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These law firms are leading the way on Boston's biotech IPO boom



Latham & Watkins LLP partner Peter Handrinos has played a major role in nine local biotech IPOs, including the recent blockbuster IPO for Seres Therapeutics.

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Boston Business Journal

The explosion in biotech initial public offerings in Massachusetts over the past two-and-a-half years has most benefitted Boston's three largest law firms, as well as a relative newcomer to the city's legal scene, according to a Business Journal analysis.

Since the beginning of 2013, Ropes & Gray LLP, the city's largest firm, has played a role in more biotech IPOs than any other in Boston. The firm has built up an extensive practice representing underwriters in the offerings, and has advised companies such as Acceleron Pharma (Nasdaq: XLRN) and Genocsa Biosciences (Nasdaq: GNCA) as well.

Closely following Ropes is WilmerHale, the third-biggest firm in Boston, and Latham & Watkins LLP. Latham, a powerhouse nationally, opened its Boston office just four years ago, but has established itself as a major player on the IPO scene. That's in large part through the leadership of partner Peter Handrinos, formerly of WilmerHale, who was involved in each of the local biotech IPOs handled by Latham's Boston office since 2013.

Handrinos attributed Latham's busy practice to the philosophy the firm followed in staffing the office. Even more so than other new entrants to Boston, it emphasized finding already-successful attorneys in the market, rather than importing lawyers

from elsewhere. "Two weeks after we were here, we were placing substantial public offerings for our clients," he said.

Goodwin Procter LLP's Boston office has also handled a significant number of local biotech IPOs in recent years, including the blockbuster Blueprint Medicines (Nasdaq: BPMC) IPO earlier in 2015.

Top attorneys expect the life sciences industry to keep throwing IPO work law firms' way, at least for the next 12 to 18 months. "There's still a lot of brilliant people in town doing really exciting science and backed by a venture capital community that really has a lot of vision," Ropes partner Patrick O'Brien said.