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Medical lab operation eyes job expansion

DCL, based on Northwestside, will unveil its plans today

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DCL Medical Laboratories, a full-service medical testing laboratory focusing on women's health, today is expected to announce a major expansion at its Northwestside headquarters.

Gov. Mitch Daniels is scheduled to make an economic development announcement at 10 a.m. today at DCL headquarters, 9550 Zionsville Road. The site is a former Dow AgroSciences building leased from Holladay Properties.

Mitch Frazier, spokesman for the Indiana Economic Development Corp., said the announcement will involve a "significant" number of new jobs, although he would not specify how many.

Michael Hanbury, DCL's president and chief executive, could not be reached for comment. But in a recent interview, he said the company would expand from its 50,000 square feet facility into another 25,000 square feet slated for new laboratory facilities.

DCL, which employs about 200 workers now, will be hiring more, Hanbury said last week.

He said he expects "double-digit growth" in revenues over the next three years, partly to assist with two ongoing clinical trials with partner medical diagnostic companies.

In March, DCL announced a strategic partnership with Madison, Wis.-based Third Wave Technologies, which will give DCL access to new assays and equipment developed by Third Wave, a leader in molecular diagnostics. In return, Third Wave will establish a laboratory at DCL for joint product research.

Third Wave initially will employ two or three scientists in several thousand square feet of space in the new lab facility, all of whom will be hired from the Indianapolis area, said Kevin T. Conroy, the company's president and chief executive.

"We hope to grow that over time as DCL grows and as our menu (of testing services) grows," Conroy said. "It's (the DCL partnership) very important for us strategically."

Founded in 1984 as one of the first freestanding fine-needle biopsy clinics in the country, DCL now provides anatomic, clinical and molecular pathology testing focusing on a range of women's health issues, such as cervical, ovarian, thyroid and breast cancer. Its clients include local physicians, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies.

DCL also is focused on growth into new areas, such as molecular diagnostics, since it received an infusion of cash from a private equity firm, Hanbury said, and brought in new management with expertise in clinical testing. Thompson Street Capital Partners of St. Louis is a key investor.

DCL hopes to use its expertise in clinical testing and diagnostics to help clients bring new drug discoveries to market quicker, Hanbury said. He said DCL also is poised to benefit from the trend of major drug makers outsourcing testing and drug development needs to contract service providers.

"It may be easier for them to outsource in certain areas," Hanbury said. "Maybe they lose some control, but they get a higher level of expertise."

Testing services companies such as DCL are key to the growth of the state's biotech sector and offer "very sophisticated" employees and equipment to offer contract services for pharmaceutical companies, said David Johnson, president and CEO of BioCrossroads, an Indianapolis-based nonprofit that promotes and funds the life sciences.
