

Subcutaneous Immune Globulin Comes of Age in the United States

By Kit-Bacon Gressitt

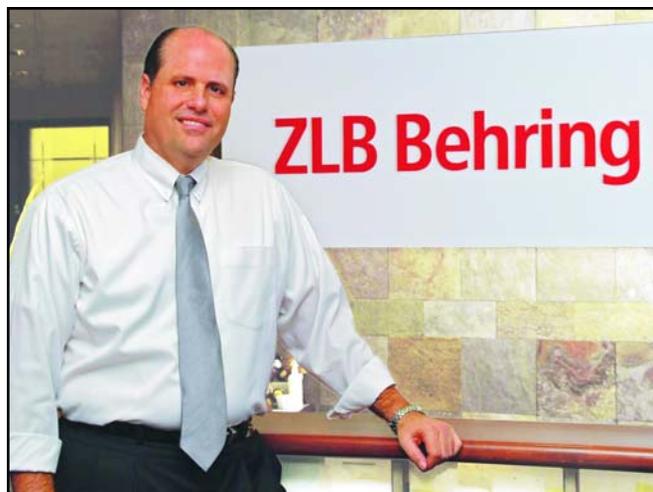
ZLB Behring, an immune globulin manufacturer with U.S. headquarters in Pennsylvania, announced in January that the company received FDA approval for Vivaglobin®, the nation's first licensed subcutaneous immune globulin (SCIG or SubQ) for patients with primary immune deficiencies. This is exciting news for U.S. patients, physicians and insurers who have been awaiting a U.S.-licensed subcutaneous product.

The method of administering IG subcutaneously, or under the skin, is gaining increasing attention from U.S. patients and physicians, having been well established in Europe for more than 10 years (see this issue's article "Subcutaneous Administration of Immune Globulin: Is It for You?" Page 7).

With the FDA approval of Vivaglobin, U.S. patients now have an additional treatment option for the delivery of IG, an option that may prove beneficial to those experiencing problems with intravenous (IV) infusions.

Paul Perreault, ZLB's executive vice president for worldwide commercial operations, described the new product's benefits. "We're all very excited about bringing Vivaglobin to the U.S. primary immunodeficient patient community," Perreault said. "Vivaglobin avoids the need for supervised IV infusions, providing an important alternative for those patients who have poor venous access or IV side effects."

Perreault encourages patients to discuss SCIG with their doctors. "Physicians play a big role in this," he explained.



Paul Perreault, ZLB executive vice president for worldwide commercial operations

"Patients should be discussing this with their physicians to make sure they are good candidates for Vivaglobin. It's an important advance in patient care, and, over time, SubQ will become more popular with patients for whom this is the right product—but that will take time and education for both patients and physicians so they understand the benefits."

ZLB Behring invested five years in bringing Vivaglobin to the United States, after successfully marketing it in Europe. "It has been a fairly long process, mainly because of the consolidation within the plasma therapeutics industry," Perreault said. "Immune globulin is not an easy product to manufacture, but Vivaglobin represents an innovation in IG therapy, and I think there is more to come from ZLB in the delivery of immune globulin to U.S. patients."

For more information about SCIG, visit www.vivaglobin.com, www.primaryimmune.org, www.jmworld.com and www.nufactor.com. ■

