeling or marketing of a product;
- restrictions on product distribution or use;
- requirements to conduct post-marketing studies or clinical trials;

Table of Contents

warning letters;
withdrawal of the products from the market;
refusal to approve pending applications or supplements to approved applications that we submit;
recall of products;
fines, restitution or disgorgement of profits or revenues;
suspension or withdrawal of marketing approvals;
damage to relationships with existing and potential collaborators;
unfavorable press coverage and damage to our reputation;
refusal to permit the import or export of our products;
product seizure; or
injunctions or the imposition of civil or criminal penalties.

Noncompliance with similar European Union requirements regarding safety monitoring or pharmacovigilance can also result in significant financial penalties. Similarly, failure to comply with U.S. and foreign regulatory requirements regarding the development of products for pediatric populations and the protection of personal health information can also lead to significant penalties and sanctions.

Risks related to our ability to commercialize our product candidates

If we are unable either to create sales, marketing and distribution capabilities or enter into agreements with third parties to perform these functions, we will be unable to commercialize our product candidates successfully.

We currently have no marketing, sales, or distribution capabilities. If and when we become reasonably certain that we will be able to commercialize our current or future product candidates, we anticipate allocating resources to the marketing, sales and distribution of our proposed products in North America and in certain other countries; however, we cannot assure that we will be able to market, sell, and distribute our products successfully. Our future success also may depend, in part, on our ability to enter into and maintain collaborative relationships for such capabilities and to encourage the collaborator's strategic interest in the products under development, and such collaborator's ability to successfully market and sell any such products. Although we intend to pursue certain collaborative arrangements regarding the sale and marketing of certain of our product candidates, there are no assurances that we will be able to establish or maintain collaborative arrangements or, if we are able to do so, whether we would be able to conduct our own sales efforts. There can also be no assurance that we will be able to establish or maintain relationships with third-party collaborators or develop in-house sales and distribution capabilities. To the extent that we depend on third parties for marketing and distribution, any revenues we receive will depend upon the efforts of such third parties, and there can be no assurance that such efforts will be successful. In addition, there can also be no assurance that we will be able to market and sell our product candidates in the United States or overseas.

If we are not able to partner with a third party and are not successful in recruiting sales and marketing personnel or in building a sales and marketing infrastructure, we will have difficulty commercializing our product candidates, which would harm our business. If we rely on pharmaceutical or biotechnology companies with established distribution systems to market our products, we will need to establish and maintain partnership arrangements, and we may not be able to enter into these arrangements on acceptable terms or at all. To the extent that we enter into co-promotion or other arrangements, any revenues we receive will depend upon the efforts of third parties that may not be successful and that will be only partially in our control.

Table of Contents

If we cannot compete successfully for market share against other drug companies, we may not achieve sufficient product revenues and our business will suffer.

The market for our product candidates is characterized by intense competition and rapid technological advances. If a product candidate receives FDA approval, it will compete with a number of existing and future drugs and therapies developed, manufactured and marketed by others. Existing or future competing products may provide greater therapeutic convenience or clinical or other benefits for a specific indication than our products, or may offer comparable performance at a lower cost. If our products fail to capture and maintain market share, we may not achieve sufficient product revenues and our business will suffer.

We will compete against fully integrated pharmaceutical companies and smaller companies that are collaborating with larger pharmaceutical companies, academic institutions, government agencies and other public and private research organizations. Many of these competitors have products already approved or in development. In addition, many of these competitors, either alone or together with their collaborative partners, operate larger research and development programs or have substantially greater financial resources than we do, as well as significantly greater experience in:

- developing drugs and biopharmaceuticals;
- undertaking preclinical testing and human clinical trials;
- obtaining FDA and other regulatory approvals of drugs and biopharmaceuticals;
- formulating and manufacturing drugs and biopharmaceuticals; and
- launching, marketing, and selling drugs and biopharmaceuticals.

Our commercial opportunity could be reduced or eliminated if our competitors develop and commercialize products that are more effective, have fewer or less severe side effects, are more convenient or are less expensive than any products that we may develop. Our competitors also may obtain FDA or other regulatory approval for their products more rapidly than we may obtain approval for ours, which could result in our competitors establishing a strong market position before we are able to enter the market. In addition, our ability to compete may be affected in many cases by insurers or other third-party payors seeking to encourage the use of generic products.

If physicians and patients do not accept and use our product candidates, our ability to generate revenue from sales of our products will be materially impaired.

Even if the FDA and/or foreign equivalents thereof approve our product candidates, physicians and patients may not accept and use them. Acceptance and use of our products will depend upon a number of factors including:

- perceptions by members of the healthcare community, including physicians, about the safety and effectiveness of our drugs;

- pharmacological benefit and cost-effectiveness of our products relative to competing products;

- availability of coverage and adequate reimbursement for our products from government or other healthcare payors;

- effectiveness of marketing and distribution efforts by us and our licensees and distributors, if any; and

- the price at which we sell our products.

Table of Contents

Because we expect sales of our current product candidates, if approved, to generate substantially all of our product revenues for the foreseeable future, the failure of a drug to find market acceptance would harm our business and could require us to seek additional financing in order to fund the development of future product candidates.

Our ability to generate product revenues will be diminished if our drugs do not obtain coverage or adequate reimbursement from payors.

Our ability to commercialize our drugs, alone or with collaborators, will depend in part on the extent to which coverage and reimbursement will be available from government authorities, private managed care organizations and health insurers and other third-party payors.

Patients who are prescribed medicine for the treatment of their conditions generally rely on third-party payors to reimburse all or part of the costs associated with their prescription drugs. Coverage and adequate reimbursement from governmental healthcare programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, and commercial payors is critical to new product acceptance. Coverage decisions may depend upon clinical and economic standards that disfavor new drug products when more established or lower cost therapeutic alternatives are already available or subsequently become available. Even if we obtain coverage for our product candidates, the resulting reimbursement payment rates might not be adequate or may require co-payments that patients find unacceptably high. Patients are unlikely to use our product candidates unless coverage is provided and reimbursement is adequate to cover a significant portion of the cost of our product candidates.

In addition, the market for our product candidates for which we may receive regulatory approval will depend significantly on access to third-party payors' drug formularies, or lists of medications for which third-party payors provide coverage and reimbursement, which might not include all of the FDA-approved drugs for a particular indication. The industry competition to be included in such formularies often leads to downward pricing pressures on pharmaceutical companies. Also, third-party payors may refuse to include a particular branded drug in their formularies or otherwise restrict patient access to a branded drug when a less costly generic equivalent or other alternative is available.

Third-party payors, whether foreign or domestic, or governmental or commercial, are developing increasingly sophisticated methods of controlling healthcare costs. In addition, in the United States, no uniform policy of coverage and reimbursement for drug products exists among third-party payors. Therefore, coverage and reimbursement for drug products can differ significantly from payor to payor. As a result, the coverage determination process is often a time-consuming and costly process that requires us to provide scientific and clinical support for the use of our products to each payor separately, with no assurance that approval will be obtained. If we are unable to obtain coverage of and adequate payment levels for our product candidates from third-party payors, physicians may limit how much or under what circumstances they will prescribe or administer them and patients may decline to purchase them. This in turn could affect our ability to successfully commercialize our products and impact our profitability, results of operations, financial condition, and future success.

In addition, in many foreign countries, particularly the countries of the European Union, the pricing of prescription drugs is subject to government control. In some non-U.S. jurisdictions, the proposed pricing for a drug must be approved before it may be lawfully marketed. The requirements governing drug pricing vary widely from country to country. For example, the EU provides options for its member states to restrict the range of medicinal products for which their national health insurance systems provide reimbursement and to control the prices of medicinal products for human use. A member state may approve a specific price for the medicinal product or it may instead adopt a system of direct or indirect controls on the profitability of the company placing the medicinal product on the market. We may face competition for our product candidates

Table of Contents

from lower-priced products in foreign countries that have placed price controls on pharmaceutical products. In addition, there may be importation of foreign products that compete with our own products, which could negatively impact our profitability.

Healthcare legislative reform measures may have a material adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

In both the United States and certain foreign jurisdictions, there have been a number of legislative and regulatory enactments in recent years that change the healthcare system in ways that could impact our future ability to sell our product candidates profitably.

Furthermore, there have been and continue to be a number of initiatives at the federal and state level that seek to reduce healthcare costs. Most significantly, in March 2010, President Obama signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act, as amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act, or collectively the PPACA, which includes measures that significantly change the way healthcare is financed by both governmental and private insurers. Among the provisions of the PPACA of importance to the pharmaceutical industry are the following:

an annual, nondeductible fee on any entity that manufactures or imports certain branded prescription drugs and biologic agents, apportioned among these entities according to their market share in certain government healthcare programs;

increased the statutory minimum rebates a manufacturer must pay under the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program to 23.1% and 13% of the average manufacturer price for most branded and generic drugs, respectively;

a new Medicare Part D coverage gap discount program, in which manufacturers must agree to offer 50% point-of-sale discounts off negotiated prices of applicable brand drugs to eligible beneficiaries during their coverage gap period, as a condition for the manufacturer's outpatient drugs to be covered under Medicare Part D;

an extension of manufacturers' Medicaid rebate liability to covered drugs dispensed to individuals who are enrolled in Medicaid managed care organizations;

new methodologies by which rebates owed by manufacturers under the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program are calculated for drugs that are inhaled, infused, instilled, implanted or injected, and for drugs that are line extensions;

expansion of eligibility criteria for Medicaid programs by, among other things, allowing states to offer Medicaid coverage to additional individuals with income at or below 133% of the Federal Poverty Level, thereby potentially increasing both the volume of sales and manufacturers' Medicaid rebate liability;

expansion of the entities eligible for discounts under the Public Health Service pharmaceutical pricing program;

a new requirement to annually report drug samples that certain manufacturers and authorized distributors provide to practitioners;

expansion of healthcare fraud and abuse laws, including the False Claims Act and the Anti-Kickback Statute, new government investigative powers, and enhanced penalties for noncompliance;

a licensure framework for follow-on biologic products;

Table of Contents

a new Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute to oversee, identify priorities in, and conduct comparative clinical effectiveness research, along with funding for such research;

creation of the Independent Payment Advisory Board which has authority to recommend certain changes to the Medicare program that could result in reduced payments for prescription drugs and those recommendations could have the effect of law even if Congress does not act on the recommendations; and

establishment of a Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, or CMS, to test innovative payment and service delivery models to lower Medicare and Medicaid spending, potentially including prescription drug spending. In addition, other legislative changes have been proposed and adopted since the PPACA was enacted. For example, in August 2011, President Obama signed into law the Budget Control Act of 2011, which, among other things, created the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to recommend proposals in spending reductions to Congress. The Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction did not achieve its targeted deficit reduction of at least \$1.2 trillion for the years 2013 through 2021, triggering the legislation's automatic reductions to several government programs. These reductions include aggregate reductions to Medicare payments to providers of 2% per fiscal year, which went into effect on April 1, 2013, and, due to subsequent legislative amendments, will stay in effect through 2024 unless additional Congressional action is taken. In January 2013, President Obama signed into law the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, which, among other things, further reduced Medicare payments to several providers and increased the statute of limitations period for the government to recover overpayments to providers from three to five years. The full impact of these new laws, as well as laws and other reform and cost containment measures that may be proposed and adopted in the future, remains uncertain, but may result in additional reductions in Medicare and other healthcare funding, which could have a material adverse effect on our future customers and accordingly, our ability to generate revenue, attain profitability, or commercialize our products.

If we fail to comply with federal and state healthcare laws, including fraud and abuse and health information privacy and security laws, we could face substantial penalties and our business, results of operations, financial condition and prospects could be adversely affected.

As a pharmaceutical company, even though we do not and will not control referrals of healthcare services or bill directly to Medicare, Medicaid or other third-party payors, certain federal and state healthcare laws and regulations pertaining to fraud and abuse and patients' rights are and will be applicable to our business. For example, we could be subject to healthcare fraud and abuse and patient privacy regulation by both the federal government and the states in which we conduct our business. The laws that may affect our ability to operate include, among others:

the federal Anti-Kickback Statute, which constrains our business activities, including our marketing practices, educational programs, pricing policies, and relationships with healthcare providers or other entities, by prohibiting, among other things, soliciting, receiving, offering or paying remuneration, directly or indirectly, to induce, or in return for, either the referral of an individual or the purchase or recommendation of an item or service reimbursable under a federal healthcare program, such as the Medicare and Medicaid programs;

federal civil and criminal false claims laws and civil monetary penalty laws, which prohibit, among other things, individuals or entities from knowingly presenting, or causing to be presented, claims for payment from Medicare, Medicaid, or other third-party payors that are false or fraudulent;

the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, or HIPAA, which created new federal criminal statutes that prohibit, among other things, executing a scheme to defraud any healthcare benefit program or making false statements relating to healthcare matters;

Table of Contents

HIPAA, as amended by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act of 2009, or HITECH, and its implementing regulations, which imposes certain requirements relating to the privacy, security and transmission of individually identifiable health information;

requirements to report annually to CMS certain financial arrangements with physicians and teaching hospitals, as defined in the PPACA and its implementing regulations, including reporting any transfer of value made or distributed to teaching hospitals, prescribers, and other healthcare providers and reporting any ownership and investment interests held by physicians and their immediate family members and applicable group purchasing organizations during the preceding calendar year; and

state and foreign law equivalents of each of the above federal laws, such as anti-kickback and false claims laws which may apply to items or services reimbursed by any third-party payor, including commercial insurers; state laws that require pharmaceutical companies to comply with the industry's voluntary compliance guidelines and the applicable compliance guidance promulgated by the federal government that otherwise restricts certain payments that may be made to healthcare providers and entities; state laws that require drug manufacturers to report information related to payments and other transfer of value to physicians and other healthcare providers and entities; and state and foreign laws governing the privacy and security of health information in certain circumstances, many of which differ from each other in significant ways and often are not preempted by HIPAA, thus complicating compliance efforts.

Because of the breadth of these laws and the narrowness of the statutory exceptions and safe harbors available, it is possible that some of our business activities could be subject to challenge under one or more of such laws. In addition, recent health care reform legislation has further strengthened these laws. For example, the PPACA, among other things, amends the intent requirement of the federal anti-kickback and certain criminal healthcare fraud statutes. A person or entity no longer needs to have actual knowledge of this statute or specific intent to violate it. Moreover, the PPACA provides that the government may assert that a claim including items or services resulting from a violation of the federal anti-kickback statute constitutes a false or fraudulent claim for purposes of the False Claims Act.

To the extent that any of our product candidates is ultimately sold in a foreign country, we may be subject to similar foreign laws and regulations.

If we or our operations are found to be in violation of any of the laws described above or any other governmental regulations that apply to us, we may be subject to penalties, including administrative, civil and criminal penalties, damages, fines, exclusion from participation in United States federal or state health care programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, and the curtailment or restructuring of our operations, any of which could materially adversely affect our ability to operate our business and our financial results. Although compliance programs can mitigate the risk of investigation and prosecution for violations of these laws, the risks cannot be entirely eliminated. Any action against us for violation of these laws, even if we successfully defend against it, could cause us to incur significant legal expenses and divert our management's attention from the operation of our business. Moreover, achieving and sustaining compliance with applicable federal and state privacy, security and fraud laws may prove costly.

Our ability to use net operating loss carryforwards and research tax credits to reduce future tax payments may be limited or restricted.

We have generated significant net operating loss carryforwards, or NOLs, and research and development tax credits, or R&D credits, as a result of our incurrence of losses and our conduct of research activities since inception. We generally are able to carry NOLs and R&D credits forward to reduce our tax liability in future years. However, our ability to utilize the NOLs and R&D credits is subject to the rules of Sections 382 and 383 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Code), respectively. Those sections generally restrict the

Table of Contents

use of NOLs and R&D credits after an ownership change. An ownership change occurs if, among other things, the stockholders (or specified groups of stockholders) who own or have owned, directly or indirectly, 5% or more of a corporation's common stock or are otherwise treated as 5% stockholders under Section 382 of the Code and the United States Treasury Department regulations promulgated thereunder increase their aggregate percentage ownership of that corporation's stock by more than 50 percentage points over the lowest percentage of the stock owned by these stockholders over the applicable testing period. In the event of an ownership change, Section 382 imposes an annual limitation on the amount of taxable income a corporation may offset with NOL carry forwards and Section 383 imposes an annual limitation on the amount of tax a corporation may offset with business credit (including the R&D credit) carry forwards. Any unused annual limitation may be carried over to later years until the applicable expiration date for the respective NOL or R&D credit carry forwards. We may have experienced an ownership change within the meaning of Section 382 in the past and there can be no assurance that we have not experienced additional ownership changes, or that we will not experience an ownership change as a result of this offering. As a result, our NOLs and business (including the R&D credit) may be subject to limitations and we may be required to pay taxes earlier and in larger amounts than would be the case if our NOLs or R&D credits were freely usable.

Our synthetic biology product candidates may face competition in the future from follow-on biologics.

With the enactment of the Biologics Price Competition and Innovation Act of 2009, or BPCIA, as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, an abbreviated pathway for the approval of follow-on biological products was created. The new abbreviated regulatory pathway establishes legal authority for the FDA to review and approve biosimilar biologics, including the possible designation of a biosimilar as interchangeable with an existing brand product. Under the BPCIA, an application for a biosimilar product cannot be approved by the FDA until 12 years after the original branded product was approved under a BLA. This data exclusivity does not prevent another company from developing a product that is highly similar to the original branded product, generating its own data and seeking approval. Data exclusivity only assures that another company cannot rely upon the data within the innovator's application to support the biosimilar product's approval.

In his proposed budget for fiscal year 2014, President Obama proposed to cut this 12-year period of exclusivity down to seven years. He also proposed to prohibit additional periods of exclusivity due to minor changes in product formulations, a practice often referred to as "evergreening." It is possible that Congress may take these or other measures to reduce or eliminate periods of exclusivity.

The new law is complex and is only beginning to be interpreted and implemented by the FDA. As a result, its ultimate impact is subject to uncertainty, and could have a material adverse effect on the future commercial prospects for our biological products. Since enactment of the BCPIA, the FDA has issued several draft guidance documents discussing the biosimilar pathway, but to date, no biosimilar or interchangeable product has been approved. Although it is unclear what final implementation of the BCPIA will entail, such FDA implementation could have a material adverse effect on the future commercial prospects for our product candidates.

Risks related to our intellectual property

If we or our licensors fail to adequately protect or enforce our intellectual property rights or secure rights to patents of others, the value of our intellectual property rights would diminish and our ability to successfully commercialize our products may be impaired.

Our success, competitive position, and future revenues will depend in part on our ability and the abilities of our licensors to obtain and maintain patent protection for our products, methods, processes and other technologies, to preserve our trade secrets, to prevent third parties from infringing on our proprietary rights, and to operate without infringing the proprietary rights of third parties.

Table of Contents

To date, we have exclusive rights to certain United States and foreign intellectual property with respect to our small molecule product candidates, with respect to the Intrexon technology, including the existing Intrexon product candidates, and with respect to CAR-T cell, NK and TCR cell therapies arising from the laboratory of Laurence Cooper, M.D., Ph.D., professor of pediatrics at MD Anderson. Under our Channel Agreement with Intrexon, Intrexon has the sole right to conduct and control the filings, prosecution and maintenance of the patents and patent applications licensed to us. Although under the agreement Intrexon has agreed to consider in good faith and consult with us regarding any comments we may have regarding these patents and patent applications, we cannot guarantee that our comments will be solicited or followed. Under the MD Anderson License Agreement, future filings and applications require the agreement of each of MD Anderson, Intrexon and us, and MD Anderson has the right to control the preparation and filing of additional patent applications unless the parties agree that we or Intrexon may prosecute the application directly. Although under the agreement MD Anderson has agreed to review and incorporate any reasonable comments that we or Intrexon may have regarding these patents and patent applications, we cannot guarantee that our comments will be solicited or followed. Without direct control of the channel program patents and patent applications, we are dependent on Intrexon or MD Anderson, as applicable, to keep us advised of prosecution, particularly in foreign jurisdictions where prosecution information may not be publicly available. We anticipate that we, Intrexon and MD Anderson will file additional patent applications both in the United States and in other countries. However, we cannot predict or guarantee:

the degree and range of protection any patents will afford us against competitors, including whether third parties will find ways to invalidate or otherwise circumvent our patents;

if and when patents will be issued;

whether or not others will obtain patents claiming subject matter related to or relevant to our product candidates; or

whether we will need to initiate litigation or administrative proceedings that may be costly whether we win or lose.

The patent prosecution process is expensive and time-consuming, and we may not be able to file and prosecute all necessary or desirable patent applications at a reasonable cost, in a timely manner, or in all jurisdictions. It is also possible that we will fail to identify patentable aspects of our research and development output before it is too late to obtain patent protection. Moreover, in some circumstances, we do not have the right to control the preparation, filing and prosecution of patent applications, or to maintain the patents, covering technology that we license from third parties. We may also require the cooperation of our licensors in order to enforce the licensed patent rights, and such cooperation may not be provided. Therefore, these patents and applications may not be prosecuted and enforced in a manner consistent with the best interests of our business.

The patent position of biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies generally is highly uncertain, involves complex legal and factual questions and has in recent years been the subject of much litigation. In addition, the laws of foreign countries may not protect our rights to the same extent as the laws of the United States and we may fail to seek or obtain patent protection in all major markets. For example, European patent law restricts the patentability of methods of treatment of the human body more than United States law does. Publications of discoveries in the scientific literature often lag behind the actual discoveries, and patent applications in the United States and other jurisdictions are typically not published until 18 months after filing, or in some cases not at all.

Changes in patent laws or in interpretations of patent laws in the United States and other countries may diminish the value of our intellectual property or narrow the scope of our patent protection. In September 2011, the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act, or the Leahy-Smith Act, was signed into law, resulting in a number of

Table of Contents

significant changes to United States patent law. These changes include provisions that affect the way patent applications will be prosecuted and may also affect patent litigation. In addition, the United States Supreme Court has ruled on several patent cases in recent years, either narrowing the scope of patent protection available in certain circumstances or weakening the rights of patent owners in certain situations. This combination of events has created uncertainty with respect to the value of patents, once obtained, and with regard to our ability to obtain patents in the future. As the U.S. PTO continues to implement the Leahy-Smith Act, and as the federal courts have the opportunity to interpret the Leahy-Smith Act, the laws and regulations governing patents, and the rules regarding patent procurement could change in unpredictable ways that would weaken our ability to obtain new patents or to enforce our existing patents and patents that we might obtain in the future.

Certain technologies utilized in our research and development programs are already in the public domain. Moreover, a number of our competitors have developed technologies, filed patent applications or obtained patents on technologies, compositions and methods of use that are related to our business and may cover or conflict with our owned or licensed patent applications, technologies or product candidates. Such conflicts could limit the scope of the patents that we may be able to obtain or may result in the rejection of claims in our patent applications. Because patent applications in the United States and many foreign jurisdictions are typically not published until eighteen months after filing, or in some cases not at all, and because publications of discoveries in the scientific literature often lag behind actual discoveries, neither we nor our licensors can be certain that others have not filed or maintained patent applications for technology used by us or covered by our pending patent applications without our being aware of these applications. Therefore, we cannot know with certainty whether we were the first to make the inventions claimed in our owned patents or pending patent applications, or that we were the first to file for patent protection of such inventions, nor can we know whether those from whom we license patents were the first to make the inventions claimed or were the first to file. As a result, the issuance, scope, validity, enforceability and commercial value of our patent rights are highly uncertain. Our pending and future patent applications may not result in patents being issued which protect our technology or products, in whole or in part, or which effectively prevent others from commercializing competitive technologies and products. Changes in either the patent laws or interpretation of the patent laws in the United States and other countries may diminish the value of our patents or narrow the scope of our patent protection. In addition, our own earlier filed patents and applications or those of Intrexon may limit the scope of later patents we obtain or may result in the rejection of claims in our later filed patent applications. If third parties filed patent applications or obtained patents on technologies, compositions and methods of use that are related to our business and that cover or conflict with our owned or licensed patent applications, technologies or product candidates, we may be required to challenge such protection, terminate or modify our programs impacted by such protection or obtain licenses from such third parties, which might not be available on acceptable terms, or at all.

Even if our owned and licensed patent applications issue as patents, they may not issue in a form that will provide us with any meaningful protection, prevent competitors from competing with us or otherwise provide us with any competitive advantage. Our competitors may be able to circumvent our owned or licensed patents by developing similar or alternative technologies or products in a non-infringing manner.

The issuance of a patent is not conclusive as to its inventorship, scope, validity or enforceability, and our owned and licensed patents may be challenged in the courts or patent offices in the United States and abroad. Such challenges may result in loss of exclusivity or freedom to operate or in patent claims being narrowed, invalidated or held unenforceable, in whole or in part, which could limit our ability to stop others from using or commercializing similar or identical technology and products, or limit the duration of the patent protection of our technology and products. Given the amount of time required for the development, testing and regulatory

Table of Contents

review of new drug candidates, patents protecting such candidates might expire before or shortly after such candidates are commercialized. As a result, our owned and licensed patent portfolio may not provide us with sufficient rights to exclude others from commercializing products similar or identical to ours.

If we are unable to protect the confidentiality of our trade secrets, our business and competitive position would be harmed.

Our success also depends upon the skills, knowledge, and experience of our scientific and technical personnel, our consultants and advisors, as well as our licensors and contractors. To help protect our proprietary know-how and our inventions for which patents may be unobtainable or difficult to obtain, and to maintain our competitive position, we rely on trade secret protection and confidentiality agreements. To this end, it is our general policy to require our employees, consultants, advisors, and contractors to enter into agreements that prohibit the disclosure of confidential information and, where applicable, require disclosure and assignment to us of the ideas, developments, discoveries, and inventions important to our business. These agreements may not provide adequate protection for our trade secrets, know-how or other proprietary information in the event of any unauthorized use or disclosure or the lawful development by others of such information. Moreover, we may not be able to obtain adequate remedies for any breaches of these agreements. Our trade secrets may also be obtained by third parties by other means, such as breaches of our physical or computer security systems. Enforcing a claim that a party illegally disclosed or misappropriated a trade secret is difficult, expensive and time-consuming, and the outcome is unpredictable. In addition, some courts inside and outside the United States are less willing or unwilling to protect trade secrets. If any of our trade secrets were to be lawfully obtained or independently developed by a competitor, we would have no right to prevent them, or those to whom they communicate it, from using that technology or information to compete with us. If any of our trade secrets, know-how or other proprietary information is disclosed, the value of our trade secrets, know-how and other proprietary rights would be significantly impaired and our business and competitive position would suffer.

Third-party claims of intellectual property infringement would require us to spend significant time and money and could prevent us from developing or commercializing our products.

In order to protect or enforce patent rights, we, or Intrexon, may initiate patent infringement litigation against third parties. Similarly, we may be sued by others for patent infringement. We also may become subject to proceedings conducted in the U.S. PTO, including interference proceedings to determine the priority or derivation of inventions, or post-grant review, inter partes review, or reexamination proceedings reviewing the patentability of our patented claims. In addition, any foreign patents that are granted may become subject to opposition, nullity, or revocation proceedings in foreign jurisdictions having such proceedings. The defense and prosecution, if necessary, of intellectual property actions are costly and divert technical and management personnel away from their normal responsibilities.

Our commercial success depends upon our ability, and the ability of our collaborators, to develop, manufacture, market and sell our drug candidates without infringing the proprietary rights of third parties. There is considerable intellectual property litigation in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. While no such litigation has been brought against us and we have not been held by any court to have infringed a third party's intellectual property rights, we cannot guarantee that our products or use of our products do not infringe third-party patents. It is also possible that we have failed to identify relevant third-party patents or applications. For example, applications filed before November 29, 2000 and certain applications filed after that date that will not be filed outside the United States remain confidential until patents issue. Patent applications in the United States and elsewhere are published approximately 18 months after the earliest filing, which is referred to as the

Table of Contents

priority date. Therefore, patent applications covering our products or technology could have been filed by others without our knowledge. Additionally, pending patent applications which have been published can, subject to certain limitations, be later amended in a manner that could cover our products or the use of our products.

Our research, development and commercialization activities, as well as any product candidates or products resulting from these activities, may infringe or be claimed to infringe patents or patent applications under which we do not hold licenses or other rights. Patents do not protect its owner from a claim of infringement of another owner's patent. Therefore, our patent position cannot and does not provide any assurance that we are not infringing the patent rights of another.

The patent landscape in the field of synthetic biology, which we are pursuing under our Channel Agreement with Intrexon, is particularly complex. We are aware of numerous United States and foreign patents and pending patent applications of third parties that cover compositions, methods of use and methods of manufacture of synthetic biology, including biotherapeutics involving the in vivo expression of human IL-12. In addition, there may be patents and patent applications in the field of which we are not aware. The technology we license from Intrexon is early-stage technology and we are just beginning the process of designing and developing products using this technology. Although we will seek to avoid pursuing the development of products that may infringe any patent claims that we believe to be valid and enforceable, we may fail to do so. Moreover, given the breadth and number of claims in patents and pending patent applications in the field of synthetic biology and the complexities and uncertainties associated with them, third parties may allege that we are infringing upon patent claims even if we do not believe such claims to be valid and enforceable.

If a claim for patent infringement is asserted, there can be no assurance that the resolution of the claim would permit us to continue marketing the relevant product on commercially reasonable terms, if at all. We may not have sufficient resources to bring these actions to a successful conclusion. If we do not successfully defend any infringement actions to which we become a party or are unable to have infringed patents declared invalid or unenforceable, we may have to pay substantial monetary damages, which can be tripled if the infringement is deemed willful, or be required to discontinue or significantly delay commercialization and development of the affected products.

Any legal action against us or our collaborators claiming damages and seeking to enjoin developmental or marketing activities relating to affected products could, in addition to subjecting us to potential liability for damages, require us or our collaborators to obtain licenses to continue to develop, manufacture, or market the affected products. Such a license may not be available to us on commercially reasonable terms, if at all.

An adverse determination in a proceeding involving our owned or licensed intellectual property may allow entry of generic substitutes for our products.

Obtaining and maintaining our patent protection depends on compliance with various procedural, document submission, fee payment and other requirements imposed by governmental patent agencies, and our patent protection could be reduced or eliminated for noncompliance with these requirements.

Periodic maintenance fees on any issued patent are due to be paid to the U.S. PTO and foreign patent agencies in several stages over the lifetime of the patent. The U.S. PTO and various foreign governmental patent agencies require compliance with a number of procedural, documentary, fee payment and other similar provisions during the patent application process. While an inadvertent lapse can in many cases be cured by payment of a late fee or by other means in accordance with the applicable rules, there are situations in which noncompliance can result in abandonment or lapse of the patent or patent application, resulting in partial or complete loss of patent rights in the relevant jurisdiction. Noncompliance events that could result in

Table of Contents

abandonment or lapse of a patent or patent application include, but are not limited to, failure to respond to official actions within prescribed time limits, non-payment of fees and failure to properly legalize and submit formal documents. In such an event, our competitors might be able to enter the market, which would have a material adverse effect on our business.

If we breach any of the agreements under which we license rights to products or technology from others, we could lose license rights that are material to our business or be subject to claims by our licensors.

We license rights to products and technology that are important to our business, and we expect to enter into additional licenses in the future. For instance, we have exclusively licensed patents and patent applications under our Channel Agreement with Intrexon and under the MD Anderson License. Under these agreements, we are subject to a range of commercialization and development, sublicensing, royalty, patent prosecution and maintenance, insurance and other obligations.

Any failure by us to comply with any of these obligations or any other breach by us of our license agreements could give the licensor the right to terminate the license in whole, terminate the exclusive nature of the license or bring a claim against us for damages. Any such termination or claim could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition, results of operations, liquidity or business. Even if we contest any such termination or claim and are ultimately successful, such dispute could lead to delays in the development or commercialization of potential products and result in time-consuming and expensive litigation or arbitration. On termination we may be required to license to the licensor any related intellectual property that we developed.

In addition, in certain cases, the rights licensed to us are rights of a third party licensed to our licensor. In such instances, if our licensors do not comply with their obligations under such licenses, our rights under our license agreements with our licensor may be adversely affected.

We may be subject to claims by third parties asserting that our employees or we have misappropriated their intellectual property, or claiming ownership of what we regard as our own intellectual property.

Many of our employees were previously employed at universities or other biotechnology or pharmaceutical companies, including our competitors or potential competitors. Although we try to ensure that our employees do not use the proprietary information or know-how of others in their work for us, we may be subject to claims that these employees or we have used or disclosed intellectual property, including trade secrets or other proprietary information, of any such employee's former employer. Litigation may be necessary to defend against these claims.

In addition, while it is our policy to require our employees and contractors who may be involved in the development of intellectual property to execute agreements assigning such intellectual property to us, we may be unsuccessful in executing such an agreement with each party who in fact develops intellectual property that we regard as our own. Our and their assignment agreements may not be self-executing or may be breached, and we may be forced to bring claims against third parties, or defend claims they may bring against us, to determine the ownership of what we regard as our intellectual property.

If we fail in prosecuting or defending any such claims, in addition to paying monetary damages, we may lose valuable intellectual property rights or personnel. Even if we are successful in prosecuting or defending against such claims, litigation could result in substantial costs and be a distraction to management.

Table of Contents

Other risks related to our company

We are subject to Sarbanes-Oxley and the reporting requirements of federal securities laws, which can be expensive.

As a public reporting company, we are subject to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, as well as to the information and reporting requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act, and other federal securities laws. As a result, we incur significant legal, accounting, and other expenses that we would not incur as a private company, including costs associated with our public company reporting requirements and corporate governance requirements. As an example of public reporting company requirements, we evaluate the effectiveness of disclosure controls and procedures and of our internal control over financial reporting in order to allow management to report on such controls. Sarbanes-Oxley generally requires that a public reporting company's independent registered public accounting firm attest to the effectiveness of the company's internal control over financial reporting as of the end of each fiscal year in the company's Annual Report on Form 10-K. In addition, any updates to our finance and accounting systems, procedures and controls, which may be required as a result of our ongoing analysis of internal controls, or results of testing by our independent auditor, may require significant time and expense. As a company with limited accounting resources, a significant amount of management's time and attention has been and will continue to be diverted from our business to ensure compliance with these regulatory requirements. This diversion of management's time and attention may have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Management is working to continuously monitor and improve internal controls and has set in place controls to mitigate the potential segregation of duties risk. In the event significant deficiencies or material weaknesses are identified in our internal control over financial reporting that we cannot remediate in a timely manner, or if we are unable to receive a positive attestation from our independent registered public accounting firm with respect to our internal controls over financial reporting, investors and others may lose confidence in the reliability of our financial statements and the trading price of our common stock and ability to obtain any necessary equity or debt financing could suffer. In addition, in the event that our independent registered public accounting firm is unable to rely on our internal controls over financial reporting in connection with its audit of our financial statements, and in the further event that it is unable to devise alternative procedures in order to satisfy itself as to the material accuracy of our financial statements and related disclosures, we may be unable to file our periodic reports with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC. This would likely have an adverse effect on the trading price of our common stock and our ability to secure any necessary additional equity or debt financing, and could result in the delisting of our common stock from the NASDAQ Capital Market, which would severely limit the liquidity of our common stock.

Anti-takeover provisions in our charter documents and under Delaware law may make an acquisition of us, which may be beneficial to our stockholders, more difficult.

Provisions of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and bylaws, as well as provisions of Delaware law, could make it more difficult for a third party to acquire us, even if doing so would benefit our stockholders. These provisions authorize the issuance of blank check preferred stock that could be issued by our board of directors to increase the number of outstanding shares and hinder a takeover attempt, and limit who may call a special meeting of stockholders. In addition, Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law generally prohibits a publicly-held Delaware corporation from engaging in a business combination with a party that owns at least 15% of its common stock unless the business combination is approved by the company's board of directors before the person acquires the 15% ownership stake or later by its board of directors and two-thirds of its stockholders. Section 203 could have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control that our stockholders might consider to be in their best interests.

Table of Contents

In connection with our January 2011 issuance of shares of common stock to Intrexon in a private placement transaction, our board of directors waived the Section 203 prohibition with respect to a future business combination with Intrexon.

Because we do not expect to pay dividends, you will not realize any income from an investment in our common stock unless and until you sell your shares at profit.

We have never paid dividends on our capital stock and we do not anticipate that we will pay any dividends for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, any return on an investment in us will be realized, if at all, only when you sell shares of our common stock.

Risks related to this offering

Management will have broad discretion as to the use of the proceeds from this offering, and we may not use the proceeds effectively.

Our management will have broad discretion in the application of the net proceeds from this offering and could spend the proceeds in ways that do not improve our results of operations or enhance the value of our common stock. Our failure to apply these funds effectively could have a material adverse effect on our business, delay the development of our product candidates and cause the price of our common stock to decline.

You will experience immediate and substantial dilution in the net tangible book value per share of the common stock you purchase.

Since the price per share of our common stock being offered is substantially higher than the net tangible book value per share of our common stock, you will suffer substantial dilution in the net tangible book value of the common stock you purchase in this offering. Based on an assumed public offering price of \$8.95 per share, and after deducting underwriting discounts and commissions and estimated offering expenses payable by us, and based on a net tangible book value of our common stock of \$0.48 per share as of September 30, 2014, if you purchase shares of common stock in this offering, you will suffer immediate and substantial dilution of \$7.88 per share in the net tangible book value of common stock. See the section entitled "Dilution" below for a more detailed discussion of the dilution you will incur if you purchase common stock in this offering.

You may experience future dilution as a result of future equity offerings and other issuances of our common stock.

In order to raise additional capital, we may in the future offer additional shares of our common stock or other securities convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock at prices that may not be the same as the price per share in this offering. We cannot assure you that we will be able to sell shares or other securities in any other offering at a price per share that is equal to or greater than the price per share paid by investors in this offering, and investors purchasing shares or other securities in the future could have rights superior to existing stockholders, including investors who purchase shares of common stock in this offering. The price per share at which we sell additional shares of our common stock or securities convertible into common stock in future transactions may be higher or lower than the price per share in this offering.

In addition, pursuant to the terms of the MD Anderson License, the Letter Agreement and the MD Anderson Equity Agreements entered into in connection therewith, we are required to issue an aggregate of 11,722,163 shares of our common stock to MD Anderson within sixty days of the date of the License. These shares will be issued in consideration for MD Anderson entering into the MD Anderson License and the Letter Agreement, and we will not receive any cash proceeds for these shares. As a result, you may experience dilution from our issuance of these shares to MD Anderson.

Table of Contents

If securities and/or industry analysts fail to continue publishing research about our business, if they change their recommendations adversely or if our results of operations do not meet their expectations, our stock price and trading volume could decline.

The trading market for our common stock will be influenced by the research and reports that industry or securities analysts publish about us or our business. If one or more of these analysts cease coverage of our company or fail to publish reports on us regularly, we could lose visibility in the financial markets, which in turn could cause our stock price or trading volume to decline. In addition, it is likely that in some future period our operating results will be below the expectations of securities analysts or investors. If one or more of the analysts who cover us downgrade our stock, or if our results of operations do not meet their expectations, our stock price could decline.

Our stock price is volatile and may decline regardless of our operating performance, and you may not be able to resell your shares at or above the price at which you purchased such shares.

The market price for our common stock is volatile and may fluctuate significantly in response to a number of factors, most of which we cannot control, including:

price and volume fluctuations in the overall stock market;

market conditions or trends in our industry or the economy as a whole;

changes in operating performance and stock market valuations of other biopharmaceutical companies generally, or those that develop and commercialize cancer drugs in particular;

the financial projections we may provide to the public, any changes in these projections or our failure to meet these projections;

changes in financial estimates or ratings by any securities analysts who follow our common stock, our failure to meet these estimates or failure of those analysts to initiate or maintain coverage of our common stock;

the public's response to press releases or other public announcements by us or third parties, including our filings with the SEC and announcements relating to product development, litigation and intellectual property impacting us or our business;

the sustainability of an active trading market for our common stock;

future sales of our common stock by our executive officers, directors and significant stockholders;

announcements of mergers or acquisition transactions;

our inclusion or deletion from certain stock indices;

announcements of medical innovations or new products by our competitors;

announcements of changes in our senior management;

other events or factors, including those resulting from war, incidents of terrorism, natural disasters or responses to these events; and

changes in accounting principles.

In addition, the stock markets, and in particular the NASDAQ Capital Market, have experienced extreme price and volume fluctuations that have affected and continue to affect the market prices of equity securities of many

S-45

Table of Contents

biopharmaceutical companies. Stock prices of many biopharmaceutical companies have fluctuated in a manner unrelated or disproportionate to the operating performance of those companies. In the past, stockholders have instituted securities class action litigation following periods of market volatility. If we were involved in securities litigation, we could incur substantial costs and our resources and the attention of management could be diverted from our business.

Our principal stockholders, executive officers and directors have substantial control over the company, which may prevent you and other stockholders from influencing significant corporate decisions and may harm the market price of our common stock.

As of September 30, 2014, our executive officers, directors and holders of five percent or more of our outstanding common stock, beneficially owned, in the aggregate, 19.1% of our outstanding common stock. These stockholders may have interests that conflict with our other stockholders and, if acting together, have the ability to influence the outcome of matters submitted to our stockholders for approval, including the election and removal of directors and any merger, consolidation or sale of all or substantially all of our assets. Accordingly, this concentration of ownership may harm the market price of our common stock by:

delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control;
impeding a merger, consolidation, takeover or other business combination involving us; or
discouraging a potential acquirer from making a tender offer or otherwise attempting to obtain control of us.

S-46

Table of Contents

Special note regarding forward-looking statements

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus contain, and the documents incorporated by reference herein and therein and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering may contain, forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, and Section 21E of the Exchange Act. All statements other than statements of historical facts contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the information we incorporate by reference are forward-looking statements. These statements relate to future events or to our future operating or financial performance and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performances or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements may include, but are not limited to statements about:

the progress, timing and results of preclinical and clinical trials involving our drug candidates;

the progress of our research and development programs;

our plans or others' plans to conduct future clinical trials or research and development efforts;

the risk that final trial data may not support interim analysis of the viability of our drug candidates;

our plans and expectations regarding partnering our drug candidates;

the benefits to be derived from relationships with our collaborators;

the receipt or anticipated receipt of regulatory clearances and approvals;

estimates of the potential markets for our drug candidates;

our ability to adequately protect our intellectual property rights;

the use of proceeds from this offering;

our estimates of future revenues and profitability;

competitive risks in our industry;

our estimates regarding our capital requirements and our ability to control costs; and

Edgar Filing: ZIOPHARM ONCOLOGY INC - Form 424B5

our need for additional funding and the period through which we anticipate our resources will sufficient to fund operations. In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terms such as may, will, should, could, would, expects, plans, intends, anticipates, believes, estimates, projects, predicts, potential, the negative of these words and similar expressions intended to identify forward-looking statements. These statements reflect our current views with respect to future events and are based on assumptions and subject to risks and uncertainties. Given these uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. We discuss many of these risks in greater detail under the heading Risk factors in this prospectus supplement and in our SEC filings. Also, these forward-looking statements represent our estimates and assumptions only as of the date of the document containing the applicable statement.

You should read this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, the documents we have filed with the SEC that are incorporated by reference and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in

S-47

Table of Contents

connection with this offering completely and with the understanding that our actual future results may be materially different from what we expect. We qualify all of the forward-looking statements in the foregoing documents by these cautionary statements.

Unless required by law, we undertake no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements to reflect new information or future events or developments. Thus, you should not assume that our silence over time means that actual events are bearing out as expressed or implied in such forward-looking statements.

S-48

Table of Contents

Use of proceeds

We estimate that the net proceeds to us from the sale of our common stock offered hereby will be approximately \$70.2 million, or approximately \$80.7 million if the underwriters exercise in full their option to purchase additional shares of common stock, after deducting the underwriting discounts and commissions and our estimated offering expenses.

We currently intend to use the net proceeds from this offering for general corporate and working capital purposes, including clinical development of our pipeline and development of the technologies licensed from MD Anderson.

The amount and timing of these expenditures will depend on a number of factors, including the progress of our research and development efforts, the progress of any partnering efforts, technological advances and the competitive environment for our product candidates. Accordingly, our management will have broad discretion in the application of these proceeds, and investors will be relying on the judgment of our management with regard to the use of these proceeds. Pending application of the net proceeds as described above, we intend to invest the proceeds in investment grade interest bearing instruments.

S-49

Table of Contents**Dilution**

Our net tangible book value as of September 30, 2014 was approximately \$49.1 million, or \$0.48 per share. Net tangible book value per share is determined by dividing our total tangible assets, less total liabilities, by the number of shares of our common stock outstanding as of September 30, 2014. Dilution in net tangible book value per share represents the difference between the amount per share paid by purchasers of shares of common stock in this offering and the net tangible book value per share of our common stock immediately after this offering.

After taking into account the sale by us of \$75,000,000 of shares of our common stock in this offering at an assumed public offering price of \$8.95 per share, less the underwriting discounts and commissions and estimated offering expenses payable by us, our as adjusted net tangible book value as of September 30, 2014 would have been approximately \$119.3 million, or \$1.07 per share. This would represent an immediate increase in net tangible book value of \$0.59 per share to existing stockholders and in immediate dilution of \$7.88 per share to investors purchasing our common stock in this offering at such assumed public offering price. The following table illustrates this dilution on a per share basis:

Assumed public offering price per share	\$ 8.95
Net tangible book value per share as of September 30, 2014	\$ 0.48
Increase per share attributable to investors purchasing our common stock in this offering	\$ 0.59
As adjusted net tangible book value per share as of September 30, 2014, after giving effect to this offering	\$ 1.07
Dilution in net tangible book value per share to investors purchasing our common stock in this offering	\$ 7.88

A \$1.00 increase or decrease in an assumed public offering price of \$8.95 per share would increase or decrease our as adjusted net tangible book value by approximately \$0.01 per share, and the as adjusted dilution per share to investors in this offering by approximately \$0.99 per share, after deducting underwriting discounts and commissions and the estimated offering expenses payable by us. We may also increase or decrease the aggregate amount of the shares we are offering. Each increase or decrease of \$7,500,000 of shares of our common stock offered by us at an assumed public offering price of \$8.95 per share would increase or decrease our as adjusted net tangible book value by approximately \$7.1 million (\$0.06 per share), and the as adjusted dilution per share to investors in this offering by approximately \$0.06 per share, after deducting underwriting discounts and commissions and the estimated offering expenses payable by us. The as adjusted information discussed above is illustrative only. Our net tangible book value following the completion of this offering is subject to adjustment based on the actual public offering price of our shares and other terms of this offering determined at pricing.

If the underwriters exercise in full their option to purchase \$11,250,000 of additional shares of common stock at an assumed public offering price of \$8.95 per share, the pro forma as adjusted net tangible book value after this offering would be \$1.16 per share, representing an increase in net tangible book value of \$0.68 per share to existing stockholders and immediate dilution in net tangible book value of \$7.79 per share to investors purchasing our common stock in this offering at the public offering price.

The amounts above are based on 102,683,984 shares of common stock outstanding as of September 30, 2014 and assume no exercise of outstanding options or warrants since that date and exclude:

5,792,428 shares of our common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options outstanding as of September 30, 2014, having a weighted average exercise price of \$3.94 per share;

Table of Contents

5,555,864 shares of our common stock available as of September 30, 2014 for future issuance pursuant to our 2012 Equity Incentive Plan;

1,755,845 shares of our common stock issued upon the exercise of warrants since September 30, 2014; and

11,722,163 shares of our common stock to be issued to MD Anderson within sixty days of the execution of the MD Anderson License, pursuant to the terms of the MD Anderson License, a letter agreement that we and Intrexon entered into with MD Anderson on January 9, 2015, or the Letter Agreement, and the securities issuance agreements and registration rights agreement entered into in connection therewith, which we collectively refer to as the MD Anderson Equity Agreements.

To the extent options or warrants outstanding as of September 30, 2014 have been or may be exercised or other shares have been issued, there may be further dilution to investors.

S-51

Table of Contents

Material United States federal income and estate tax consequences for non-U.S. holders

The following discussion describes the material U.S. federal income and estate tax consequences of the acquisition, ownership and disposition of our common stock acquired in this offering by a Non-U.S. Holder (as defined below). This discussion does not address all aspects of U.S. federal income and estate taxes, does not discuss the potential application of the 3.8% Medicare tax on net investment income, and does not deal with non-U.S., state and local consequences that may be relevant to Non-U.S. Holders in light of their particular circumstances, nor does it address U.S. federal tax consequences other than income and estate taxes. Rules different from those described below may apply to certain Non-U.S. Holders that are subject to special treatment under the Code, including, without limitation, banks, thrifts and other financial institutions, insurance companies, tax-exempt organizations, broker-dealers and traders in securities, U.S. expatriates, regulated investment companies, real estate investment trusts, controlled foreign corporations, passive foreign investment companies, corporations that accumulate earnings to avoid U.S. federal income tax, persons that hold our common stock as part of a straddle, hedge, conversion transaction, synthetic security, integrated investment or other risk reduction strategy, partnerships and other pass-through entities, and investors in such pass-through entities or entities that are treated as disregarded entities for U.S. federal income tax purposes (regardless of their places of organization or formation), persons subject to the alternative minimum tax, persons that hold or receive shares of our common stock pursuant to the exercise of any employee stock option or otherwise as compensation, persons that own, or are deemed to own, more than 5% of our outstanding common stock (except to the extent specifically set forth below), and persons deemed to sell shares of our common stock under the constructive sale provisions of the Code. Such Non-U.S. Holders are urged to consult their own tax advisors to determine the U.S. federal, state, local and other tax consequences that may be relevant to them. Furthermore, the discussion below is based upon the provisions of the Code, and Treasury regulations, rulings and judicial decisions thereunder as of the date hereof, and such authorities may be repealed, revoked or modified, perhaps retroactively, so as to result in U.S. federal income or estate tax consequences different from those discussed below. No ruling has been or will be sought from the United States Internal Revenue Service (the IRS) with respect to the statements made and the conclusions reached in the following discussion, and there can be no assurance that the IRS will not take a contrary position regarding the tax consequences of the acquisition, ownership or disposition of shares of our common stock, or that any such contrary position would not be sustained by a court. This discussion is limited to Non-U.S. Holders who hold our common stock as a capital asset within the meaning of Code Section 1221 (generally, property held for investment).

The following discussion is for general information only and is not tax advice for any Non-U.S. Holders under their particular circumstances. **Persons considering the purchase of our common stock should consult their own tax advisors concerning the U.S. federal income and estate tax consequences of acquiring, owning and disposing of our common stock in light of their particular situations as well as any consequences arising under the laws of any other taxing jurisdiction, including any state, local or non-U.S. tax consequences and the possible application of tax treaties that might change the general provisions discussed below.**

Except as otherwise described in the discussion of estate tax below, a Non-U.S. Holder is a beneficial owner of our common stock that is not a U.S. Holder. A U.S. Holder means a beneficial owner of our common stock that is for U.S. federal income tax purposes (i) an individual who is a citizen or resident of the United States, (ii) a corporation or other entity treated as a corporation created or organized in or under the laws of the United States, any state thereof or the District of Columbia, (iii) an estate the income of which is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source or (iv) a trust if it (x) is subject to the primary supervision of a court within the United States and one or more U.S. persons have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust or (y) has a valid election in effect under applicable U.S. Treasury regulations to be treated as a U.S. person.

Table of Contents

If a partnership (including any entity or arrangement treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes) acquires our common stock, the tax treatment of a partner in the partnership will generally depend upon the status of the partner and the activities of the partnership. Persons who are partners of partnerships holding our common stock are urged to consult their tax advisors. For purposes of the following discussion, entities treated as partnerships or disregarded entities for U.S. federal income tax purposes are not addressed by this discussion and are, therefore, not considered to be Non-U.S. Holders.

Distributions

Subject to the discussion below, distributions, if any, of cash or property made on our common stock to a Non-U.S. Holder, to the extent made out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits (as determined under U.S. federal income tax principles), generally will constitute dividends for U.S. tax purposes and generally will be subject to withholding tax at a 30% rate or such lower rate as may be specified by an applicable income tax treaty. To obtain a reduced rate of withholding under a treaty, a Non-U.S. Holder generally will be required to provide us or our paying agent with a properly-executed IRS Form W-8BEN or W-8BEN-E, or other appropriate form, certifying the Non-U.S. Holder's entitlement to benefits under that treaty. Such certificate must be provided prior to the payment of dividends and must be updated periodically. Treasury regulations provide special rules to determine whether, for purposes of determining the applicability of a tax treaty, dividends paid to a Non-U.S. Holder that is an entity should be treated as paid to the entity or to those holding an interest in that entity. If a Non-U.S. Holder holds stock through a financial institution or other agent acting on the holder's behalf, the holder will be required to provide appropriate documentation to such agent. The holder's agent will then be required to provide certification to us or our paying agent, either directly or through other intermediaries, of the Non-U.S. Holder's entitlement to treaty benefits. If you are eligible for a reduced rate of U.S. federal withholding tax pursuant to an applicable income tax treaty but do not timely provide us or our paying agent with the required certification, you should consult with your tax advisor to determine whether you may obtain a refund of any excess amounts withheld by timely filing an appropriate claim for refund with the IRS.

We generally are not required to withhold tax on dividends paid to a Non-U.S. Holder that are effectively connected with the Non-U.S. Holder's conduct of a trade or business within the United States (and, if required by an applicable income tax treaty, are attributable to a permanent establishment that such Non-U.S. Holder maintains in the United States) if a properly-executed IRS Form W-8ECI, or other appropriate form, stating that the dividends are so connected, is furnished to us or our paying agent (or, if stock is held through a financial institution or other agent, to such agent). In general, such effectively connected dividends will be subject to U.S. federal income tax, on a net income basis generally at regular graduated rates, unless a specific treaty exemption applies. A corporate Non-U.S. Holder receiving effectively connected dividends may also be subject to an additional branch profits tax, which is imposed, under certain circumstances, at a rate of 30% (or such lower rate as may be specified by an applicable treaty) on the corporate Non-U.S. Holder's effectively connected earnings and profits, subject to certain adjustments.

To the extent distributions on our common stock, if any, exceed our current and accumulated earnings and profits, they will first reduce your adjusted basis in our common stock as a non-taxable return of capital, but not below zero, and then any excess will be treated as gain from the sale of stock and taxed in the same manner as gain realized from a sale or other disposition of common stock as described in the next section.

Gain on disposition of our common stock

Subject to the discussion below regarding backup withholding and foreign accounts, a Non-U.S. Holder generally will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax with respect to gain realized on a sale or other

Table of Contents

disposition of our common stock unless (i) the gain is effectively connected with a trade or business of such holder in the United States (and, if required by an applicable income tax treaty, is attributable to a permanent establishment that such Non-U.S. Holder maintains in the United States), (ii) in the case of Non-U.S. Holders who are nonresident alien individuals, such individuals are present in the United States for 183 or more days in the taxable year of the disposition and certain other conditions are met, or (iii) we are or have been a United States real property holding corporation within the meaning of Code Section 897(c)(2) at any time within the shorter of the five-year period preceding such disposition or such holder's holding period.

If you are a Non-U.S. Holder described in (i) above, you will be required to pay tax on the net gain derived from the sale at regular graduated U.S. federal income tax rates, unless a specific treaty exemption applies, and corporate Non-U.S. Holders described in (i) above may be subject to the additional branch profits tax at a 30% rate or such lower rate as may be specified by an applicable income tax treaty. If you are an individual Non-U.S. Holder described in (ii) above, you will be required to pay a flat 30% tax on the gain derived from the sale, which tax may be offset by U.S. source capital losses if you have timely filed tax returns with respect to such losses (even though you are not considered a resident of the United States). With respect to (iii) above, in general, we would be a United States real property holding corporation if interests in U.S. real estate comprised (by fair market value) at least half of our business assets. We believe that we are not, and do not anticipate becoming, a United States real property holding corporation; however, there can be no assurance that we will not become a U.S. real property holding corporation in the future. Even if we are treated as a U.S. real property holding corporation, gain realized by a Non-U.S. Holder on a disposition of our common stock will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax so long as (1) the Non-U.S. Holder owned directly, indirectly and constructively, no more than five percent of our common stock at all times within the shorter of (a) the five-year period preceding the disposition or (b) the holder's holding period of our common stock disposed of and (2) our common stock is regularly traded on an established securities market. There can be no assurance that our common stock will continue to qualify as regularly traded on an established securities market. If gain realized by you on the sale of our common stock is taxable because we are a U.S. real property holding corporation and your ownership of our common stock exceeded the 5% threshold in the period noted above, you will be taxed on such disposition generally in the same manner applicable to U.S. persons.

Information reporting requirements and backup withholding

Generally, we or certain financial middlemen must report information to the IRS with respect to any dividends we pay on our stock including the amount of any such dividends, the name and address of the recipient, and the amount, if any, of tax withheld. A similar report is sent to the holder to whom any such dividends are paid. Pursuant to tax treaties or certain other agreements, the IRS may make its reports available to tax authorities in the country in which the Non-U.S. Holder resides or is established.

Proceeds from a disposition of our stock and dividends paid by us (or our paying agents) to a Non-U.S. Holder may also be subject to United States backup withholding. United States backup withholding generally will not apply to a Non-U.S. Holder who provides a properly-executed IRS Form W-8BEN or W-8BEN-E, or W-8ECI or otherwise establishes an exemption. The current backup withholding rate is 28%. Notwithstanding the foregoing, backup withholding may apply if either we or our paying agent has actual knowledge, or reason to know, that the holder of our common stock is a U.S. person that is not an exempt recipient.

Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Rather, the tax liability of persons subject to backup withholding will be reduced by the amount of tax withheld. If withholding results in an overpayment of taxes, a refund or credit may generally be obtained with respect to such backup withholding, provided that the required information is timely furnished to the IRS.

Table of Contents

Legislation relating to foreign accounts

A U.S. federal withholding tax of 30% may apply to dividends and the gross proceeds of a disposition of our common stock paid to a foreign financial institution (as specifically defined by applicable rules), including when the foreign financial institution holds our common stock on behalf of a Non-U.S. Holder, unless such institution enters into an agreement with the U.S. government to withhold on certain payments and to collect and provide to the U.S. tax authorities substantial information regarding U.S. account holders of such institution (which includes certain equity holders of such institution, as well as certain account holders that are foreign entities with U.S. owners), or otherwise qualifies for an exemption from these rules. This U.S. federal withholding tax of 30% will also apply to dividends and the gross proceeds of a disposition of our common stock paid to a non-financial foreign entity (as specifically defined by applicable rules), unless such entity provides the withholding agent with either a certification that it does not have any substantial direct or indirect U.S. owners or provides information regarding direct and indirect U.S. owners of the entity, or otherwise qualifies for an exemption from these rules. The withholding tax described above will not apply if the foreign financial institution or non-financial foreign entity otherwise qualifies for an exemption from the rules. Foreign financial institutions located in jurisdictions that have an intergovernmental agreement with the United States governing these withholding and reporting requirements may be subject to different rules. Under certain circumstances, a Non-U.S. Holder might be eligible for refunds or credits of such taxes. Holders are encouraged to consult with their own tax advisors regarding the possible implications of these rules on their investment in our common stock.

The withholding provisions described above currently apply to payments of dividends on our common stock and will apply to payments of gross proceeds from a sale or other disposition of common stock on or after January 1, 2017.

Federal estate tax

An individual who at the time of death is not a citizen or resident of the United States and who is treated as the owner of, or has made certain lifetime transfers of, an interest in our common stock will be required to include the value thereof in his or her taxable estate for U.S. federal estate tax purposes, and may be subject to U.S. federal estate tax unless an applicable estate tax treaty provides otherwise. The test for whether an individual is a resident of the United States for U.S. federal estate tax purposes differs from the test used for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Some individuals, therefore, may be Non-U.S. Holders for U.S. federal income tax purposes, but not for U.S. federal estate tax purposes, and vice versa.

THE PRECEDING DISCUSSION OF UNITED STATES FEDERAL INCOME TAX AND ESTATE TAX CONSIDERATIONS IS FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY. IT IS NOT TAX ADVICE. EACH PROSPECTIVE INVESTOR SHOULD CONSULT ITS OWN TAX ADVISOR REGARDING THE TAX CONSEQUENCES OF PURCHASING, HOLDING AND DISPOSING OF OUR COMMON STOCK, INCLUDING THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANY PROPOSED CHANGE IN APPLICABLE LAW.

Table of Contents

Underwriting

We are offering the shares of common stock described in this prospectus supplement through a number of underwriters. J.P. Morgan Securities LLC is acting as book-running manager of the offering and representative of the underwriters. We have entered into an underwriting agreement with the underwriters. Subject to the terms and conditions of the underwriting agreement, we have agreed to sell to the underwriters, and each underwriter has severally agreed to purchase, at the public offering price less the underwriting discounts and commissions set forth on the cover page of this prospectus supplement, the number of shares of common stock listed next to its name in the following table:

Name	Number of shares
J.P. Morgan Securities LLC	
BMO Capital Markets	

Total

The underwriters are committed to purchase all shares of common stock offered by us if they purchase any shares. The underwriting agreement also provides that if an underwriter defaults, the purchase commitments of non-defaulting underwriters may also be increased or the offering may be terminated.

The underwriters propose to offer the shares of common stock directly to the public at the public offering price set forth on the cover page of this prospectus supplement and to certain dealers at that price less a concession not in excess of \$ per share. Any such dealers may resell shares to certain other brokers or dealers at a discount of up to \$ per share from the public offering price. After the public offering of the shares, the offering price and other selling terms may be changed by the underwriters. Sales of shares made outside of the United States may be made by affiliates of the underwriters.

The underwriters have an option to buy up to additional shares of common stock from us. The underwriters have 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement to exercise this option to purchase additional shares. If any shares are purchased with this option, the underwriters will purchase shares in approximately the same proportion as shown in the table above. If any additional shares of common stock are purchased, the underwriters will offer the additional shares on the same terms as those on which the shares are being offered.

The underwriting fee is equal to the public offering price per share of common stock less the amount paid by the underwriters to us per share of common stock. The underwriting fee is \$ per share. The following table shows the per share and total underwriting discounts and commissions to be paid to the underwriters assuming both no exercise and full exercise of the underwriters' option to purchase additional shares.

	Without option exercise	With option exercise
Per Share	\$	\$
Total	\$	\$

We estimate that the total expenses of this offering, including registration, filing and listing fees, printing fees and legal and accounting expenses, but excluding the underwriting discounts and commissions, will be approximately \$350,000.

Table of Contents

A prospectus in electronic format may be made available on the websites maintained by one or more underwriters, or selling group members, if any, participating in the offering. The underwriters may agree to allocate a number of shares to underwriters and selling group members for sale to their online brokerage account holders. Internet distributions will be allocated by the underwriters to selling group members that may make Internet distributions on the same basis as other allocations.

We have agreed that we will not (i) offer, pledge, announce the intention to sell, sell, contract to sell, sell any option or contract to purchase, purchase any option or contract to sell, grant any option, right or warrant to purchase or otherwise transfer or dispose of, directly or indirectly, or file with SEC a registration statement under the Securities Act relating to, any shares of our common stock or securities convertible into or exercisable or exchangeable for any shares of our common stock, or publicly disclose the intention to make any offer, sale, pledge, disposition or filing, or (ii) enter into any swap or other arrangement that transfers, in whole or in part, any portion of the economic consequences associated with the ownership of any shares of common stock or any such other securities (regardless of whether any of these transactions are to be settled by the delivery of shares of common stock or such other securities, in cash or otherwise), in each case without the prior written consent of J.P. Morgan Securities LLC on behalf of the underwriters for a period of 90 days after the date of this prospectus supplement.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if (1) during the last 17 days of the 90-day restricted period, we issue an earnings release or material news or a material event relating to our company occurs; or (2) prior to the expiration of the 90-day restricted period, we announce that we will release earnings results during the 16-day period beginning on the last day of the 90-day period, the restrictions described above shall continue to apply until the expiration of the 18-day period beginning on the issuance of the earnings release or the occurrence of the material news or material event unless J.P. Morgan Securities LLC waives, in writing, such an extension. The foregoing sentence will not apply if, within three business days prior to the 15th calendar day before the last day of the 90-day period, we deliver a certificate, signed by our Chief Financial Officer or Chief Executive Officer, certifying on our behalf that the shares of common stock are actively traded securities (as defined in Regulation M) and that we meet the requirements set forth in paragraph (a)(1) of Rule 139 under the Securities Act in the manner contemplated by NASD Conduct Rule 2711(f)(4).

The restrictions described in the immediately preceding paragraph do not apply, subject to certain conditions, to the following:

the sale of shares of common stock pursuant to the underwriting agreement;

the issuance of shares of our common stock pursuant to our stock plans;

the issuance of shares of our common stock upon the exercise of warrants outstanding on the date hereof;

the issuance of shares of our common stock pursuant to the MD Anderson Equity Agreements;

the filing by us of any Registration Statement on Form S-8 or a successor form thereto;

the filing by us of any Registration Statement pursuant to the MD Anderson Equity Agreements; or

the issuance of shares of common stock or securities convertible into or exercisable or exchangeable for shares of common stock representing in the aggregate no more than 5% of our issued and outstanding shares of common stock immediately following the completion of this offering, which may be sold only to one or more counterparties in connection with the consummation of a strategic partnership, joint venture, collaboration, merger or the acquisition or license of any business products or technology, so long as the recipients of such securities sign and deliver a lock-up agreement.

Table of Contents

Our directors and executive officers have entered into lock-up agreements with the underwriters prior to the commencement of this offering pursuant to which each of these persons or entities, with limited exceptions described below, for a period of 90 days after the date of this prospectus, may not, without the prior written consent of J.P. Morgan Securities LLC on behalf of the underwriters, (i) offer, pledge, announce the intention to sell, sell, contract to sell, sell any option or contract to purchase, purchase any option or contract to sell, grant any option, right or warrant to purchase, or otherwise transfer or dispose of, directly or indirectly, any shares of our common stock or any securities convertible into or exercisable or exchangeable for our common stock (including, without limitation, common stock or such other securities which may be deemed to be beneficially owned by such persons or entities in accordance with the rules and regulations of the SEC and securities which may be issued upon exercise of a stock option or warrant), (ii) enter into any swap or other agreement that transfers, in whole or in part, any of the economic consequences of ownership of the common stock or such other securities, whether any such transaction described in clause (i) or (ii) above is to be settled by delivery of common stock or such other securities, in cash or otherwise, or (iii) make any demand for or exercise any right with respect to the registration of any shares of our common stock or any security convertible into or exercisable or exchangeable for our common stock. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if (1) during the last 17 days of the 90-day restricted period, we issue an earnings release or material news or a material event relating to our company occurs; or (2) prior to the expiration of the 90-day restricted period, we announce that we will release earnings results during the 16-day period beginning on the last day of the 90-day period, the restrictions described above shall continue to apply until the expiration of the 18-day period beginning on the issuance of the earnings release or the occurrence of the material news or material event unless J.P. Morgan Securities LLC waives, in writing, such an extension. The foregoing sentence will not apply if, within three business days prior to the 15th calendar day before the last day of the 90-day period, we deliver a certificate, signed by our Chief Financial Officer or Chief Executive Officer, certifying on our behalf that the shares of common stock are actively traded securities (as defined in Regulation M) and that we meet the requirements set forth in paragraph (a)(1) of Rule 139 under the Securities Act in the manner contemplated by NASD Conduct Rule 2711(f)(4).

The restrictions described in the immediately preceding paragraph do not apply, subject to certain conditions, to the following:

the transfer of shares of our common stock or other securities as a bona fide gift or gifts;

the transfer of share of our common stock withheld for tax purposes in connection with the vesting and distribution of our common stock;

transactions relating to shares of common stock or other securities acquired in open market transactions after the completion of this offering;

the transfer of shares of common stock or any security convertible into or exercisable or exchangeable for common stock to the immediate family of the signatory, to a trust the beneficiaries of which are exclusively the signatory and/or a member or members of the immediate family of the signatory or to any corporation, partnership, limited liability company or other entity all of the beneficial ownership interests of which are held exclusively by the signatory and/or a member or members of the immediate family of the signatory;

if the signatory is an entity, the transfer of shares of our common stock or other securities to an affiliate (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act) in a transaction not involving a distribution for value;

the distribution of shares of our common stock or other securities to members, partners or stockholders of the signatory;

the transfer of shares of common stock or any security convertible or exercisable or exchangeable for common stock upon death by will or intestate succession; or

Table of Contents

the entry into any trading plan established pursuant to Rule 10b5-1 of the Exchange Act, provided that no sales or other dispositions may occur under such plan until the expiration of the 90-day restricted period and that no filing or other public announcement, whether under the Exchange Act or otherwise, shall be required or shall be made by the signatory or the Company in connection with the trading plan during such restricted period and, before the trading plan is established, the Company shall have provided to J.P. Morgan Securities LLC on behalf of the underwriters written confirmation that no such filing or public announcement shall be required or shall be made by the Company in connection with the trading plan during such period.

We have agreed to indemnify the underwriters against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act.

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Capital Market under the symbol ZIOP.

In connection with this offering, the underwriters may engage in stabilizing transactions, which involve making bids for, purchasing and selling shares of common stock in the open market for the purpose of preventing or retarding a decline in the market price of the common stock while this offering is in progress. These stabilizing transactions may include making short sales of the common stock, which involves the sale by the underwriters of a greater number of shares of common stock than they are required to purchase in this offering, and purchasing shares of common stock on the open market to cover positions created by short sales. Short sales may be covered shorts, which are short positions in an amount not greater than the underwriters' option referred to above, or may be naked shorts, which are short positions in excess of that amount. The underwriters may close out any covered short position either by exercising their option, in whole or in part, or by purchasing shares in the open market. In making this determination, the underwriters will consider, among other things, the price of shares available for purchase in the open market compared to the price at which the underwriters may purchase shares through the option. A naked short position is more likely to be created if the underwriters are concerned that there may be downward pressure on the price of the common stock in the open market that could adversely affect investors who purchase in this offering. To the extent that the underwriters create a naked short position, they will purchase shares in the open market to cover the position.

The underwriters have advised us that, pursuant to Regulation M under the Exchange Act, they may also engage in other activities that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the price of the common stock, including the imposition of penalty bids. This means that if the representative of the underwriters purchase common stock in the open market in stabilizing transactions or to cover short sales, the representative can require the underwriters that sold those shares as part of this offering to repay the underwriting discount received by them.

These activities may have the effect of raising or maintaining the market price of the common stock or preventing or retarding a decline in the market price of the common stock, and, as a result, the price of the common stock may be higher than the price that otherwise might exist in the open market. If the underwriters commence these activities, they may discontinue them at any time. The underwriters may carry out these transactions on the NASDAQ Capital Market, in the over-the-counter market or otherwise.

In addition, in connection with this offering certain of the underwriters (and selling group members) may engage in passive market making transactions in our common stock on the NASDAQ Capital Market prior to the pricing and completion of this offering. Passive market making consists of displaying bids on the NASDAQ Capital Market no higher than the bid prices of independent market makers and making purchases at prices no higher than these independent bids and effected in response to order flow. Net purchases by a passive market maker on each day are generally limited to a specified percentage of the passive market maker's average daily trading volume in the common stock during a specified period and must be discontinued when such limit is reached. Passive market making may cause the price of our common stock to be higher than the price that otherwise would exist in the open market in the absence of these transactions. If passive market making is commenced, it may be discontinued at any time.

Table of Contents

If you purchase shares of common stock offered in this prospectus, you may be required to pay stamp taxes and other charges under the laws and practices of the country of purchase, in addition to the offering price listed on the cover page of this prospectus.

Other than in the United States, no action has been taken by us or the underwriters that would permit a public offering of the securities offered by this prospectus in any jurisdiction where action for that purpose is required. The securities offered by this prospectus may not be offered or sold, directly or indirectly, nor may this prospectus or any other offering material or advertisements in connection with the offer and sale of any such securities be distributed or published in any jurisdiction, except under circumstances that will result in compliance with the applicable rules and regulations of that jurisdiction. Persons into whose possession this prospectus comes are advised to inform themselves about and to observe any restrictions relating to the offering and the distribution of this prospectus. This prospectus does not constitute an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy any securities offered by this prospectus in any jurisdiction in which such an offer or a solicitation is unlawful.

Certain of the underwriters and their affiliates may provide from time to time in the future certain commercial banking, financial advisory, investment banking and other services for us and our affiliates in the ordinary course of their business, for which they may receive customary fees and commissions. In addition, from time to time, certain of the underwriters and their affiliates may effect transactions for their own account or the account of customers, and hold on behalf of themselves or their customers, long or short positions in our debt or equity securities or loans.

S-60

Table of Contents

Selling restrictions

European economic area

In relation to each Member State of the European Economic Area which has implemented the Prospectus Directive (each, a Relevant Member State) an offer to the public of any securities which are the subject of the offering contemplated by this prospectus may not be made in that Relevant Member State, except that an offer to the public in that Relevant Member State of any securities may be made at any time under the following exemptions under the Prospectus Directive, if they have been implemented in that Relevant Member State:

to any legal entity which is a qualified investor as defined in the Prospectus Directive;

to fewer than 100 or, if the Relevant Member State has implemented the relevant provision of the 2010 PD Amending Directive, 150, natural or legal persons (other than qualified investors as defined in the Prospectus Directive), as permitted under the Prospectus Directive, subject to obtaining the prior consent of the joint book-running managers for any such offer; or

in any other circumstances falling within Article 3(2) of the Prospectus Directive, provided that no such offer of the securities shall result in a requirement for the publication by us or any underwriter of a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the Prospectus Directive. For the purposes of this provision, the expression an offer to the public in relation to any securities in any Relevant Member State means the communication in any form and by any means of sufficient information on the terms of the offer and any securities to be offered so as to enable an investor to decide to purchase any securities, as the same may be varied in that Member State by any measure implementing the Prospectus Directive in that Member State, the expression Prospectus Directive means Directive 2003/71/EC (and amendments thereto, including the 2010 PD Amending Directive, to the extent implemented in the Relevant Member State), and includes any relevant implementing measure in the Relevant Member State, and the expression 2010 PD Amending Directive means Directive 2010/73/EU.

United Kingdom

Each underwriter has represented and agreed that:

it has only communicated or caused to be communicated and will only communicate or cause to be communicated an invitation or inducement to engage in investment activity within the meaning of Section 21 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, or the FSMA, received by it in connection with the issue or sale of the securities in circumstances in which Section 21(1) of the FSMA does not apply to us; and

it has complied and will comply with all applicable provisions of the FSMA with respect to anything done by it in relation to the securities in, from or otherwise involving the United Kingdom.

Switzerland

The shares may not be publicly offered in Switzerland and will not be listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange, or the SIX, or on any other stock exchange or regulated trading facility in Switzerland. This document has been prepared without regard to the disclosure standards for issuance prospectuses under art. 652a or art. 1156 of the Swiss Code of Obligations or the disclosure standards for listing prospectuses under art. 27 ff. of the SIX Listing Rules or the listing rules of any other stock exchange or regulated trading facility in Switzerland. Neither this prospectus nor any other offering or marketing material relating to the shares or the offering may be publicly distributed or otherwise made publicly available in Switzerland.

Table of Contents

Neither this prospectus nor any other offering or marketing material relating to the offering, the Company, the shares have been or will be filed with or approved by any Swiss regulatory authority. In particular, this document will not be filed with, and the offer of shares will not be supervised by, the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority FINMA, and the offer of shares has not been and will not be authorized under the Swiss Federal Act on Collective Investment Schemes, or the CISA. The investor protection afforded to acquirers of interests in collective investment schemes under the CISA does not extend to acquirers of shares.

Notice to Prospective Investors in the Dubai International Financial Centre

This prospectus relates to an Exempt Offer in accordance with the Offered Securities Rules of the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA). This prospectus is intended for distribution only to persons of a type specified in the Offered Securities Rules of the DFSA. It must not be delivered to, or relied on by, any other person. The DFSA has no responsibility for reviewing or verifying any documents in connection with Exempt Offers. The DFSA has not approved this prospectus nor taken steps to verify the information set forth herein and has no responsibility for the prospectus. The shares to which this prospectus relates may be illiquid and/or subject to restrictions on their resale. Prospective purchasers of the shares offered should conduct their own due diligence on the shares. If you do not understand the contents of this prospectus you should consult an authorized financial advisor.

Notice to Prospective Investors in Australia

No placement document, prospectus, product disclosure statement or other disclosure document has been lodged with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), in relation to the offering. This prospectus does not constitute a prospectus, product disclosure statement or other disclosure document under the Corporations Act 2001 (the Corporations Act), and does not purport to include the information required for a prospectus, product disclosure statement or other disclosure document under the Corporations Act.

Any offer in Australia of the shares may only be made to persons (the Exempt Investors) who are sophisticated investors (within the meaning of section 708(8) of the Corporations Act), professional investors (within the meaning of section 708(11) of the Corporations Act) or otherwise pursuant to one or more exemptions contained in section 708 of the Corporations Act so that it is lawful to offer the shares without disclosure to investors under Chapter 6D of the Corporations Act.

The shares applied for by Exempt Investors in Australia must not be offered for sale in Australia in the period of 12 months after the date of allotment under the offering, except in circumstances where disclosure to investors under Chapter 6D of the Corporations Act would not be required pursuant to an exemption under section 708 of the Corporations Act or otherwise or where the offer is pursuant to a disclosure document which complies with Chapter 6D of the Corporations Act. Any person acquiring shares must observe such Australian on-sale restrictions.

This prospectus contains general information only and does not take account of the investment objectives, financial situation or particular needs of any particular person. It does not contain any securities recommendations or financial product advice. Before making an investment decision, investors need to consider whether the information in this prospectus is appropriate to their needs, objectives and circumstances, and, if necessary, seek expert advice on those matters.

Hong Kong

The shares may not be offered or sold by means of any document other than (i) in circumstances which do not constitute an offer to the public within the meaning of the Companies Ordinance (Cap.32, Laws of Hong Kong), or (ii) to professional investors within the meaning of the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap.571, Laws of

Table of Contents

Hong Kong) and any rules made thereunder, or (iii) in other circumstances which do not result in the document being a prospectus within the meaning of the Companies Ordinance (Cap.32, Laws of Hong Kong), and no advertisement, invitation or document relating to the shares may be issued or may be in the possession of any person for the purpose of issue (in each case whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere), which is directed at, or the contents of which are likely to be accessed or read by, the public in Hong Kong (except if permitted to do so under the laws of Hong Kong) other than with respect to shares which are or are intended to be disposed of only to persons outside Hong Kong or only to professional investors within the meaning of the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap. 571, Laws of Hong Kong) and any rules made thereunder.

Singapore

This prospectus has not been registered as a prospectus with the Monetary Authority of Singapore. Accordingly, this prospectus and any other document or material in connection with the offer or sale, or invitation for subscription or purchase, of the shares may not be circulated or distributed, nor may the shares be offered or sold, or be made the subject of an invitation for subscription or purchase, whether directly or indirectly, to persons in Singapore other than (i) to an institutional investor under Section 274 of the Securities and Futures Act, Chapter 289 of Singapore (the SFA), (ii) to a relevant person, or any person pursuant to Section 275(1A), and in accordance with the conditions, specified in Section 275 of the SFA or (iii) otherwise pursuant to, and in accordance with the conditions of, any other applicable provision of the SFA.

Where the shares are subscribed or purchased under Section 275 by a relevant person which is: (a) a corporation (which is not an accredited investor) the sole business of which is to hold investments and the entire share capital of which is owned by one or more individuals, each of whom is an accredited investor; or (b) a trust (where the trustee is not an accredited investor) whose sole purpose is to hold investments and each beneficiary is an accredited investor, shares, debentures and units of shares and debentures of that corporation or the beneficiaries' rights and interest in that trust shall not be transferable for 6 months after that corporation or that trust has acquired the shares under Section 275 except: (1) to an institutional investor under Section 274 of the SFA or to a relevant person, or any person pursuant to Section 275(1A), and in accordance with the conditions, specified in Section 275 of the SFA; (2) where no consideration is given for the transfer; or (3) by operation of law.

Japan

The securities have not been and will not be registered under the Financial Instruments and Exchange Law of Japan (the Financial Instruments and Exchange Law) and each underwriter has agreed that it will not offer or sell any securities, directly or indirectly, in Japan or to, or for the benefit of, any resident of Japan (which term as used herein means any person resident in Japan, including any corporation or other entity organized under the laws of Japan), or to others for re-offering or resale, directly or indirectly, in Japan or to a resident of Japan, except pursuant to an exemption from the registration requirements of, and otherwise in compliance with, the Financial Instruments and Exchange Law and any other applicable laws, regulations and ministerial guidelines of Japan.

Table of Contents

Legal matters

Cooley LLP, Boston, Massachusetts, will pass upon the validity of the issuance of the common stock offered hereby. The underwriters are being represented by Latham & Watkins LLP, Costa Mesa, California.

Experts

The financial statements and the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting incorporated in this Prospectus by reference to the Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2013 and for the period from September 9, 2003 (date of inception) through December 31, 2013, have been audited by McGladrey LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in their report incorporated by reference herein and have been so incorporated in reliance upon such reports and upon the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

Where you can find more information

We are a reporting company and file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy these reports, proxy statements and other information at the SEC's public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549 or at the SEC's other public reference facilities. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for more information about the operation of the public reference rooms. You can request copies of these documents by writing to the SEC and paying a fee for the copying costs. In addition, the SEC maintains an Internet site at <http://www.sec.gov> that contains reports, proxy and information statements and other information regarding issuers that file electronically with the SEC. Our SEC filings are available on the SEC's Internet site. We maintain a website at <http://www.ziopharm.com>. Information found on, or accessible through, our website is not a part of, and is not incorporated into, this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus, and you should not consider it part of this prospectus supplement or part of the accompanying prospectus.

Table of Contents

Incorporation of information by reference

We are allowed to incorporate by reference information contained in documents that we file with the SEC. This means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents and that the information in this prospectus supplement is not complete and you should read the information incorporated by reference for more detail. Information in this prospectus supplement supersedes information incorporated by reference that we filed with the SEC prior to the date of this prospectus supplement, while information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and supersede the information in this prospectus supplement.

We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and any future filings we will make with the SEC under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act from the date of this prospectus supplement but prior to the termination of the offering of the securities covered hereby (other than Current Reports or portions thereof furnished under Item 2.02 or 7.01 of Form 8-K):

Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2013, filed on March 3, 2014;

The information specifically incorporated by reference into our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2013 from our Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A, filed on April 30, 2014;

Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2014, June 30, 2014, and September 30, 2014, filed on May 8, 2014, August 7, 2014, and October 30, 2014, respectively;

Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on January 8, 2014, January 15, 2014, February 10, 2014, March 3, 2014 (excluding Item 2.02), March 28, 2014, April 8, 2014, May 8, 2014 (excluding Item 2.02), May 22, 2014 (excluding Item 7.01), June 19, 2014, July 31, 2014, August 7, 2014 (excluding Item 2.02), September 16, 2014, October 30, 2014 (excluding Item 2.02), December 3, 2014 (excluding Item 7.01), January 14, 2015, second filing on January 14, 2015 (excluding Item 7.01), and January 28, 2015; and

The description of our common stock set forth in the registration statement on Form 8-A registering our common stock under Section 12 of the Exchange Act, which was filed with the SEC on September 20, 2006, including any amendments or reports filed for purposes of updating such description.

We will provide to each person, including any beneficial owner, to whom a prospectus is delivered a copy of any or all of the documents that are incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement but not delivered with this prospectus, including exhibits that are specifically incorporated by reference in such documents. You may request a copy of such documents at no cost, by writing or telephoning us at the following address or telephone number:

ZIOPHARM Oncology, Inc.

One First Avenue, Parris Building 34, Navy Yard Plaza

Boston, Massachusetts 02129

Attention: Chief Legal Officer

Telephone: (617) 259-1970

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

Common Stock

Preferred Stock

Warrants

Debt Securities

From time to time, we may offer and sell any combination of common stock, preferred stock, warrants and debt securities, in one or more offerings. We may also offer common stock or preferred stock upon conversion of debt securities, common stock upon conversion of preferred stock, or common stock, preferred stock or debt securities upon the exercise of warrants. We may offer these securities separately or as units, which may include combinations of the securities.

This prospectus describes the general terms of these securities and the general manner in which these securities will be offered. We will provide the specific terms of these offerings and securities in one or more supplements to this prospectus. We may also authorize one or more free writing prospectuses to be provided to you in connection with these offerings. The prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should carefully read this prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, as well as any documents incorporated by reference, before buying any of the securities being offered.

Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Capital Market under the symbol ZIOP. On January 30, 2015, the closing price of our common stock, as reported on the NASDAQ Capital Market, was \$8.95.

This prospectus may not be used to consummate a sale of any securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

We may offer these securities in amounts, at prices and on terms determined at the time of offering. The securities may be sold directly by us to investors, through agents designated from time to time or to or through underwriters or dealers, on a continuous or delayed basis. For additional information on the methods of sale, you should refer to the section entitled Plan of Distribution in this prospectus. If any agents or underwriters are involved in the sale of any securities with respect to which this prospectus is being delivered, the names of such agents or underwriters and any applicable fees, commissions, discounts and options to purchase additional securities will be set forth in a prospectus supplement. The price to the public of such securities and the net proceeds that we expect to receive from such sale will also be set forth in a prospectus supplement.

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should review carefully the risks and uncertainties described under the heading Risk Factors contained in the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, and under similar headings in the other documents that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. A representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this Prospectus is February 2, 2015.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<u>About This Prospectus</u>	i
<u>Prospectus Summary</u>	1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	10
<u>Special Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements</u>	11
<u>Ratio Of Earnings To Fixed Charges And To Combined Fixed Charges And Preference Dividends</u>	12
<u>Use Of Proceeds</u>	13
<u>Dilution</u>	13
<u>Description Of Capital Stock</u>	14
<u>Description Of Debt Securities</u>	17
<u>Description Of Warrants</u>	24
<u>Certain Provisions Of Delaware Law, The Certificate Of Incorporation And Bylaws</u>	26
<u>Plan Of Distribution</u>	28
<u>Legal Matters</u>	30
<u>Experts</u>	30
<u>Where You Can Find More Information</u>	30
<u>Incorporation Of Information By Reference</u>	31

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the Commission, using a shelf registration process. Under this shelf registration process, from time to time, we may sell any combination of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we offer and sell securities under this prospectus, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain more specific information about the terms of the applicable offering. The prospectus supplement may include a discussion of risks or other special considerations applicable to us or the offered securities. We may also authorize one or more free writing prospectuses to be provided to you that may contain material information relating to these offerings. The prospectus supplement, and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you, may also add, update or change the information contained in this prospectus or in the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus. If there is any inconsistency between the information in this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, you must rely on the information in the prospectus supplement. We urge you to carefully read this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, together with the information incorporated herein by reference as described under the headings Where You Can Find More Information and Incorporation of Information by Reference before buying any of the securities being offered. **THIS PROSPECTUS MAY NOT BE USED TO CONSUMMATE A SALE OF SECURITIES UNLESS IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY A PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT.**

You should rely only on the information contained in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus or any applicable prospectus supplement, along with the information contained in any related free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. No dealer, salesperson or other person is authorized to give any information or to represent anything not contained in this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement or any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you. You must not rely on any unauthorized information or representation. This prospectus is an offer to sell only the securities offered hereby, but only under circumstances and in jurisdictions

where it is lawful to do so. The information in this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement or any related free writing prospectus is accurate only as of the date on the front of the document, and any information we have incorporated by reference is accurate only as of the date of the document incorporated by reference, regardless of the time of delivery of this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement or any related free writing prospectus, or any sale of a security. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

i.

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS SUMMARY

This summary highlights selected information contained elsewhere in this prospectus or incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and does not contain all of the information that you need to consider in making your investment decision. You should carefully read the entire prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, including the risks of investing in our securities discussed under the heading Risk Factors contained in the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, and under similar headings in the other documents that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus. You should also carefully read the information incorporated by reference into this prospectus, including our financial statements, and the exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. Unless otherwise indicated, ZIOPHARM, our Company, we, us, our and similar terms refer to ZIOPHARM Oncology, Inc.

Company overview

ZIOPHARM Oncology, Inc. is a biopharmaceutical company that seeks to acquire, develop and commercialize, on its own or with commercial partners, a diverse portfolio of cancer therapies that can address unmet medical needs through synthetic biology. Pursuant to an exclusive channel agreement with Intrexon Corporation, or Intrexon, we obtained rights to Intrexon's synthetic biology platform for use in the field of oncology, which included a clinical stage product candidate, Ad-RTS-IL-12 used with the oral activator veledimex. The synthetic biology platform is an industrialized engineering approach for molecular and cell biology and gene control. It employs an inducible gene-delivery system that enables controlled in vivo expression of genes that produce therapeutic proteins to treat cancer. Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex uses this gene delivery system to produce Interleukin-12, or IL-12, a potent, naturally occurring anti-cancer protein. We have completed two Phase 2 studies evaluating Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex, the first for the treatment of metastatic melanoma, and the second for the treatment of metastatic breast cancer; data from these Phase 2 studies was presented in December 2014. We are continuing to pursue intratumoral injection of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in breast cancer and brain cancer.

In addition to our synthetic biology programs, we recently obtained an exclusive, worldwide license to certain immuno-oncology technologies owned and licensed by The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, or MD Anderson, including technologies relating to novel chimeric antigen receptors, or CARs, natural killer, or NK cells and T cell receptors, or TCRs. Combining these technologies with Intrexon's technology suite and clinically tested RheoSwitch Therapeutic System®, or RTS®, IL-12 modules, we plan to develop CAR-T and other immune cells that will target and kill cancer cells. We plan to leverage the synergy between the platforms to accelerate a promising synthetic immuno-oncology pipeline, with up to five CAR-T therapies expected to enter the clinic in 2015 and programs for the development of allogeneic CAR-T therapies that can be used off-the-shelf expected to be initiated in 2016.

We plan to continue to combine Intrexon's technology suite with our capabilities to translate science to the patient to identify and develop additional products to stimulate or inhibit or stimulate key pathways, including those used by the body's immune system, to treat cancer.

We also have a portfolio of small molecule drug candidates, which are no longer a strategic focus of our development activities and for some of which we are seeking partners to pursue further development and potential commercialization.

1.

Table of Contents***Enabling technologies******Synthetic biology***

Synthetic biology entails the application of engineering principles to biological systems for the purpose of designing and constructing new biological systems or redesigning/modifying existing biological systems. Biological systems are governed by DNA, the building block of gene programs, which control cellular processes by coding for the production of proteins and other molecules that have a functional purpose and by regulating the activities of these molecules. This regulation occurs via complex biochemical and cellular reactions working through intricate cell signaling pathways, and control over these molecules modifies the output of biological systems. Synthetic biology has been enabled by the application of information technology and advanced statistical analysis, also known as bioinformatics, to genetic engineering, as well as by improvements in DNA synthesis. Synthetic biology aims to engineer gene-based programs or codes to modify cellular function to achieve a desired biological outcome. Its application is intended to allow more precise control of drug concentration and dose, thereby improving the therapeutic index associated with the resulting drug.

On January 6, 2011, we entered into an Exclusive Channel Partner Agreement with Intrexon, which we refer to as the Channel Agreement, to develop and commercialize novel DNA-based therapeutics in the field of cancer treatment by combining Intrexon's synthetic biology platform with our capabilities to translate science to the patient. As a result, our DNA synthetic biology platform employs an inducible gene-delivery system that enables regulated and controlled delivery of genes that produce therapeutic proteins to treat cancer. The first example of this regulated controlled delivery is achieved by producing IL-12, a potent, naturally occurring anti-cancer protein, under the control of Intrexon's proprietary biological switch to turn on and off (and on and off repeatedly) the therapeutic protein expression at the tumor site. We and Intrexon refer to this switch as the RheoSwitch Therapeutic System[®] or RTS[®] platform. Our initial drug candidate being developed using the synthetic biology platform is Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex.

More detailed descriptions of our clinical development for each are set forth in this report under the caption Product candidates below.

Immuno-oncology

Immuno-oncology, which utilizes a patient's own immune system to treat cancer, is one of the most actively pursued areas of research by biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies today. Cancer cells contain mutated proteins and may overexpress other proteins usually found in the body at low levels. The immune system typically recognizes unusual or aberrant cell protein expression and eliminates these cells in a highly efficient process known as immune surveillance. A central player in immune surveillance is a type of white blood cell known as the T cell. In healthy individuals, T cells identify and kill infected or abnormal cells, including cancer cells. Cancer cells develop the ability to evade immune surveillance, which is a key factor in their growth, spread, and persistence. In the last five years, there has been substantial scientific progress in countering these evasion mechanisms using immunotherapies, or therapies that activate the immune system.

On January 13, 2015, we, together with Intrexon, entered into a license agreement with MD Anderson, which we refer to as the MD Anderson License. Pursuant to the MD Anderson License, we and Intrexon hold an exclusive, worldwide license to certain technologies owned and licensed by MD Anderson including technologies relating to novel CAR-T cell therapies arising from the laboratory of Laurence Cooper, M.D., Ph.D., professor of pediatrics at MD Anderson, as well as either co-exclusive or non-exclusive licenses under certain related technologies.

Combining the non-viral genetic engineering technologies we licensed from MD Anderson together with Intrexon's industrialized approach to gene engineering and cell control, we believe we can rapidly and efficiently reprogram T cells to express a particular CAR or TCR construct that will enable the T cell to recognize and target

2.

Table of Contents

cancer cells. CAR-T cells target cell surface tumor antigens, such as CD-19, that exist on cancer cells and that are independent of human leukocyte antigens, or HLAs, and which we refer to as public antigens. TCRs target tumor antigens that are dependent on HLAs and which we refer to as private antigens. Natural killer cells target tumors with loss of HLAs, or tumors with no antigens. Most CAR-T cell and TCR products currently being developed by competitors are autologous, or derived from the patient's own blood, and gene engineered with viral technology. As a result, the patient's blood must be harvested, shipped to a manufacturing facility where it is modified using a retrovirus to express the CAR or TCR, and then shipped back to be infused into the patient. The process can take several weeks to a month and is very labor intensive and costly. Currently, this complex technique can only be done in very sophisticated laboratories. We believe we will be able to manufacture our CAR-T cells and TCRs using non-viral methods, which we expect will enable a simpler process requiring only days or hours and result in a lower cost of manufacturing. Our non-viral methods could also potentially enable autologous point of care treatment, where a patient's own T cells would be modified at or near the point of care, for example, utilizing a local blood bank, to express the CAR-T or TCR construct and then infused back into the patient, potentially during the same visit. In addition, we intend to use our non-viral methods to develop allogeneic treatments that can be used off-the-shelf. An allogeneic off-the-shelf treatment would enable a patient to be treated with a CAR-T or TCR construct that is created from a separate healthy donor, personalized for that patient, and then distributed to the point of care. Our non-viral methods, which we believe are nimble, fast and less costly than other approaches, together with our industrialized, scalable engineering approach are expected to enable highly efficient and less costly manufacturing approaches to gene engineered cell-based therapy. In addition, our proprietary RheoSwitch Therapeutic System[®] may give us the ability to control in vivo gene expression (on-off-on-off etc.) in CAR-T or TCR cells, which we believe could result in significantly lower toxicity compared to other products currently in development.

Product candidates

The following chart identifies our current synthetic biology product candidates and their stage of development, each of which are described in more detail below.

3.

Table of Contents

Synthetic biology programs

Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex

Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex has been evaluated in two Phase 2 studies, the first for the treatment of metastatic melanoma, and the second for the treatment of unresectable recurrent or metastatic breast cancer. Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex is our lead product candidate, which uses our gene delivery system to produce IL-12, a potent, naturally occurring anti-cancer protein.

More specifically, IL-12 is a potent immunostimulatory cytokine which activates and recruits dendritic cells that facilitate the cross-priming of tumor antigen-specific T cells. Intratumoral administration of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex, which allows for adjustment of IL-12 gene expression upon varying the dose of veledimex, is designed to reduce the toxicity elicited by systemic delivery of IL-12, and increase efficacy through high intratumoral expression.

We reported the controlled local expression of IL-12 as an immunotherapeutic treatment of glioma (brain cancer) in animal models through the use of the RTS® at the October 2013 AACR-NCI-EORTC conference. Veledimex brain penetration was demonstrated in normal mice and monkeys with intact blood brain barriers. Treatment with Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex and DC-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex both demonstrated dose-related increase in survival in the mouse GL-261 glioma model with no adverse clinical signs observed. In December 2013, we announced the unanimous approval of the Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee of the National Institutes of Health, or the RAC/NIH, for the initiation of a Phase 1 study of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex, in subjects with recurrent or progressive high grade gliomas. The U.S Food and Drug Administration, or FDA, has requested additional nonclinical information to support the Phase 1 study and this data has been generated. Subject to reaching agreement with the FDA, we anticipate initiation of the Phase 1 study during the first half of 2015. Glioblastoma is by far the most frequent malignant brain tumor and is associated with a particularly aggressive course and dismal prognosis. The current standard of care is based on surgical resection to the maximum feasible extent, followed by radiotherapy and concomitant adjuvant temozolomide. Such aggressive treatment, however, is associated with only modest improvements in survival resulting in a very high unmet medical need.

At the American Association for Cancer Research, or AACR, 2014 Annual Meeting, in April 2014, we presented data from a preclinical study conducted jointly by us and Intrexon demonstrating the anti-tumor effects and tolerability of Ad-RTS-mIL-12 in a glioblastoma murine model. Veledimex was found to effectively cross the blood brain barrier, with dose-related increases in plasma and brain tissue exposure, and no accumulation in brain tissue following repeat dosing. The study data demonstrated that administration of Ad-RTS-mIL-12 + veledimex resulted in dose-related increases in survival of four- to five-fold, without exhibiting an adverse safety profile, when compared to median survival in vehicle control groups.

At the 17th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy, or ASGCT, in May 2014, we presented results demonstrating the potent anti-tumor and anti-cancer stem cell effects of Ad-RTS-IL-12 in a preclinical glioma model. Results from human and laboratory studies of Ad-RTS-IL-12 demonstrated that precise control of IL-12 gene expression levels can be achieved using Intrexon's RTS®. Rapid, tight modulation of in vivo expression of IL-12 using the activator ligand, veledimex, was demonstrated across these studies. When IL-12 expression was switched on it rapidly led to expression and an immune response. This immune response was characterized by an increase in tumor infiltrating lymphocytes with system wide immune activation. The data presented in May 2014 further demonstrated that Ad-RTS-IL-12 has potent anti-cancer effects in a glioma model, showing both a reduction in tumor mass and prolonged survival when compared to existing treatment standards. The data also showed a significant reduction in cancer stem cells, as measured by dramatically reduced nestin levels. Cancer stem cells are thought to play a critical role in recurrence and metastasis.

At the AACR 2014 Immunology and Immunotherapy Meeting in December 2014, together with Intrexon, we presented clinical results from the Ad-RTS-hIL-12 + veledimex studies in patients with advanced breast cancer and

4.

Table of Contents

melanoma demonstrating local and systemic IL-12-mediated anti-cancer activity, as well as safety and control of both immune- and IL-12-mediated toxicity with use of the RTS[®] gene switch. In two open-label Phase 2 clinical studies, twelve patients with metastatic advanced stage breast cancer and twenty-six patients with metastatic melanoma were administered Ad-RTS-hIL-12. Following intra-tumoral injection of Ad-RTS-hIL-12, expression of IL-12 within patients was controlled by the RTS[®] gene switch using the oral activator ligand, veledimex, at doses ranging from 5mg to 160mg. All subjects had heavy tumor burden and disease progression at the time of enrollment, with mean number of prior therapies at 14 and 10 for breast cancer and melanoma patients, respectively. Treatment with Ad-RTS-hIL-12 + veledimex resulted in an increase in the immune cytokine IL-12 and downstream cytokines, IFN-g, IP-10 and IL-10, resulting in a significant increase in the number of CD8+ T-cells. Among seven evaluable subjects in the Phase 2 clinical study of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in patients with recurrent or metastatic breast cancer, three had stable disease, including one triple negative breast cancer subject who crossed the primary endpoint of 16 week progression free survival, for a disease control rate (stable disease or better) of 43%. Target lesions and tumor burden were significantly reduced in approximately 40% of patients. In the Phase 1/2 study of Ad-RTS-hIL-12 + veledimex in subjects with unresectable stage III/IV melanoma, of eighteen evaluable subjects, one had a partial response and six had stable disease, for a disease control rate of 39%. In melanoma patients for whom a response was observed, there was evidence of local and systemic anti-cancer activity. The adverse event profile of Ad-RTS-hIL-12 + veledimex in both melanoma and breast cancer was predictable, reversible and characteristic of immune activation. The most common³ Grade 3 treatment emergent adverse events, or TEAEs, in breast cancer and melanoma included neutropenia and electrolyte abnormalities (21%) each, LFTs increased (16%), leukopenia (13%) and pyrexia, hypotension, lymphopenia, anemia, and cytokine release syndrome (11%) each. Importantly, all TEAEs and SAEs³ Grade 3 reversed rapidly upon discontinuation of veledimex oral dosing.

Also at the AACR 2014 Immunology and Immunotherapy Meeting in December 2014, together with Intrexon, we presented preclinical data supporting the potential for cytolytic activity against solid tumor targets with allogeneic, genetically-modified stem cells enabled for controlled release of cell-linking moieties, or CLMs, within the tumor micro-environment and preclinical data describing the development of a novel, high-throughput screening technology for rapidly identifying bi-specific antibodies capable of inducing targeted immunologic activity through the activation of T-cells or other immune cells against tumors. CLMs are small bi-specific antibody fragments capable of directing potent T-cell mediated tumor lysis by bridging the immunologic synapses of T-cells and surface targets on tumor cells. Previous studies have shown that the systemic distribution and pharmacokinetic profile of bi-specific antibodies limit their utility for many target/effector combinations. In two preclinical studies, Intrexon and Ziopharm researchers interrogated a large number of CLM-based effectors for their ability to activate white blood cells from peripheral blood and lyse receptor target-positive tumor cells. Allogeneic, tumor targeting stem cells were then genetically modified to express CLMs within the tumor microenvironment using the RTS[®] platform as a mechanism for providing spatial and temporal control. The first study demonstrated the ability of Intrexon's proprietary image-based screening systems and rapid DNA assembly to screen a large number of EGFR and HER2 receptor-targeted CLM variants for their ability to recruit CD3+ T-cells and mediate selective cell killing against target positive cells in peripheral blood co-cultures. The image-based screening platform allowed for real time target cell killing information to be obtained, as well as kinetic cell morphologic analyses to understand the dynamics of killing activity, thereby shortening the developmental timeline to lead candidate selection. The second study validated these CLM candidates in scalable, allogeneic endometrial regenerative cells, or ERCs, genetically modified to express an anti-CD3-anti-EGFR CLM under RTS[®] ligand inducible control. Expression of CLMs under the RTS[®] inducible promoter provided effective control of CLM secretion and modulation of killing activity, with veledimex-dependent cytotoxicity of greater than 80% against an EGFR+ KRAS mutant lung cancer cell model. CLM-expressing ERCs were found to be effective in co-culture killing assays at cellular doses as low as 1% of target cells. These data supported the feasibility of localized cytolytic activity of CLM-secreting allogeneic cell therapy products against EGFR+ KRAS mutant solid tumor malignancies.

We have completed the Phase 2 monotherapy studies in melanoma and breast cancer using Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex. Additionally, we expect a future trial with IL-12 in combination therapies with standard of care for

5.

Table of Contents

breast cancer. As the treatment of advanced melanoma has undergone and continues to undergo a rapid evolution with the introduction and approval of highly promising new single and combination agents, the standard of care in this indication has become uncertain, resulting in a much more competitive and commercially unpredictable environment. As a result, we are pursuing intratumoral injection of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in brain cancer and breast cancer, and will pause further development of Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in melanoma with intratumoral injection. However, through current strategic initiatives, we expect to utilize RTS-IL-12 + veledimex in cell based immunotherapy of melanoma and other cancers. We plan to initiate a Phase 1 trial to evaluate Ad-RTS-IL-12 + veledimex as a single agent in the treatment of patients with brain cancer in the first half of 2015.

CAR-T/cytokine programs

We are actively pursuing non-viral, genetic engineering technologies to develop novel CAR-T, NK and TCR cells. Combining this technology with Intrexon's industrialized synthetic biologic engineering and clinically tested and validated RTS IL-12 modules, represents a differentiated approach to genetically modified CAR-T cell and other immune cells. Employing novel cell engineering techniques and multigenic gene programs, we expect to implement next-generation non-viral adoptive cellular therapies based on designer cytokines and CARs under

control of RTS® technology targeting both hematologic malignancies and solid tumors. We plan to leverage the synergy between the platforms to accelerate a promising synthetic immuno-oncology pipeline, with up to five CAR-T therapies expected to enter the clinic in 2015 and programs for the development of allogeneic CAR-T therapies that can be used off-the-shelf expected to be initiated in 2016.

Research suggests that T cells can be re-programmed to have a very strong anti-cancer therapeutic effect through the expression of CARs to redirect specificity to tumors without HLA restrictions. The signature event within this field has resulted from the infusion of T cells expressing CARs into patients with B cells leukemias and lymphomas. Many of these patients have responded to these new therapies with a durable and dramatic anti-tumor effect after infusing CD19-specific T cells. Despite the highly promising results that have been demonstrated by early researchers in the field, current technologies and approaches have shown a number of serious drawbacks, including toxicity, manufacturing complexity and expense. A particular problem is that infusions of T cells into patients with large amounts of disease have invariably led to significant issues of toxicity for recipient patients. These toxicities primarily involve three major, potentially catastrophic side-effects:

1. The rapid killing of tumor cells releases a large number intracellular constituents that are very toxic to various organs and is called tumor lysis syndrome that can be fatal,
2. the supra-physiologic release of cytokines (cytokine storm) that causes fever, instability of blood pressure, mental status changes and on occasion, death, and
3. on-target, and off-tissue toxicity represented by the concomitant damage of normal B cells and loss of humoral (antibody) immunity.

We expect to be able to tightly control expansion and activation of CAR-T cells in the body, which has the potential to alleviate or abrogate these toxicities.

MD Anderson's platform, which uses the exclusive Sleeping Beauty system, or SB system, generates and characterizes new CAR-T designs, which enables a high throughput approach to evaluate the CAR-T. This EZ-CAR-T non-viral system is used to fashion immuno-receptors that differ in specificity and ability to activate T cells. These CAR-T molecules are evaluated in a go/no go system based on serial killing and protection of T cells from activation-induced cell death. Non-viral gene transfer using the SB system is unique in the field of oncology. Examples of cell engineering techniques that we expect to employ with the SB system are induced pluripotent stem cell (iPSC) processing technologies combined with Laser-enabled Analysis and Processing, or LEAP[®], which consists of computerized image-based selection and laser processing for very rapid cell identification and purification as well as AttSite[®] Recombinases, which involves stable, targeted gene integration

6.

Table of Contents

and expression with proprietary serine recombinases. We believe the advanced DNA vectors derived from SB can be used to avoid the expense and manufacturing difficulty associated with creating CAR-T cells using viral vectors. After electroporation, the transposon/transposase improves the efficiency of integration of plasmids used to express CAR and other transgenes in T cells. Propagation of genetically modified T cells on activating and propagating cells, or AaPC, provide a competitive advantage over other non-viral methods of modification. The SB system combined with artificial antigen-presenting cells can selectively propagate and thus retrieve CAR+ T cells suitable for human application. T cells can also be genetically modified using these technologies to target a panel (several) cancer antigen targets. We are on the verge of implementing technology to manufacture minimally-manipulated T cells within days of gene transfer by electroporation.

We expect this platform will rapidly integrate with Intrexon's RTS® and multigenic control gene programs. The programs are also designed and built for rapid transition to universal donor products or minimally manipulated point of care products. Dr. Laurence Cooper and colleagues at MD Anderson recently published research which demonstrated that transformed, primary, and pluripotent stem cells can be permanently modified to eliminate HLA-A expression, demonstrating how to generate *a priori* cells from one allogeneic donor for infusion into multiple recipients representing a significant step towards our goal of on-demand therapy that can be pre-deployed at multiple sites and infused when needed. The primary factor limiting the development of a universal donor product is the existence of graft-vs-host response, or GVHD. GVHD occurs because the newly transplanted cells regard the recipient's body as foreign. When this happens, the newly transplanted cells attack the recipient's body. Additional research from Dr. Cooper and colleagues at MD Anderson suggests that universal allogeneic T cells generated from one donor could be administered to multiple recipients. This is achieved by genetically editing CD19-specific CAR+ T cells to eliminate expression of the endogenous $\alpha\beta$ TCR, the gene responsible for triggering GVHD, without compromising CAR-dependent effector functions. Genetically modified T cells are generated using the SB system to stably introduce the CD19-specific CAR with subsequent permanent deletion of α or β TCR chains with nucleases. The translation of the SB system and AaPC for use in clinical trials highlights how a nimble and cost-effective approach to developing genetically modified T cells can be used to implement clinical trials infusing next-generation T cells with improved therapeutic potential. We are expanding our initial trials targeting CD19 and planning to conduct additional trials with re-designed CAR-Ts expanding beyond CD19+ tumor cells.

Anticipated Milestones

We expect the following milestones to occur in 2015 and 2016:

Intra-tumoral IL-12 RheoSwitch® programs:

Early data is expected in the fourth quarter of 2015 for our Phase 1/2 study in Breast Cancer with standard of care.

Early data is expected in the fourth quarter of 2015 for our Phase 1 study of Glioblastoma multiforme (GBM).

CAR-T programs:

We expect to initiate two Phase 1 studies of next-generation CD19 CARs in the second quarter of 2015.

We expect to initiate a Phase 1 study of next-generation CAR with an inducible cytokine in the fourth quarter of 2015.

We expect to initiate a novel CAR for myeloid malignancies in the fourth quarter of 2015.

We expect to receive interim data on two Phase 1 CARs studies in advanced leukemia and lymphomas in the fourth quarter of 2015.

7.

Table of Contents

We expect to initiate other leukemia and solid tumor CAR-T cell studies in 2016.

We expect to initiate allogeneic, off-the-shelf T-cell studies in 2016.

Data from all programs is expected in 2015 and 2016. We are also evaluating additional potential preclinical candidates and continuing discovery efforts aimed at identifying other potential product candidates under our Channel Agreement with Intrexon. In addition, we may seek to enhance our pipeline in synthetic biology through focused strategic transactions, which may include acquisitions, partnerships and in-licensing activities. We are actively seeking to out-license some or all of our small molecule programs to further support our synthetic biology efforts.

Small molecule programs

In addition to our synthetic biology programs discussed above, we have certain rights to three small molecule programs, palifosfamide (or isophosphoramidate mustard), darinaparsin and indibulin, all of which we are no longer actively pursuing. With respect to palifosfamide, in March 2013, we announced that the pivotal Phase 3 study, PICASSO 3, did not meet its primary endpoint of progression-free survival, and that we would terminate our development program in metastatic soft tissue sarcoma. In addition, we recently received the overall survival endpoint data from our study of palifosfamide in combination with carboplatin and etoposide chemotherapy versus carboplatin and etoposide alone in chemotherapy naïve patients with metastatic small cell lung cancer, which we refer to as MATISSE, which data will be submitted for presentation at a scientific forum during the first half of 2015.

We are seeking transactions with third parties for the possible out-license of palifosfamide. With respect to darinaparsin, we have entered into an amended and restated global licensing agreement with Solasia Pharma K.K., or Solasia, on July 31, 2014 granting Solasia an exclusive worldwide license to develop and commercialize darinaparsin, and related organoarsenic molecules, in both intravenous and oral forms in all indications for human use. In exchange, we will be eligible to receive from Solasia development-and sales-based milestones, a royalty on net sales of darinaparsin, once commercialized, and a percentage of any sublicense revenues generated by Solasia. During 2014, we determined to no longer pursue clinical development of indibulin.

Recent developments

Expected cash as of December 31, 2014

Based upon preliminary estimates, we expect to have approximately \$43 million in cash and cash equivalents as of December 31, 2014. We have not yet completed our year-end financial close process for the year ended December 31, 2014. This estimate of our cash and cash equivalents as of December 31, 2014 is based on preliminary estimates of our financial results that we expect to report for the period. These estimates are subject to completion of our financial closing procedures. Our independent registered public accounting firm, McGladrey LLP, has not audited, reviewed or compiled these estimates. These estimates are not a comprehensive statement of our financial results for the year ended December 31, 2014 and our actual results may differ materially from these estimates as a result of the completion of our financial closing procedures, final adjustments and other developments arising between now and the time that our financial results for this period are finalized.

Development plans

Our current plan is to raise additional capital to support further development activities for our strategic product candidates. Based upon our current plans and without taking into account the net proceeds of this offering, we anticipate that our cash resources will be sufficient to fund our operations into the third quarter of 2015. This forecast

of cash resources is forward-looking information that involves risks and uncertainties, and the actual

8.

Table of Contents

amount of our expenses could vary materially and adversely as a result of a number of factors, including the factors discussed in the Risk Factors section of the applicable prospectus supplement and the uncertainties applicable to our forecast for the overall sufficiency of our capital resources. We have based our estimates on assumptions that may prove to be wrong, and our expenses could prove to be significantly higher than we currently anticipate. In particular, pursuant to the MD Anderson License, MD Anderson agreed to transfer to us certain existing research programs described in the MD Anderson License and we, together with Intrexon, agreed to enter into a research and development agreement pursuant to which we will provide funding for certain research and development activities of MD Anderson for a period of three years from the date of the MD Anderson License, in an amount between \$15 and \$20 million per year. In addition, we also expect to enter into additional collaboration and technology transfer agreements with MD Anderson and Intrexon to accelerate technology and clinical development of these product candidates. We expect to increase the level of our overall research and development expenses significantly going forward as a result of each of these items. Further, in light of our entry into the MD Anderson License, we expect to establish operations in Houston, Texas that will enable us to join and collaborate with the MD Anderson academic and medical community, which may require that we add headcount in the future, and which could add to our general and administrative expenses going forward. Although our forecasts for expenses and the sufficiency of our capital resources takes into account our plans to develop the technology licensed from MD Anderson and our obligations under the MD Anderson License, the MD Anderson License was entered into on January 13, 2015 and is only beginning to be implemented, therefore the actual costs associated therewith may be significantly in excess of forecasted amounts.

Corporate Information

We originally incorporated in Colorado in September 1998 (under the name Net Escapes, Inc.) and later changed our name to EasyWeb, Inc. in February 1999. We re-incorporated in Delaware on May 16, 2005 under the same name. On September 13, 2005, we completed a reverse acquisition of privately held ZIOPHARM, Inc., a Delaware corporation. To effect this transaction, we caused ZIO Acquisition Corp., our wholly-owned subsidiary, to merge with and into ZIOPHARM, Inc., with ZIOPHARM, Inc. surviving as our wholly owned subsidiary. In accordance with the terms of the merger, the outstanding common stock of ZIOPHARM, Inc. automatically converted into the right to receive an aggregate of approximately 97.3% of our outstanding common stock (after giving effect to the transaction). Following the merger, we caused ZIOPHARM, Inc. to merge with and into us and we changed our name to ZIOPHARM Oncology, Inc. Although EasyWeb, Inc. was the legal acquirer in the transaction, we accounted for the transaction as a reverse acquisition under generally accepted accounting principles. As a result, ZIOPHARM, Inc. became the registrant with the Commission and the historical financial statements of ZIOPHARM, Inc. became our historical financial statements.

Our principal executive offices are located at One First Avenue, Parris Building 34, Navy Yard Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts 02129, and our telephone number is (617) 259-1970. Our internet site is www.ziopharm.com. Information found on, or accessible through, our website is not a part of, and is not incorporated into, this prospectus, and you should not consider it part of this prospectus or part of any prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should carefully review the risks and uncertainties described under the heading "Risk Factors" contained in the applicable prospectus supplement and any related free writing prospectus, and under similar headings in the other documents that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, before deciding whether to purchase any of the securities being offered. Each of the risk factors could adversely affect our business, operating results and financial condition, as well as adversely affect the value of an investment in our securities, and the occurrence of any of these risks might cause you to lose all or part of your investment. Moreover, the risks described are not the only ones that we face. Additional risks not presently known to us or that we currently believe are immaterial may also significantly impair our business operations.

10.

Table of Contents

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein contain, and any prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus may contain, forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act. All statements other than statements of historical facts contained in this prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein contain, and any prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus are forward-looking statements. These statements relate to future events or to our future financial performance and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performances or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements may include, but are not limited to statements about:

- the progress, timing and results of preclinical and clinical trials involving our drug candidates;
- the progress of our research and development programs;
- our plans or others' plans to conduct future clinical trials or research and development efforts;
- the risk that final trial data may not support interim analysis of the viability of our drug candidates;
- our plans and expectations regarding partnering our drug candidates;
- the benefits to be derived from relationships with our collaborators;
- the receipt or anticipated receipt of regulatory clearances and approvals;
- estimates of the potential markets for our drug candidates;
- our ability to adequately protect our intellectual property rights;
- the use of proceeds from this offering;
- our estimates of future revenues and profitability;
- completive risks in our industry;

our estimates regarding our capital requirements and our ability to control costs; and

our need for additional funding and the period through which we anticipate our resources will sufficient to fund operations.

In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terms such as may, will, should, could, would, plans, anticipates, believes, estimates, projects, predicts, potential and similar expressions intended to identify forward-looking statements. These statements reflect our current views with respect to future events and are based on assumptions and subject to risks and uncertainties. Given these uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. We discuss many of these risks in greater detail under the heading Risk Factors in the applicable prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus and in our reports filed from time to time under the Securities Act and/or the Exchange Act. We encourage you to read these filings as they are made. Also, these forward-looking statements represent our estimates and assumptions only as of the date of the document containing the applicable statement.

You should read this prospectus, the documents incorporated by reference herein, and any prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering completely and with the understanding that our actual future results may be materially different from what we expect. We qualify all of the forward-looking statements in the foregoing documents by these cautionary statements.

Unless required by law, we undertake no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements to reflect new information or future events or developments. Thus, you should not assume that our silence over time means that actual events are bearing out as expressed or implied in such forward-looking statements.

Table of Contents

**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES AND TO
COMBINED FIXED CHARGES AND PREFERENCE DIVIDENDS**

The following table shows our ratio of earnings to fixed charges and the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preference dividends for the periods indicated.

	Year Ended December 31,					Nine Months Ended September 30,
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges						
Ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preference dividends						

For purposes of computing the ratio of earnings to fixed charges and the ratio of earnings to our combined fixed charges and preference dividends, earnings consist of our net income (loss) before tax benefit (provision) for the period plus fixed charges. Fixed charges consist of interest expense and amortized premiums, discounts and capitalized expenses related to indebtedness. The ratio of earnings to fixed charges and the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preference dividends were less than one-to-one for each of the periods presented. Earnings were insufficient to cover fixed charges by \$7.6 million in 2009, \$32.7 million in 2010, \$63.8 million in 2011, \$96.1 million in 2012, \$57.1 million in 2013 and \$21.4 million in the nine months ended September 30, 2014.

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

We will retain broad discretion over the use of the net proceeds from the sale of our securities offered by this prospectus. Unless we indicate otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement or in any related free writing prospectus we have authorized for use in connection with a specific offering, we anticipate that any net proceeds will be used for working capital and general corporate purposes. We will set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus our intended use for the net proceeds received from the sale of securities sold pursuant to that prospectus supplement or free writing prospectus.

DILUTION

We will set forth in a prospectus supplement the following information regarding any material dilution of the equity interests of investors purchasing securities in an offering under this prospectus:

the net tangible book value per share of our equity securities before and after the offering;

the amount of the increase in such net tangible book value per share attributable to the cash payments made by purchasers in the offering; and

the amount of the immediate dilution from the public offering price which will be absorbed by such purchasers.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

As of the date of this prospectus, our authorized capital stock consists of 280,000,000 shares, comprised of 250,000,000 shares of common stock, par value \$.001 per share, and 30,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$.001 per share. As of January 30, 2015, there were 104,428,495 shares of common stock and no shares of preferred stock issued and outstanding. Our common stock is traded on the NASDAQ Capital Market under the symbol ZIOP .

The following description summarizes the material terms of our capital stock. This summary is, however, subject to the provisions of our certificate of incorporation and bylaws. For greater detail about our capital stock, please refer to our certificate of incorporation and bylaws.

Common Stock

Voting. The holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each outstanding share of common stock owned by such stockholder on every matter properly submitted to the stockholders for their vote. Stockholders are not entitled to vote cumulatively for the election of directors. Because of this, the holders of a majority of the shares of common stock entitled to vote in any election of directors can elect all of the directors standing for election, if they should so choose. At any meeting of the stockholders, a quorum as to any matter shall consist of a majority of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter, except where a larger quorum is required by law, by our certificate of incorporation or by our bylaws.

Dividend Rights. Holders of our common stock are entitled to receive ratably dividends and other distributions of cash or any other right or property as may be declared by our board of directors out of our assets or funds legally available for such dividends or distributions. The dividend rights of holders of common stock are subject to the dividend rights of the holders of any series of preferred stock that may be issued and outstanding from time to time.

Liquidation Rights. In the event of any voluntary or involuntary liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our affairs, holders of our common stock would be entitled to share ratably in our assets that are legally available for distribution to stockholders after payment of liabilities. If we have any preferred stock outstanding at such time, the holders of such preferred stock may be entitled to distribution and/or liquidation preferences that require us to pay the applicable distribution to the holders of preferred stock before paying distributions to the holders of common stock.

Rights and Preferences. Holders of our common stock have no preemptive, conversion or subscription rights, and there are no redemption or sinking fund provisions applicable to our common stock. The rights, preferences and privileges of the holders of common stock are subject to, and may be adversely affected by, the rights of the holders of shares of any series of our preferred stock that we may designate and issue in the future.

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is American Stock Transfer & Trust Company.

See Certain Provisions of Delaware Law, the Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws for a description of provisions of our certificate of incorporation and bylaws which may have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing changes in the our control.

Preferred Stock

Pursuant to our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, our board of directors has the authority, without stockholder approval, subject to limitations prescribed by law, to provide for the issuance of up to 30,000,000 shares of preferred stock in one or more series, and by filing a certificate pursuant to the applicable law of the State of

Delaware, to establish from time to time the number of shares to be included in each such series, and to fix the designation, powers, preferences and rights of the shares of each series and any qualifications, limitations or restrictions thereof, and to increase or decrease the number of shares of any such series, but not below the number of shares of such series then outstanding.

14.

Table of Contents

We will fix the designations, voting powers, preferences and rights of the preferred stock of each series, as well as the qualifications, limitations or restrictions thereof, in the certificate of designation relating to that series. We will file as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, or will incorporate by reference from reports that we file with the Commission, the form of any certificate of designation that describes the terms of the series of preferred stock we are offering before the issuance of that series of preferred stock. This description will include:

the title and stated value;

the number of shares offered;

the liquidation preference per share;

the purchase price per share;

the dividend rate(s), period(s) and/or payment date(s) or method(s) of calculation for dividends;

whether dividends are cumulative or non-cumulative and, if cumulative, the date from which dividends will accumulate;

our right, if any, to defer payment of dividends and the maximum length of any such deferral period;

the procedures for any auction and remarketing, if any;

the provisions for a sinking fund, if any;

the provision for redemption or repurchase, if applicable, and any restrictions on our ability to exercise those redemption and repurchase rights;

any listing of the preferred stock on any securities exchange or market;

the terms and conditions, if applicable, upon which the preferred stock will be convertible into common stock, including the conversion price (or manner of calculation) and conversion period;

whether the preferred stock will be exchangeable into debt securities, and, if applicable, the exchange price, or how it will be calculated, and the exchange period;

voting rights, if any, of the preferred stock;

preemptive rights, if any;

restrictions on transfer, sale or other assignment, if any;

whether interests in the preferred stock will be represented by depositary shares;

a discussion of any material and/or special U.S. federal income tax considerations applicable to the preferred stock;

the relative ranking and preferences of the preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights upon the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our affairs;

any limitations on issuance of any class or series of preferred stock ranking senior to or on a parity with the class or series of preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our affairs; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights, limitations or restrictions of the preferred stock.

Our board of directors could authorize the issuance of shares of preferred stock with terms and conditions that could have the effect of discouraging a takeover or other transaction that might involve a premium price for holders of the shares or which holders might believe to be in their best interests. The issuance of preferred stock could adversely affect the voting power, conversion or other rights of holders of common stock and reduce the likelihood that common stockholders will receive dividend payments and payments upon liquidation.

Table of Contents

The laws of the state of Delaware, the state of our incorporation, provide that the holders of preferred stock will have the right to vote separately as a class on any proposal involving fundamental changes in the rights of holders of such preferred stock. This right is in addition to any voting rights that may be provided for in the applicable certificate of designation.

The transfer agent and registrar for any series of preferred stock will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

We may issue debt securities from time to time, in one or more series, as either senior or subordinated debt or as senior or subordinated convertible debt. While the terms we have summarized below will apply generally to any debt securities that we may offer under this prospectus, we will describe the particular terms of any debt securities that we may offer in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. The terms of any debt securities offered under a prospectus supplement may differ from the terms described below. Unless the context requires otherwise, whenever we refer to the indenture, we also are referring to any supplemental indentures that specify the terms of a particular series of debt securities.

We will issue the debt securities under the indenture that we will enter into with the trustee named in the indenture. The indenture will be qualified under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, or the Trust Indenture Act. We have filed the form of indenture as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and supplemental indentures and forms of debt securities containing the terms of the debt securities being offered will be filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part or will be incorporated by reference from reports that we file with the SEC.

The following summary of material provisions of the debt securities and the indenture is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to, all of the provisions of the indenture applicable to a particular series of debt securities. We urge you to read the applicable prospectus supplements and any related free writing prospectuses related to the debt securities that we may offer under this prospectus, as well as the complete indenture that contains the terms of the debt securities.

General

The indenture does not limit the amount of debt securities that we may issue. It provides that we may issue debt securities up to the principal amount that we may authorize and may be in any currency or currency unit that we may designate. Except for the limitations on consolidation, merger and sale of all or substantially all of our assets contained in the indenture, the terms of the indenture do not contain any covenants or other provisions designed to give holders of any debt securities protection against changes in our operations, financial condition or transactions involving us.

We may issue the debt securities issued under the indenture as discount securities, which means they may be sold at a discount below their stated principal amount. These debt securities, as well as other debt securities that are not issued at a discount, may be issued with original issue discount, or OID, for U.S. federal income tax purposes because of interest payment and other characteristics or terms of the debt securities. Material U.S. federal income tax considerations applicable to debt securities issued with OID will be described in more detail in any applicable prospectus supplement.

We will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement the terms of the series of debt securities being offered, including:

the title of the series of debt securities;

any limit upon the aggregate principal amount that may be issued;

the maturity date or dates;

the form of the debt securities of the series;

the applicability of any guarantees;

whether or not the debt securities will be secured or unsecured, and the terms of any secured debt;

whether the debt securities rank as senior debt, senior subordinated debt, subordinated debt or any combination thereof, and the terms of any subordination;

17.

Table of Contents

if the price (expressed as a percentage of the aggregate principal amount thereof) at which such debt securities will be issued is a price other than the principal amount thereof, the portion of the principal amount thereof payable upon declaration of acceleration of the maturity thereof, or if applicable, the portion of the principal amount of such debt securities that is convertible into another security or the method by which any such portion shall be determined;

the interest rate or rates, which may be fixed or variable, or the method for determining the rate and the date interest will begin to accrue, the dates interest will be payable and the regular record dates for interest payment dates or the method for determining such dates;

our right, if any, to defer payment of interest and the maximum length of any such deferral period;

if applicable, the date or dates after which, or the period or periods during which, and the price or prices at which, we may, at our option, redeem the series of debt securities pursuant to any optional or provisional redemption provisions and the terms of those redemption provisions;

the date or dates, if any, on which, and the price or prices at which we are obligated, pursuant to any mandatory sinking fund or analogous fund provisions or otherwise, to redeem, or at the holder's option to purchase, the series of debt securities and the currency or currency unit in which the debt securities are payable;

the denominations in which we will issue the series of debt securities, if other than denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof;

any and all terms, if applicable, relating to any auction or remarketing of the debt securities of that series and any security for our obligations with respect to such debt securities and any other terms which may be advisable in connection with the marketing of debt securities of that series;

whether the debt securities of the series shall be issued in whole or in part in the form of a global security or securities; the terms and conditions, if any, upon which such global security or securities may be exchanged in whole or in part for other individual securities; and the depositary for such global security or securities;

if applicable, the provisions relating to conversion or exchange of any debt securities of the series and the terms and conditions upon which such debt securities will be so convertible or exchangeable, including the conversion or exchange price, as applicable, or how it will be calculated and may be adjusted, any mandatory or optional (at our option or the holders' option) conversion or exchange features, the applicable conversion or exchange period and the manner of settlement for any conversion or exchange;

if other than the full principal amount thereof, the portion of the principal amount of debt securities of the series which shall be payable upon declaration of acceleration of the maturity thereof;

additions to or changes in the covenants applicable to the particular debt securities being issued, including, among others, the consolidation, merger or sale covenant;

additions to or changes in the events of default with respect to the securities and any change in the right of the trustee or the holders to declare the principal, premium, if any, and interest, if any, with respect to such securities to be due and payable;

additions to or changes in or deletions of the provisions relating to covenant defeasance and legal defeasance;

additions to or changes in the provisions relating to satisfaction and discharge of the indenture;

additions to or changes in the provisions relating to the modification of the indenture both with and without the consent of holders of debt securities issued under the indenture;

the currency of payment of debt securities if other than U.S. dollars and the manner of determining the equivalent amount in U.S. dollars;

Table of Contents

whether interest will be payable in cash or additional debt securities at our or the holders' option and the terms and conditions upon which the election may be made;

the terms and conditions, if any, upon which we will pay amounts in addition to the stated interest, premium, if any and principal amounts of the debt securities of the series to any holder that is not a United States person for federal tax purposes;

any restrictions on transfer, sale or assignment of the debt securities of the series; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of, or restrictions on, the debt securities, any other additions or changes in the provisions of the indenture, and any terms that may be required by us or advisable under applicable laws or regulations.

Conversion or Exchange Rights

We will set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement the terms on which a series of debt securities may be convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock or our other securities. We will include provisions as to settlement upon conversion or exchange and whether conversion or exchange is mandatory, at the option of the holder or at our option. We may include provisions pursuant to which the number of shares of our common stock or our other securities that the holders of the series of debt securities receive would be subject to adjustment.

Consolidation, Merger or Sale

Unless we provide otherwise in the prospectus supplement applicable to a particular series of debt securities, the indenture will not contain any covenant that restricts our ability to merge or consolidate, or sell, convey, transfer or otherwise dispose of our assets as an entirety or substantially as an entirety. However, any successor to or acquirer of such assets (other than a subsidiary of ours) must assume all of our obligations under the indenture or the debt securities, as appropriate.

Events of Default under the Indenture

Unless we provide otherwise in the prospectus supplement applicable to a particular series of debt securities, the following are events of default under the indenture with respect to any series of debt securities that we may issue:

if we fail to pay any installment of interest on any series of debt securities, as and when the same shall become due and payable, and such default continues for a period of 90 days; provided, however, that a valid extension of an interest payment period by us in accordance with the terms of any indenture supplemental thereto shall not constitute a default in the payment of interest for this purpose;

if we fail to pay the principal of, or premium, if any, on any series of debt securities as and when the same shall become due and payable whether at maturity, upon redemption, by declaration or otherwise, or in any payment required by any sinking or analogous fund established with respect to such series; provided, however, that a valid extension of the maturity of such debt securities in accordance with the terms of any

indenture supplemental thereto shall not constitute a default in the payment of principal or premium, if any;

if we fail to observe or perform any other covenant or agreement contained in the debt securities or the indenture, other than a covenant specifically relating to another series of debt securities, and our failure continues for 90 days after we receive written notice of such failure, requiring the same to be remedied and stating that such is a notice of default thereunder, from the trustee or holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the applicable series; and

if specified events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization occur.

If an event of default with respect to debt securities of any series occurs and is continuing, other than an event of default specified in the last bullet point above, the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in aggregate

Table of Contents

principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series, by notice to us in writing, and to the trustee if notice is given by such holders, may declare the unpaid principal of, premium, if any, and accrued interest, if any, due and payable immediately. If an event of default specified in the last bullet point above occurs with respect to us, the principal amount of and accrued interest, if any, of each issue of debt securities then outstanding shall be due and payable without any notice or other action on the part of the trustee or any holder.

The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of an affected series may waive any default or event of default with respect to the series and its consequences, except defaults or events of default regarding payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest, unless we have cured the default or event of default in accordance with the indenture. Any waiver shall cure the default or event of default.

Subject to the terms of the indenture, if an event of default under an indenture shall occur and be continuing, the trustee will be under no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under such indenture at the request or direction of any of the holders of the applicable series of debt securities, unless such holders have offered the trustee reasonable indemnity. The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series will have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee, or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee, with respect to the debt securities of that series, provided that:

the direction so given by the holder is not in conflict with any law or the applicable indenture; and

subject to its duties under the Trust Indenture Act, the trustee need not take any action that might involve it in personal liability or might be unduly prejudicial to the holders not involved in the proceeding.

A holder of the debt securities of any series will have the right to institute a proceeding under the indenture or to appoint a receiver or trustee, or to seek other remedies only if:

the holder has given written notice to the trustee of a continuing event of default with respect to that series;

the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have made written request,

such holders have offered to the trustee indemnity satisfactory to it against the costs, expenses and liabilities to be incurred by the trustee in compliance with the request; and

the trustee does not institute the proceeding, and does not receive from the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series other conflicting directions within 90 days after the notice, request and offer.

These limitations do not apply to a suit instituted by a holder of debt securities if we default in the payment of the principal, premium, if any, or interest on, the debt securities.

We will periodically file statements with the trustee regarding our compliance with specified covenants in the indenture.

Modification of Indenture; Waiver

We and the trustee may change an indenture without the consent of any holders with respect to specific matters:

to cure any ambiguity, defect or inconsistency in the indenture or in the debt securities of any series;

to comply with the provisions described above under Description of Debt Securities Consolidation, Merger or Sale;

Table of Contents

to provide for uncertificated debt securities in addition to or in place of certificated debt securities;

to add to our covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions such new covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions for the benefit of the holders of all or any series of debt securities, to make the occurrence, or the occurrence and the continuance, of a default in any such additional covenants, restrictions, conditions or provisions an event of default or to surrender any right or power conferred upon us in the indenture;

to add to, delete from or revise the conditions, limitations, and restrictions on the authorized amount, terms, or purposes of issue, authentication and delivery of debt securities, as set forth in the indenture;

to make any change that does not adversely affect the interests of any holder of debt securities of any series in any material respect;

to provide for the issuance of and establish the form and terms and conditions of the debt securities of any series as provided above under Description of Debt Securities General to establish the form of any certifications required to be furnished pursuant to the terms of the indenture or any series of debt securities, or to add to the rights of the holders of any series of debt securities;

to evidence and provide for the acceptance of appointment under any indenture by a successor trustee; or

to comply with any requirements of the SEC in connection with the qualification of any indenture under the Trust Indenture Act.

In addition, under the indenture, the rights of holders of a series of debt securities may be changed by us and the trustee with the written consent of the holders of at least a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series that is affected. However, unless we provide otherwise in the prospectus supplement applicable to a particular series of debt securities, we and the trustee may make the following changes only with the consent of each holder of any outstanding debt securities affected:

extending the fixed maturity of any debt securities of any series;

reducing the principal amount, reducing the rate of or extending the time of payment of interest, or reducing any premium payable upon the redemption of any series of any debt securities; or

reducing the percentage of debt securities, the holders of which are required to consent to any amendment, supplement, modification or waiver.

Discharge

Each indenture provides that we can elect to be discharged from our obligations with respect to one or more series of debt securities, except for specified obligations, including obligations to:

provide for payment;

register the transfer or exchange of debt securities of the series;

replace stolen, lost or mutilated debt securities of the series;

pay principal of and premium and interest on any debt securities of the series;

maintain paying agencies;

hold monies for payment in trust;

recover excess money held by the trustee;

compensate and indemnify the trustee; and

appoint any successor trustee.

21.

Table of Contents

In order to exercise our rights to be discharged, we must deposit with the trustee money or government obligations sufficient to pay all the principal of, any premium, if any, and interest on, the debt securities of the series on the dates payments are due.

Form, Exchange and Transfer

We will issue the debt securities of each series only in fully registered form without coupons and, unless we provide otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, in denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof. The indenture provides that we may issue debt securities of a series in temporary or permanent global form and as book-entry securities that will be deposited with, or on behalf of, The Depository Trust Company, or DTC, or another depository named by us and identified in the applicable prospectus supplement with respect to that series. To the extent the debt securities of a series are issued in global form and as book-entry, a description of terms relating to any book-entry securities will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

At the option of the holder, subject to the terms of the indenture and the limitations applicable to global securities described in the applicable prospectus supplement, the holder of the debt securities of any series can exchange the debt securities for other debt securities of the same series, in any authorized denomination and of like tenor and aggregate principal amount.

Subject to the terms of the indenture and the limitations applicable to global securities set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the debt securities may present the debt securities for exchange or for registration of transfer, duly endorsed or with the form of transfer endorsed thereon duly executed if so required by us or the security registrar, at the office of the security registrar or at the office of any transfer agent designated by us for this purpose. Unless otherwise provided in the debt securities that the holder presents for transfer or exchange, we will impose no service charge for any registration of transfer or exchange, but we may require payment of any taxes or other governmental charges.

We will name in the applicable prospectus supplement the security registrar, and any transfer agent in addition to the security registrar, that we initially designate for any debt securities. We may at any time designate additional transfer agents or rescind the designation of any transfer agent or approve a change in the office through which any transfer agent acts, except that we will be required to maintain a transfer agent in each place of payment for the debt securities of each series.

If we elect to redeem the debt securities of any series, we will not be required to:

issue, register the transfer of, or exchange any debt securities of that series during a period beginning at the opening of business 15 days before the day of mailing of a notice of redemption of any debt securities that may be selected for redemption and ending at the close of business on the day of the mailing; or

register the transfer of or exchange any debt securities so selected for redemption, in whole or in part, except the unredeemed portion of any debt securities we are redeeming in part.

Information Concerning the Trustee

The trustee, other than during the occurrence and continuance of an event of default under an indenture, undertakes to perform only those duties as are specifically set forth in the applicable indenture. Upon an event of default under an

indenture, the trustee must use the same degree of care as a prudent person would exercise or use in the conduct of his or her own affairs. Subject to this provision, the trustee is under no obligation to exercise any of the powers given it by the indenture at the request of any holder of debt securities unless it is offered reasonable security and indemnity against the costs, expenses and liabilities that it might incur.

Table of Contents

Payment and Paying Agents

Unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will make payment of the interest on any debt securities on any interest payment date to the person in whose name the debt securities, or one or more predecessor securities, are registered at the close of business on the regular record date for the interest.

We will pay principal of and any premium and interest on the debt securities of a particular series at the office of the paying agents designated by us, except that unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will make interest payments by check that we will mail to the holder or by wire transfer to certain holders. Unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will designate the corporate trust office of the trustee as our sole paying agent for payments with respect to debt securities of each series. We will name in the applicable prospectus supplement any other paying agents that we initially designate for the debt securities of a particular series. We will maintain a paying agent in each place of payment for the debt securities of a particular series.

All money we pay to a paying agent or the trustee for the payment of the principal of or any premium or interest on any debt securities that remains unclaimed at the end of two years after such principal, premium or interest has become due and payable will be repaid to us, and the holder of the debt security thereafter may look only to us for payment thereof.

Governing Law

The indenture and the debt securities will be governed by and construed in accordance with the internal laws of the State of New York, except to the extent that the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 is applicable.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

The following description, together with the additional information we may include in any applicable prospectus supplements and in any related free writing prospectuses that we may authorize to be distributed to you, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the warrants that we may offer under this prospectus, which may consist of warrants to purchase common stock, preferred stock or debt securities and be issued in one or more series. Warrants may be offered independently or in combination with common stock, preferred stock or debt securities offered by any prospectus supplement. While the terms we have summarized below will apply generally to any warrants that we may offer under this prospectus, we will describe the particular terms of any series of warrants in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. The following description of warrants will apply to the warrants offered by this prospectus unless we provide otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement. The applicable prospectus supplement for a particular series of warrants may specify different or additional terms.

We have filed forms of the warrant agreements and forms of warrant certificates containing the terms of the warrants that may be offered as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. We will file as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, or will incorporate by reference from reports that we file with the SEC, the form of warrant and/or the warrant agreement and warrant certificate, as applicable, that describe the terms of the particular series of warrants we are offering, and any supplemental agreements, before the issuance of such warrants. The following summaries of material terms and provisions of the warrants are subject to, and qualified in their entirety by reference to, all the provisions of the form of warrant and/or the warrant agreement and warrant certificate, as applicable, and any supplemental agreements applicable to a particular series of warrants that we may offer under this prospectus. We urge you to read the applicable prospectus supplement related to the particular series of warrants that we may offer under this prospectus, as well as any related free writing prospectuses, and the complete form of warrant and/or the warrant agreement and warrant certificate, as applicable, and any supplemental agreements, that contain the terms of the warrants.

General

We will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement the terms of the series of warrants being offered, including:

the offering price and aggregate number of warrants offered;

the currency for which the warrants may be purchased;

if applicable, the designation and terms of the securities with which the warrants are issued and the number of warrants issued with each such security or each principal amount of such security;

in the case of warrants to purchase debt securities, the principal amount of debt securities purchasable upon exercise of one warrant and the price at, and currency in which, this principal amount of debt securities may be purchased upon such exercise;

in the case of warrants to purchase common stock or preferred stock, the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock, as the case may be, purchasable upon the exercise of one warrant and the price at which these shares may be purchased upon such exercise;

the effect of any merger, consolidation, sale or other disposition of our business on the warrant agreements and the warrants;

the terms of any rights to redeem or call the warrants;

any provisions for changes to or adjustments in the exercise price or number of securities issuable upon exercise of the warrants;

the dates on which the right to exercise the warrants will commence and expire;

the manner in which the warrant agreements and warrants may be modified;

Table of Contents

a discussion of any material or special U.S. federal income tax considerations of holding or exercising the warrants;

the terms of the securities issuable upon exercise of the warrants; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of or restrictions on the warrants.

Before exercising their warrants, holders of warrants will not have any of the rights of holders of the securities purchasable upon such exercise, including:

in the case of warrants to purchase debt securities, the right to receive payments of principal of, or premium, if any, or interest on, the debt securities purchasable upon exercise or to enforce covenants in the applicable indenture; or

in the case of warrants to purchase common stock or preferred stock, the right to receive dividends, if any, or, payments upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up or to exercise voting rights, if any.

Exercise of Warrants

Each warrant will entitle the holder to purchase the securities that we specify in the applicable prospectus supplement at the exercise price that we describe in the applicable prospectus supplement. The warrants may be exercised as set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the warrants offered. Unless we otherwise specify in the applicable prospectus supplement, warrants may be exercised at any time up to the close of business on the expiration date set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the warrants offered thereby. After the close of business on the expiration date, unexercised warrants will become void.

Upon receipt of payment and the warrant or warrant certificate, as applicable, properly completed and duly executed at the corporate trust office of the warrant agent, if any, or any other office, including ours, indicated in the prospectus supplement, we will, as soon as practicable, issue and deliver the securities purchasable upon such exercise. If less than all of the warrants (or the warrants represented by such warrant certificate) are exercised, a new warrant or a new warrant certificate, as applicable, will be issued for the remaining warrants.

Governing Law

Unless we otherwise specify in the applicable prospectus supplement, the warrants and any warrant agreements will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York.

Enforceability of Rights by Holders of Warrants

Each warrant agent, if any, will act solely as our agent under the applicable warrant agreement and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust with any holder of any warrant. A single bank or trust company may act as warrant agent for more than one issue of warrants. A warrant agent will have no duty or responsibility in case of any default by us under the applicable warrant agreement or warrant, including any duty or responsibility to initiate any proceedings at law or otherwise, or to make any demand upon us. Any holder of a warrant may, without the consent of the related warrant agent or the holder of any other warrant, enforce by appropriate legal action its right to

exercise, and receive the securities purchasable upon exercise of, its warrants.

25.

Table of Contents

**CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF DELAWARE LAW,
THE CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION AND BYLAWS**

Limitations on Directors' Liability

Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and our bylaws contain provisions indemnifying our directors and officers to the fullest extent permitted by law. In addition, as permitted by Delaware law, our amended and restated certificate of incorporation provides that no director will be liable to us or our stockholders for monetary damages for breach of certain fiduciary duties as a director. The effect of this provision is to restrict our rights and the rights of our stockholders in derivative suits to recover monetary damages against a director for breach of certain fiduciary duties as a director, except that a director will be personally liable for:

the benefits to be derived from relationships with our collaborators;

any breach of his or her duty of loyalty to the registrant or its stockholders;

acts or omissions not in good faith which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law;

the payment of dividends or the redemption or purchase of stock in violation of Delaware law; or

any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit.

This provision does not affect a director's liability under the federal securities laws.

To the extent that our directors, officers and controlling persons are indemnified under the provisions contained in our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, Delaware law or contractual arrangements against liabilities arising under the Securities Act, we have been advised that in the opinion of the Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act, and is therefore unenforceable.

Provisions that May Have an Anti-Takeover Effect

Certain provisions set forth in our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, bylaws and in Delaware law, which are summarized below, are intended to enhance the likelihood of continuity and stability in the composition of our board of directors and in the policies formulated by our board of directors and to discourage certain types of transactions that may involve an actual or threatened change of control. In that regard, these provisions are designed to reduce our vulnerability to an unsolicited acquisition proposal. The provisions also are intended to discourage certain tactics that may be used in proxy fights. However, such provisions could have the effect of discouraging others from making tender offers for our shares and, as a consequence, they also may inhibit fluctuations in the market price of our common stock that could result from actual or rumored takeover attempts. Such provisions also may have the effect of preventing changes in our management.

Blank Check Preferred Stock. Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation contains provisions that permit our board of directors to issue, without any further vote or action by the stockholders, up to 30,000,000 shares of preferred stock in one or more series and, with respect to each such series, to fix the number of shares constituting the series and the designation of the series, the voting powers (if any) of the shares of the series, and the preferences and relative, participating, optional and other special rights, if any, and any qualifications, limitations or restrictions, of the shares of such series. As a result, our board of directors could authorize the issuance of shares of preferred stock with terms and conditions that could have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a transaction or a change in control that might involve a premium price for holders of the registrant's common stock or otherwise be in their best interest.

Special Meetings of Stockholders. Our bylaws provide that special meetings of stockholders may be called only by the board of directors. Stockholders are not permitted to call a special meeting of stockholders or to require that the board of directors call such a special meeting.

Table of Contents

Delaware Takeover Statute.

We are subject to Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law, or DGCL, which regulates acquisitions of some Delaware corporations. In general, Section 203 prohibits, with some exceptions, a Delaware corporation that is a public company from engaging in any business combination with any interested stockholder for a period of three years following the date that such stockholder became an interested stockholder, unless:

prior to such date, the board of directors of the corporation approved either the business combination or the transaction that resulted in the stockholder becoming an interested stockholder;

on consummation of the transaction that resulted in the stockholder becoming an interested stockholder, the interested stockholder owned at least 85% of the voting stock of the corporation outstanding at the time the transaction commenced, excluding for purposes of determining the number of shares outstanding those shares owned (x) by persons who are directors and also officers and (y) by employee stock plans in which employee participants do not have the right to determine confidentially whether shares held subject to the plan will be tendered in a tender or exchange offer; or

on or subsequent to such date, the business combination is approved by the board of directors and authorized at an annual or special meeting of stockholders, and not by written consent, by the affirmative vote of at least 66 2/3% of the outstanding voting stock that is not owned by the interested stockholder.

Section 203 of the DGCL defines business combination to include:

any merger or consolidation involving the corporation and the interested stockholder;

any sale, transfer, pledge or other disposition of 10% or more of the assets of the corporation involving the interested stockholder;

subject to certain exceptions, any transaction that results in the issuance or transfer by the corporation of any stock of the corporation to the interested stockholder;

any transaction involving the corporation that has the effect of increasing the proportionate share of the stock of any class or series of the corporation beneficially owned by the interested stockholder; or

the receipt by the interested stockholder of the benefit of any loans, advances, guarantees, pledges or other financial benefits provided by or through the corporation.

In general, Section 203 defines an interested shareholder as an entity or person beneficially owning 15% or more of the outstanding voting stock of the corporation and any entity or person affiliated with such entity or person.

27.

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities from time to time pursuant to underwritten public offerings, negotiated transactions, block trades or a combination of these methods. We may sell the securities to or through underwriters or dealers, through agents, or directly to one or more purchasers. We may distribute securities from time to time in one or more transactions:

at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed;

at market prices prevailing at the times of sale;

at prices related to such prevailing market prices; or

at negotiated prices.

A prospectus supplement or supplements (and any related free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be provided to you) will describe the terms of the offering of the securities, including, to the extent applicable:

the name or names of the underwriters, if any;

the purchase price of the securities or other consideration therefor, and the proceeds, if any, we will receive from the sale;

any options under which underwriters may purchase additional securities from us;

any agency fees or underwriting discounts and other items constituting agents' or underwriters' compensation;

any public offering price;

any discounts or concessions allowed or reallowed or paid to dealers; and

any securities exchange or market on which the securities may be listed.

Only underwriters named in the prospectus supplement will be underwriters of the securities offered by the prospectus supplement.

If underwriters are used in the sale, they will acquire the securities for their own account and may resell the securities from time to time in one or more transactions at a fixed public offering price or at varying prices determined at the time of sale. The obligations of the underwriters to purchase the securities will be subject to the conditions set forth in the applicable underwriting agreement. We may offer the securities to the public through underwriting syndicates represented by managing underwriters or by underwriters without a syndicate. Subject to certain conditions, the underwriters will be obligated to purchase all of the securities offered by the prospectus supplement, other than securities covered by any option to purchase additional securities. Any public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers may change from time to time. We may use underwriters with whom we have a material relationship. We will describe in the prospectus supplement, naming the underwriter, the nature of any such relationship.

We may sell securities directly or through agents we designate from time to time. We will name any agent involved in the offering and sale of securities and we will describe any commissions we will pay the agent in the prospectus supplement. Unless the prospectus supplement states otherwise, our agent will act on a best-efforts basis for the period of its appointment.

We may authorize agents or underwriters to solicit offers by certain types of institutional investors to purchase securities from us at the public offering price set forth in the prospectus supplement pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. We will describe the conditions to these contracts and the commissions we must pay for solicitation of these contracts in the prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

We may provide agents and underwriters with indemnification against civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or contribution with respect to payments that the agents or underwriters may make with respect to these liabilities. Agents and underwriters may engage in transactions with, or perform services for, us in the ordinary course of business.

All securities we may offer, other than common stock, will be new issues of securities with no established trading market. Any underwriters may make a market in these securities, but will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. We cannot guarantee the liquidity of the trading markets for any securities.

Any underwriter may engage in over-allotment, stabilizing transactions, short-covering transactions and penalty bids in accordance with Regulation M under the Exchange Act. Over-allotment involves sales in excess of the offering size, which create a short position. Stabilizing transactions permit bids to purchase the underlying security so long as the stabilizing bids do not exceed a specified maximum price. Syndicate-covering or other short-covering transactions involve purchases of the securities, either through exercise of the option to purchase additional securities or in the open market after the distribution is completed, to cover short positions. Penalty bids permit the underwriters to reclaim a selling concession from a dealer when the securities originally sold by the dealer are purchased in a stabilizing or covering transaction to cover short positions. Those activities may cause the price of the securities to be higher than it would otherwise be. If commenced, the underwriters may discontinue any of the activities at any time.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the securities offered hereby will be passed upon by Cooley LLP, Boston, Massachusetts.

EXPERTS

The financial statements and the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting incorporated in this Prospectus by reference to the Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2013 and for the period from September 9, 2003 (date of inception) through December 31, 2013, have been audited by McGladrey LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in their report incorporated by reference herein and have been so incorporated in reliance upon such reports and upon the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We are a reporting company and file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the Commission. You may read and copy these reports, proxy statements and other information at the Commission's public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549 or at the Commission's other public reference facilities. Please call the Commission at 1-800-SEC-0330 for more information about the operation of the public reference rooms. You can request copies of these documents by writing to the Commission and paying a fee for the copying costs. In addition, the Commission maintains an Internet site at <http://www.sec.gov> that contains reports, proxy and information statements and other information regarding issuers that file electronically with the Commission. Our Commission filings are available on the Commission's Internet site. We maintain a website at <http://www.ziopharm.com>. Information found on, or accessible through, our website is not a part of, and is not incorporated into, this prospectus, and you should not consider it part of this prospectus or part of any prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

INCORPORATION OF INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

We are allowed to incorporate by reference information contained in documents that we file with the Commission. This means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents and that the information in this prospectus is not complete and you should read the information incorporated by reference for more detail. Information in this prospectus supersedes information incorporated by reference that we filed with the Commission prior to the date of this prospectus, while information that we file later with the Commission will automatically update and supersede the information in this prospectus.

We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and any future filings we will make with the Commission under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act (i) after the date of the initial filing of the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and prior to effectiveness of such registration statement, and (ii) from the date of this prospectus but prior to the termination of the offering of the securities covered by this prospectus (other than Current Reports or portions thereof furnished under Item 2.02 or 7.01 of Form 8-K):

Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2013, filed on March 3, 2014;

The information specifically incorporated by reference into our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2013 from our Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A, filed on April 30, 2014;

Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2014, June 30, 2014, and September 30, 2014, filed on May 8, 2014, August 7, 2014, and October 30, 2014, respectively;

Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on January 8, 2014, January 15, 2014, February 10, 2014, March 3, 2014 (excluding Item 2.02), March 28, 2014, April 8, 2014, May 8, 2014 (excluding Item 2.02), May 22, 2014 (excluding Item 7.01), June 19, 2014, July 31, 2014, August 7, 2014 (excluding Item 2.02), September 16, 2014, October 30, 2014 (excluding Item 2.02), December 3, 2014 (excluding Item 7.01), January 14, 2015, second filing on January 14, 2015 (excluding Item 7.01), and January 28, 2015; and

The description of our common stock set forth in the registration statement on Form 8-A registering our common stock under Section 12 of the Exchange Act, which was filed with the Commission on September 20, 2006, including any amendments or reports filed for purposes of updating such description. We will provide to each person, including any beneficial owner, to whom a prospectus is delivered a copy of any or all of the documents that are incorporated by reference in this prospectus but not delivered with this prospectus, including exhibits that are specifically incorporated by reference in such documents. You may request a copy of such documents at no cost, by writing or telephoning us at the following address or telephone number:

ZIOPHARM Oncology, Inc.

One First Avenue, Parris Building 34, Navy Yard Plaza

Edgar Filing: ZIOPHARM ONCOLOGY INC - Form 424B5

Boston, Massachusetts 02129

Attention: Chief Legal Officer

(617) 259-1970

31.

Table of Contents

\$75,000,000

Common stock

Prospectus supplement

Book-running manager

J.P. Morgan

Senior lead manager

BMO Capital Markets

February , 2015