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## 40 biotech jobs headed to Chicago

Therapeutic Proteins Inc. moving from Deerfield to IIT facility

April 21, 2010 | By Bruce Japsen, Tribune reporter

Health care reform is helping to bring 40 jobs to the South Side at a new drug-making plant, where lower-priced versions of prescription biotech medicines will be made.

Therapeutic Proteins Inc. will relocate from Deerfield to a new 13,000-square-foot facility at Illinois Institute of Technology's University Technology Park within a month. The facility can be expanded to 40,000 square feet.

The company makes raw ingredients for cheaper "biosimilar" or "biogeneric" versions of drugs derived from biotechnology, such as the anti-anemia brand Epogen. For now, biogenerics are available only outside the U.S.

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Biotech brands such as Epogen are unavailable in the U.S. in biogeneric form because they were not part of the 1984 landmark Hatch-Waxman law that allowed for cheaper generics. That law largely covers products derived from chemicals, such as the cholesterol drug Zocor and the antidepressant Zoloft.

Under the health care reform legislation passed by Congress and signed into law last month by President Barack Obama, lawmakers finally cleared a path for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to approve biogeneric drugs.

"We started the company in anticipation of this new niche of generic versions of biotech drugs opening," said Thomas Flynn III, Therapeutic Proteins' chief executive.

Flynn expects Therapeutic Proteins to make its first biogenerics for the U.S. market in two to three years.

"The newly enacted health care bill removed the main hurdle in the promulgation of a bill in Congress to allow biological drugs to be sold as generics," Flynn said.

The eventual introduction of cheaper biotech drugs in the U.S. could save \$10 billion a year once biogenerics are on the market here, according to some estimates. Patients generally see a 20 percent to 30 percent savings in biogenerics over name-brand drugs.

Some countries are already reaping substantial savings. For example, Lake Forest-based generic biotech drug producer Hospira Inc. said it already is selling its drug Retacrit, a biosimilar version of Epogen, in Europe.

[bjapsen@tribune.com](mailto:bjapsen@tribune.com)

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