Jörg Storre – General Manager, CSL Vifor Pharma Switzerland



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Jörg Storre, General Manager of CSL Vifor Pharma Switzerland, explores the company's historical legacy and current focus on innovative iron therapies and nephrology. Storre highlights some of his strategic priorities, including improving patient care and access, fostering talent development, and maintaining supply security within a competitive landscape.

Could you share CSL Vifor's historical background and current focus areas, especially regarding its Swiss legacy and therapeutic specialties?

CSL Vifor's legacy is deeply rooted in Swiss innovation, dating back to 1872 when Caspar Friedrich Hausmann first introduced iron-based treatments at a pharmacy in St. Gallen. This pioneering work laid the foundation for our expertise in iron therapies, with decades of advancements. To this day, the active pharmaceutical ingredients of all of our iron-based products are manufactured in St. Gallen, underscoring our commitment to Swiss craftsmanship and innovation.

Our focus has naturally evolved, particularly within nephrology, as iron deficiency and anaemia are prevalent challenges for patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD). Over the last 10 to 15 years, we've expanded our focus to address conditions along the spectrum of kidney disease.

A unique role for CSL Vifor's Swiss affiliate is our regulatory and commercial partnership model, which provides comprehensive support for companies that lack a full presence in Switzerland—particularly in women's health.

How has CSL's acquisition of Vifor Pharma enhanced CSL Vifor Switzerland's capabilities, and what new opportunities have emerged from this integration?

Becoming part of CSL has opened significant avenues for growth and collaboration, particularly from our perspective in Switzerland. A primary benefit for us is access to CSL's R&D capabilities and pipeline. With CSL's significant production and R&D sites, we've become one of the country's leading pharmaceutical employers. Coupled with CSL Vifor's established expertise in product introduction, this allows us to have a greater impact.

A concrete example is our expanded role in public health. CSL's vaccine division, CSL Seqirus, specializes in both seasonal and pandemic influenza vaccines but previously had no direct distribution network in Switzerland. Through CSL Vifor, we are now able to bring these vaccines to the Swiss market, capitalizing on CSL's global capabilities and tailoring them to meet local needs.

Our expertise allows us to collaborate on shared therapeutic initiatives within CSL. For instance, we are actively engaged in supporting the implementation of 'Patient Blood Management' (PBM), a clinical approach designed to preserve patient's own blood when a surgery is required. The objective is to improve patient outcomes while also lowering costs. By advancing PBM awareness and understanding, and aligning our offerings and approach across the enterprise in this area, we can position CSL as a leading partner in this field.

Overall, I am confident that, together, we are now in a stronger position to serve our patients.

What trends and needs are shaping CSL Vifor's approach to the iron market, and how is the company adapting to these developments?

Iron therapy is at the core of CSL Vifor's heritage, and the demand for effective treatment options continues to grow across a diverse spectrum of patients, from those managing chronic conditions to women's health. While there has been significant progress, there remains a vast unmet need worldwide: approximately 70% of patients who could benefit from iron therapy still lack adequate diagnosis and access to treatment due to various systemic barriers. Our focus remains firmly on

addressing this critical gap through raising awareness, innovation and sustained engagement.

In Switzerland, our approach has two main elements. First, we actively support healthcare providers, particularly general practitioners, through education and guidance to enhance patient care and optimize treatment management in iron deficiency and anemia. Second, we place immense importance on supply chain security to ensure continuous product availability. To meet this need, we recently expanded our St. Gallen production site with a modular “multi-cube” setup, allowing us to scale production as demand increases. This facility produces the active pharmaceutical ingredients for our iron-based therapies and includes reserves of high-purity iron ore sourced from a partner in Norway, which is to ensure our supply reliability and protect our supply chain. St. Gallen serves as CSL Vifor’s global production center for iron therapies, underscoring Switzerland’s role as both a manufacturing and operational hub. With a skilled workforce and a conducive manufacturing environment, Switzerland remains a strong base for meeting global demand. Overall, these efforts reflect CSL Vifor’s deep commitment to advancing iron therapies and ensuring a resilient, reliable supply for patients worldwide.

Could you outline CSL Vifor’s primary focus areas in Switzerland, highlighting key products and recent launches within your portfolio?

CSL Vifor’s portfolio in Switzerland is centred on four key areas: iron deficiency, nephrology, public health, and women’s health. Each of these pillars addresses significant and often unmet patient needs.

As outlined, our expertise in iron therapy forms the first pillar of our work, addressing a broad range of conditions impacted by iron deficiency.

Nephrology is our second focus area, building on our established role in chronic kidney disease (CKD) management. Over the past year, we’ve introduced innovative therapies that includes treatments for CKD-associated pruritus, a challenging condition that causes severe itching in dialysis patients, and ANCA-associated vasculitis, a serious inflammatory disease that can lead to organ damage and failure, with the kidneys and lung as major targets. We are currently introducing an innovative treatment for IgA nephropathy (IgAN), a rare kidney disease.

In the public health sector, we are working closely with healthcare stakeholders to underscore the importance of vaccination while women’s health also is one of our top priorities in Switzerland, especially in areas like menopause and fertility support.

What are the main challenges CSL Vifor faces within Switzerland's healthcare landscape, especially regarding innovation, patient access, and supply security?

Switzerland's healthcare environment is robust and innovative, yet we face challenges that demand strategic focus in three main areas: research and development (R&D), equitable patient access to new treatments, and ensuring reliable long-term supply.

First, Switzerland has established itself as a hub for R&D, thanks to close collaborations between universities, public research institutions, and the pharmaceutical industry. We are deeply engaged in this ecosystem, with multiple research centers that drive our innovation pipeline. However, for Switzerland to maintain its appeal to top scientists and to continue its leadership in research, clear frameworks with the European Union are essential. Programs such as Horizon Europe, which support cross-border collaboration, are invaluable, and ensuring continued access to these initiatives is crucial to sustaining scientific advancement.

The second challenge is ensuring that patients have prompt access to innovative treatments. While Swissmedic, our regulatory body, has worked proactively to maintain efficient approval processes, significant delays often occur in post-approval reimbursement. Legally, reimbursement should be finalized within 60 days; however, the process often extends to an average of 300 days, and in some cases up to 500. This results in unequal access, as patients may receive or be denied timely treatments based on their insurance provider. Although the issue is recognized and constructive solutions are being discussed, there is an urgent need to establish a system that delivers equitable and timely access. CSL Vifor works closely with industry associations, and we value the Swiss tradition of collaborative problem-solving to achieve balanced solutions that serve patients and healthcare providers alike.

Finally, supply security is a top priority, especially for established products that undergo periodic price reductions mandated by regulatory authorities. Maintaining these therapies requires significant investment to ensure reliable supply, a commitment we uphold through our domestic production facilities, such as our site in St. Gallen. This infrastructure provides flexibility and stability, enabling us to manage inventory effectively and respond to demand. However, preserving this capability requires a supportive healthcare environment that acknowledges the value of consistent supply for patient care.

As Switzerland approaches critical decisions that will shape its healthcare future, we are optimistic that choices will reinforce the nation's dedication to fostering innovation, improving access, and

maintaining dependable supply. CSL Vifor Switzerland is fully engaged in these discussions, advocating for a system that enables us to continue as a trusted partner in Swiss healthcare.

How does CSL Vifor prioritize talent attraction, development, and retention in Switzerland’s competitive pharmaceutical landscape?

Our people are fundamental to our success, making talent attraction, development, and retention top priorities. Switzerland offers a distinct advantage, as we have both our local affiliate and various global teams operating within the same country. This proximity fosters opportunities for career advancement across local, regional, and global roles, allowing employees to gain diverse perspectives and experiences.

A hallmark of our organization is working in a value-based culture with the collective power of our people. We emphasize close collaboration among medical, market access and marketing, where appropriate, which creates a cohesive working environment. This culture not only enhances individual development but also allows employees to explore various functions, helping them identify their strengths and interests. My own journey with diverse roles throughout the CSL Vifor organization exemplifies how this supportive environment facilitates professional growth.

Moreover, we believe that nurturing our people is a core value, and we actively create pathways for those who demonstrate a desire to learn and excel. In Fribourg, the base of our Swiss Commercial Operations, we invest in developing local talent, gradually increasing their responsibilities while providing the necessary support for their advancement.

Fostering an environment where individuals can thrive and pursue meaningful career paths is incredibly rewarding. It is just as vital to our mission as introducing innovative products to the market. This people-centric culture is integral to CSL Vifor’s ongoing success and our dedication to making a positive impact in healthcare.

What are your strategic priorities for CSL Vifor in Switzerland, especially in light of unmet medical needs and the competitive pharmaceutical landscape?

Our strategic priorities at CSL Vifor Switzerland can be encapsulated in four key areas. First and foremost, our commitment remains to serve Swiss patients effectively across a diverse array of disease and therapy areas. Secondly, we will concentrate on ensuring continued access to and

supply of our established products. This aspect is critical, as maintaining reliable availability is essential to fulfilling our promise to patients.

The third priority involves actively engaging in dialogue with stakeholders within Switzerland. Given its status as a leading pharmaceutical hub known for high-quality standards, Switzerland deserves a healthcare system that is modern and responsive, particularly regarding pricing and reimbursement practices. We are committed to collaborating with stakeholders to identify areas for improvement, aiming not only to sustain the status quo but to enhance our healthcare environment.

Lastly, we strive to solidify our position as an attractive employer. It is imperative that our team members feel they are part of an organization where they can learn, grow, and make meaningful contributions. When employees reflect on their experiences with us and recognize the value of their personal and professional development, we will have achieved significant success. These strategic priorities not only motivate me but also guide our collective efforts at CSL Vifor Switzerland as we work to address the needs of patients and stakeholders in the years ahead.

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