

ONY Biotech's promising future



Barbara Fick, a quality control technician for ONY Biotech, prepares tests in the company's Amherst lab.

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IN THIS ARTICLE

Biotech

Topic

Edmund Egan

Person

Health Care

Industry

Randy Burkard

Person

Technology

Industry

ONY Biotech has been around for nearly 35 years, and its leaders believe the future will be even brighter.

The Amherst biotechnology company was founded by Dr. [Edmund Egan](#), a renowned pediatric researcher who remains chairman and chief medical officer.

The signature product is Infasurf, a lung treatment to prevent and treat respiratory distress in premature infants.

About three years ago, ONY brought on local investor [Randy Burkard](#), who is now president and CEO.

With Egan's vision and biotechnology expertise and Burkard's business acumen, the company has put together a plan to grow beyond its niche as a small, single-product health sciences player.



Dr. Edmund Egan founded ONY Biotech in 1985 and remains the visionary behind the product.

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Among the elements of that plan:

- An expansion into international markets. ONY sells in 22 markets and continues to work through distributors to gain access to new regions. Burkard said the international market is a “tremendous opportunity.”
- New products through company research and development. The leading candidate is a new way of delivering Infasurf and has completed a 470-patient clinical trial. ONY expects to publish the results of that trial later this year and is working toward regulatory approval with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The potential for that new delivery mechanism cannot be overstated, said Egan and Burkard.

The drug is currently delivered through an endotracheal tube, which is painful for the patients and cumbersome for everyone involved. The new device is an aerosol spray.

ONY is easily the smallest of the companies that offer this particular kind of lung treatment. It would be the only one of them to be able to deliver it with minimal disruption and pain.

“We believe we have a very bright future and fully expect this company to show substantial growth over the short term and the long term,” Burkard said.



Randy Burkard got started with the company as an investor three years ago. He's now president and CEO.

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ONY has 40 employees, with about 32 of them in the headquarters at the University at Buffalo's Baird Research Park in Amherst.

That is a comfortable home for the company for the foreseeable future and enables a chance to interact with other tenants such as Programmable Equipment Co. and Grit Seed while keeping an eye on high-quality talent emerging from the university.

Egan is 77 but remains an active day-to-day leader in the company. His talent in envisioning and developing products is the force that keeps pushing the company forward, Burkard said.

"The reason I haven't retired yet is because I'm having so much fun," Egan said.