

# Airport to leverage pharma hub role to build medical shipping

BY CATHERINE LACKNER

Miami International Airport will leverage its recently awarded designation as a pharmaceutical freight hub to strengthen its medical shipping business, which might attract companies that want to expand that business, using even more advanced facilities, observers say.

Late last year, efforts by the Miami-Dade Aviation Department and the Health Technologies Distribution Alliance led the International Air Transport Association to designate the airport as the first pharmaceutical freight hub in the US and the second in the world after Brussels Airport.

It's a logical move, given that the airport has facilities that are specifically built for cold storage, because Miami is a hub for shipping flowers and seafood.

"It's easier to adapt than to build from the ground up," said Jimmy Nares, aviation department section chief for avia-

tion marketing, at a Feb. 3 Beacon Council seminar on pharmaceuticals and their future impact on local business. As biopharmaceuticals become more complex, storage needs for them will also be more complicated, Mr. Nares added.

Driven in part by demographics, the pharmaceutical industry is expanding faster than other industry sectors, said Larry K. Williams, Beacon Council president and CEO.



Larry K. Williams

"The opportunities are enormous," said Joe Napoli, aviation department chief of staff. Pharmaceutical shipping has grown tremendously over the past few years, he said.

"As the busiest US airport for international freight, perishable imports and temperature-controlled products, Miami International Airport has been at the epicenter of this developing trend and is

poised for even more growth," said Aviation Director Emilio González in a release.

"There have been many changes in the past seven or eight years," said Tom Grubb, manager of Cold Chain Strategy for American Airlines Cargo. Pharmaceutical manufacturing is now a multi-step projects that uses biological components like stem cells and proteins. "Fifteen years ago, pharmaceuticals were shipped like auto parts."



Emilio Gonzalez

American operates a 3,000-square-foot cold-chain shipping and storage facility at Miami International, one of only eight such stations in the world, he said. The airline has a state-of-the-art 6,000-square-foot pharmaceutical station at Philadelphia International Airport. "The opportunity to build one here

would be fantastic," Mr. Grubb said.

Between 2010 and 2014, the value of pharmaceutical products transported through the airport grew 79%, from \$1.8 billion to \$3.3 billion, a Beacon Council document said. The airport has 3.4 million square feet of warehouse, office and support space, which includes more than 500,000 square feet of refrigerated space, according to the document.

Miami's top export partners for pharmaceuticals in 2014 were Brazil, Italy, Colombia, Argentina and Venezuela, while the top five pharmaceutical imports were from Ireland, Singapore, India, Switzerland and Uruguay that year.

It's time to move beyond the flower and fish industries, Mr. González said last year during a panel discussion at the Air and Sea Cargo Americas conference. "That business is going to grow," he assured an audience made up of cargo and logistics industry professionals.

## Zapata aim: 20-year plan to public's hands in May

BY SUSAN DANSEYAR

Commissioner Juan C. Zapata's initiative for a plan outlining specific Miami-Dade County goals and ways to measure progress so that they'll be in place 20 years from now is underway, and he anticipates a rough draft will be ready in May or June

