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AxioMed expanding operations in Ohio

Garfield Hts. firm makes spinal products

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AxioMed Spine Corp. has agreed with the West Coast maker of its spinal disc replacement products on a second manufacturing site, this one at AxioMed's Garfield Heights headquarters.

Polymer Technology Group Inc. will keep making about one-quarter of AxioMed's products at its facility in Berkeley, Calif. AxioMed has an exclusive license to use the Berkeley company's patented polymer in its lumbar and cervical spine products.

AxioMed expects to be making three-quarters of its disc replacement products in Garfield Heights by the end of the year, Jim Kuras, the company's chief operating officer and co-founder, said in an e-mailed response to questions. AxioMed expects to hire about a dozen technicians by then, if regulators approve the company's products for sale, Kuras said.

"We are fortunate to have the opportunity to broaden our relationship with [Polymer Technology Group] and build new manufacturing operations in Ohio," AxioMed's president and chief executive, Pat McBrayer, said in a written statement.

"We are currently working with over 60 vendors in Ohio and assume that manufacturing operations at [AxioMed] will solidify and strengthen those relationships."

AxioMed is leasing an additional 4,500 square feet of space next to its Transportation Boulevard headquarters, which also is leased.

The maker of replacement discs will use a \$750,000 Innovation Ohio Loan to buy equipment for the expansion, Kuras said. Awarded in September, the innovation loan comes with an interest rate of 10.25 percent for seven years.

The loan, made under the Ohio Third Frontier program, will enable AxioMed to begin making cervical spine products, adding to its products for the lumbar spine.

AxioMed's first product line, called Freedom Lumbar Total Disc Replacement, is in pilot clinical studies in Europe. The company employs 12 people.

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