

### BIOFLASH

# Intarcia to move to Fan Pier building next month

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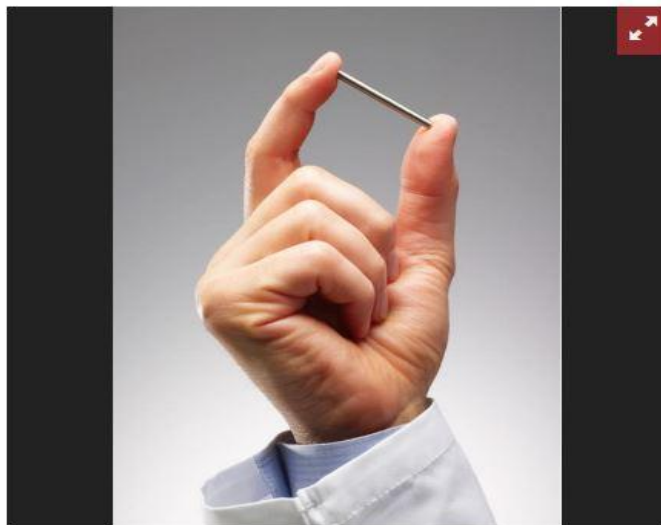
#### Don Seiffert

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Less than four months from submitting an application for approval of its first diabetes drug to the FDA, [Intarcia Therapeutics](#) is officially moving to a new 47,000-square-foot headquarters in the Fan Pier building in South Boston next month.

For CEO [Kurt Graves](#), moving into two full floors at One Marina Drive – just down the street from the company’s current office – brings him adjacent to the headquarters of his former employer, [Vertex Pharmaceuticals](#) (Nasdaq: VRTX), where he was chief commercial officer from 2007 to 2009. It’s the same building occupied by [Keryx Biopharmaceuticals](#) (Nasdaq: KERX) and [Polaris Partners](#), and one of the main buildings of the new South Boston Waterfront development by [Joe Fallon](#). The space is significantly bigger than Intarcia’s current headquarters at 155 Seaport Blvd.



The company, which plans to move next month, is developing a mini-pump for patients with...  
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# The Fallon Company

But for the company, which plans to employ 400 people by the end of this year and double that the following, it's the latest in several items disclosed in just the past week as it prepares to make one of the few truly groundbreaking treatments for type 2 diabetes available to patients.

Last week, the company disclosed the name of the tiny rod-shaped pump that's inserted into the abdomen of patients to deliver a steady dose of a drug that regulates glucose metabolism and insulin production. The Medici Drug Delivery System is the name for the device that will deliver the drug, a drug called exanatide that's been reformulated to last for more than a year at body temperature. The name of the drug (so far called ITCA 650) is yet to be announced: Graves said he has a few possibilities, and he expects to decide on one and announce it by the end of this year.

On Sunday at the annual meeting of the American Diabetes Association, Intarcia [presented the full results](#) of the 535-patient trial of ITCA 650 compared to Januvia, a \$6 billion-a-year injectable drug by [Merck & Co.](#) (NYSE: MRK). Last August, the company [announced the top-line results](#), which showed Intarcia's drug-and-device experienced a two-fold greater reduction in glycated hemoglobin (a protein used to measure how well patients' blood sugar levels are being controlled) and lost about nine pounds on average (triple the weight loss for Januvia) after a year. Graves said the full results underscored those results and how much better patients on Intarcia's drug do over the long term.

The ADA meeting started, however, with a reminder of just how little progress has been made in recent years in the fight against one of the biggest health threats of our time. An analysis by the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that only 50 percent of type 2 diabetes patients today are adequately controlling their blood sugar levels. That's worse than 57 percent a decade ago, despite 40 new drugs and injections over the past decade for the disease.

Graves said an impassioned speech by the ADA president cited the fact that hundreds of times more money is spent by the biotech industry on research into HIV drugs, for instance, than diabetes, despite the fact that diabetes is a much larger public health threat. Graves said there is enormous burden on companies to conduct safety trials involving thousands of patients, put in place in 2008 to address concerns over a class of drugs called thiazolidinediones. The cardiovascular risks of such drugs have since been deemed largely unfounded, said Graves, but the guidelines remain.

"A lot of biotech companies and a lot of venture capital companies stay away because they know diabetes is the most expensive area," he said.

*Don Seiffert writes about the life sciences industry, including biotech, the drug industry, medical devices and diagnostics.*