

Massachusetts company buys Argos facility for Durham expansion



Bluebird bio focuses on the gene therapy space
C/O BLUEBIRD BIO



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Cambridge, Massachusetts-based bluebird bio (Nasdaq: BLUE) is flying south to Durham for its third U.S. site. And **Derek Adams**, chief technology and manufacturing officer, says the company expects to grow to about 50 people in Durham over the next couple of years.

Bluebird – which is developing a pipeline of gene therapy products for the treatment of genetic diseases and cancer – has acquired the roughly 125,000-square-foot manufacturing site at 1733 T.W. Alexander Drive. According to Durham County deed records, bluebird purchased the property for about \$11.4 million.

Durham’s **Argos Therapeutics** (Nasdaq: ARGS) previously **planned to use the facility as its primary manufacturing facility, but after a difficult 2017**, announced earlier this week that landlord Charlotte-based TKC Properties had completed a sale of the facility to a third party.

“As part of our manufacturing strategy we’ve been working on executing over the last year or so, we decided that we need both internal manufacturing efforts and external partnerships,” Adams says.



A wall of bluebirds at bluebird bio

Bluebird's new Durham manufacturing facility is expected to be used for clinical as well as potential commercial production, according to bluebird. It's also expected to complement production through a number of external manufacturing partnerships, including new multi-year agreements with Cambridge-based [Brammer Bio](#), Belgium's Novasep and Merck's life sciences business MilliporeSigma.

Along with North Carolina, bluebird considered Massachusetts and Maryland as well as locations outside the U.S. for its new manufacturing facility, says Adams. Ultimately, Durham provided a significant talent pool, convenient access to the company's headquarters in Cambridge and a facility that fit with the company's timeline moving forward.

"We do intend to start construction on our end as soon as possible, as early as January," Adams says.

Additional factors like research talent from local universities and a rising gene therapy community also contributed to bluebird's selection of Durham for its new site, according to the company.

For bluebird's expansion locally, the company is receiving financial support from the North Carolina Biotechnology Center's Economic Development Award program. It has committed up to \$100,000 for bluebird meeting job creation milestones.

Bluebird has existing locations in Cambridge and Seattle, as well as in Switzerland, outside the U.S. The company [went public back in 2013, raising about \\$116 million](#).

Tucker Hansen, David Fleming and Ashley Lewis of JLL represented bluebird bio in the purchase of its new Durham facility.