

New NRL market-bound

Vystar, Alatech plan launch of first product made with Vytex

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DULUTH, Ga.—Vystar Corp. and Alatech Healthcare L.L.C. have teamed up to produce the first product, a condom called Envy, made from Vystar's patented Vytex natural rubber latex.

Officials from both firms expect the introduction to establish Vystar in the marketplace and give new life to Alatech, which has been forced to make work force cutbacks after it lost a major contract to the U.S. Agency for International Development early this year when the government agency moved sourcing of its condoms offshore.

The two firms overcame their final hurdle to produce the new condom on May 5 when they received 510(k) approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to move ahead with a plan under which Alatech will manufacture, market and sell the first product made from Vytex natural rubber latex.

Vytex has virtually undetectable levels of antigenic proteins that can cause an allergic response, while retaining and improving upon all the desirable qualities of latex, according to Vystar CEO William Doyle.

The next steps

Eufaula, Ala.-based Alatech has a tentative roll-out plan in place, said Larry Povlacs, president and CEO of the company. It has targeted key markets and "we're in

discussions with a few individuals right now on the distribution of the condoms," he said. It plans to market the product to retailers and through other distribution channels.

Envy will carry a label stating that it has the lowest antigenic protein content currently available in a natural rubber latex medical device in the U.S., the companies said. Doyle noted that the Envy condom made with Vytex "represents a revolutionary consumer product."

Natural rubber latex "is known to be the best material for both tactile sensitivity, strength and barrier protection, which are important in a condom for user acceptance and maximum protection," he said. "Now consumers can have the best material for protection plus the added benefit of the reduced antigenic proteins."

Vytex, which was introduced by Vystar in 2005 after several years of research, also is an ideal material for

gloves and the companies have a 510(k) application in with the FDA to produce a glove made with the new rubber latex, according to Povlacs.

Doyle said he anticipates the 510(k) process will be completed soon and Alatech will start manufacturing the new glove shortly thereafter.

While Alatech is making and marketing the Envy condom, Vystar will expand its Vytex marketing efforts, Doyle said. "By the time the International Latex Conference is held this year (July 21-22), we'll have our Web site set up so that companies can go to the site and

get all the information they need on Vytex."

New customer base

Duluth-headquartered Vystar is looking to build its customer base and has 52 trials in the works on Vytex, Doyle said. The potential uses are from a variety of industries, including medical and nonmedical gloves, foam mattresses and pillows, adhesives, and a long list of other possibilities.

Once companies are on board, Vystar will assist the manufacturers in marketing the Vytex component of their products.

Alatech and Vystar began tests with the new material in 2007, Doyle said. When it proved successful and they received FDA approval, the two companies were ready to move quickly with their production plan.

"Hopefully good news begets good news," Doyle said. "The first one is always the toughest. Once that's in, you can grow from there."

Alatech also is counting on more good things happening in the future after wading through months of bad news. After the company lost its pact with the USAID, which was about 90 percent of its business, it has been fighting a losing battle to get the contract back for the last few months. But the agency has remained firm, forcing Alatech to make big cutbacks and search for new condom and glove customers.

"It's been a tough time for us," Povlacs said. "But if we can just survive this year, we may be able to stay afloat."

The Envy project gives him some hope. The key will be to find the right niche in the market and line up a strong distribution network, he said.

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