

Anatara Lifesciences seeks deals to bolster human health, gastro-intestinal pipeline - new CEO

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Anatara Lifesciences [ASX:ANR], an Australian developer of treatments for gastro-intestinal conditions with unmet medical need, is actively seeking deals to bolster its gastro-intestinal pipeline as it moves its focus to human health, said new Chief Executive Officer Steven Lydeamore.

The Brisbane-based AUD 22m (USD 16m) market capitalization company will consider a range of options from acquisitions to in-licensing, partnership and collaboration deals, Lydeamore said, noting that any acquisition would need to provide "significant market interest and lead to increased shareholder value".

The company will consider deals anywhere globally but some interesting discoveries are coming out of the US, as well as from Asian markets like South Korea and smaller markets such as Israel, he said.

Anatara Lifesciences is happy to hear from advisors pitching potential opportunities, the CEO said.

Anatara is keen on any therapeutics or over-the-counter products that can be developed for gastro-intestinal conditions with unmet needs like irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, and functional dyspepsia, Lydeamore said.

It will consider therapeutics, most likely from preclinical through to Phase I stage, as well as dietary supplements, medicinal or functional foods, probiotics, and possibly also diagnostics in the gastro-intestinal health space, he elaborated.

The company currently has one product in development, its Gastrointestinal Reprogramming (GaRP) dietary supplement, which is being developed from bromelain, an enzyme extract from pineapples, and testing in animals is anticipated to commence 1H 2019. With some AUD 7m in cash reserves, it is well funded to advance GaRP but would consider raising capital if necessary for opportunities to bolster its pipeline, Lydeamore said.

Companies marketing dietary supplements for gut health include **Bayer** [ETR:BAYN], **GlaxoSmithKline**[LON:GSK] and **Nestle's** [SWX:NESN] **Health Science Group**, but Anatara is yet to find a product comparable to its GaRP, he said.

Anatara is focusing on human health following its signing of an exclusive worldwide licensing agreement with animal health company **Zoetis** [NYSE:ZTS] in May last year to develop, manufacture, distribute and market its Detach animal health product, which is a non-antibiotic product that aids in control of diarrhea in livestock.

The company has increased its skill set in human health with the appointment of Lydeamore, who came on board in December last year to lead the company's new direction. The board has also been bolstered with new directors including Sue MacLeman and Jane Ryan, Lydeamore added.

Launched with high-net-worth investors in 2010, Anatara is still majority owned by high-net-worth investors, with founders Mel Bridges and Tracey Mynott, still being the largest shareholders with some 20% together, he said.

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