

Sterigenics International and Nordion announce landmark Canada-U.S. partnership agreement to provide a long-term, reliable supply of medical isotopes

New medical isotope supply agreements with U.S.-based MURR and General Atomics will serve patients in Canada, the U.S. and around the world.

OTTAWA, Feb. 20, 2015 /CNW/ - Sterigenics International LLC and subsidiary Nordion, announced today agreements with General Atomics and the University of Missouri Research Reactor Center (MURR®) to establish a new, reliable supply of medical isotopes that will serve millions of patients around the world.

"Achieving a long-term supply of medical isotopes for our global customers has been our highest priority," said Michael Mulhern, CEO, Sterigenics International LLC. "Our new partnerships with General Atomics and MURR very much reflect our ongoing commitment to improving global public health."

"Today's announcement will ensure Nordion has a secure long-term supply of medical isotopes, which will consolidate our leadership position in this business. That is great news for our company, for our employees, our customers and patients around the world," said Mr. Tom Burnett, President, Medical Isotopes, Nordion. "Nordion has found what we believe is the best global solution for the industry – a combination of our best-in-class medical isotope capabilities, with the world-class nuclear reactor and innovative target design expertise of General Atomics and the unparalleled reliability of the University of Missouri Research Reactor (MURR), a leading U.S. research reactor centre and radioisotope supplier."

A medical isotope is a safe radioactive substance used by health professionals to assist in the diagnosis of approximately 50 million patients in North America and around the world every year. The most important of these medical isotopes is technetium-99m (Tc-99m), derived from molybdenum-99 (Mo-99), used in more than 80 percent of all nuclear medicine procedures. Nordion pioneered the efforts to develop the first commercial supply of fission-based Mo-99, bringing it to market 40 years ago. This development enabled the dramatically expanded use of Tc-99m compounds and applications that have become the gold-standard in nuclear medicine today.

Nordion's current supply of Mo-99 is from the National Research Universal reactor (NRU) at Chalk River, Ontario, operated by Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL). The NRU is scheduled to cease routine production of Mo-99 in November 2016. However the Government of Canada announced recently that it will support the extension of the NRU operations until March 31, 2018 to help support global medical isotope demand in the unexpected circumstances of shortages during this time.

"Today's announcement highlights the latest achievement in the production of medical isotopes, supporting global cooperation and ensuring security of supply," said Hon. Greg Rickford, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources. "We're pleased to be working with Nordion and others as part of our global cooperation to advance development and production of medical isotopes."

This new medical isotope supply will be produced using General Atomics' innovative Selective Gaseous Extraction (SGE) technology. The targets used will incorporate Low Enriched Uranium (LEU), in line with Nordion's commitment to the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Global Threat Reduction Initiative. The California-based technology firm brings fifty-seven years of experience and success in reactor and fuel target design to this partnership. The General Atomics TRIGA® is the most widely used research reactor in the world with 66 facilities in 23 countries on five continents.

"We are very pleased to work with world-class organizations like Nordion and MURR to solve a major medical isotope supply problem for North America that affects the lives of millions of people," said Dr. John Parmentola, General Atomics Senior Vice President of Energy and Advanced Concepts.

"As a public research institution, MURR is pleased to support the General Atomics SGE technology. MURR has worked with Nordion for more than 20 years and is proud to be involved in a partnership that will become an important U.S. source of Mo-99," said Ralph Butler, Executive Director of MURR. "We take our role in meeting patient needs very seriously, and we are fortunate in Missouri to have such a well-designed reactor and an outstanding staff enabling us to accommodate this important need in the medical community."

With project planning and pre-work well underway, Nordion and its partners expect routine supply to begin in 2017.

About Nordion

Nordion provides market-leading products used for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease. We are a leading provider of medical isotopes and gamma technologies that benefit the lives of millions of people around the world. Our products are used daily by pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, medical-device manufacturers, hospitals, clinics and research laboratories. Nordion supplies products to approximately 500 customers across more than 40 countries around the globe. Our parent company, Sterigenics International LLC, is the global leader in contract sterilization and ionization services for the medical devices, food safety and high performance/specialty materials industries serving customers around the world. Find out more at www.nordion.com and follow us at twitter.com/NordionInc.

About University of Missouri Research Reactor (MURR)

The University of Missouri Research Reactor Center (MURR®) has a long history of safe reliability. With its 10 MW reactor and a 6½-days-per-week; 52 week per year operating schedule, MURR supports research and education while also providing short-lived isotopes for medical applications. MURR provides a range of radioisotopes that help medical professionals diagnose and treat many diseases, including cardiovascular disease and cancer. The nation's largest university research reactor also supports undergraduate and graduate education programs that train the next generation of nuclear engineers and chemists. For more information, visit www.murr.missouri.edu

About General Atomics (TRIGA®)

General Atomics is a San Diego-based innovations firm with a 60-year history of successful solutions for energy, defense and environmental challenges, from the ground-breaking TRIGA reactor to MagLev transport systems to running the nation's largest magnetic fusion energy program. For more information, please visit www.ga.com.