

Conatus Pharmaceuticals Inc.
Form 424B5
April 01, 2015
Table of Contents

**Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)
Registration No. 333-198142**

The information in this preliminary prospectus supplement is not complete and may be changed. A registration statement relating to these securities has been declared effective by the Securities and Exchange Commission. This preliminary prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are not an offer to sell these securities, and we are not soliciting offers to buy these securities, in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED APRIL 1, 2015

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT (TO PROSPECTUS DATED AUGUST 25, 2014)

Shares

Common Stock

We are offering _____ shares of our common stock. Our common stock is listed on the Nasdaq Global Market under the symbol CNAT. On March 31, 2015, the last reported sale price of our common stock on the Nasdaq Global Market was \$7.12 per share.

We are an emerging growth company as that term is used in the Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act of 2012 and, as such, have elected to comply with certain reduced public company reporting requirements for this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and future filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Investing in our common stock involves risks. See Risk Factors beginning on page S-6 of this prospectus supplement and the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement.

	Per Share	Total
Public offering price	\$	\$
Underwriting discounts and commissions ⁽¹⁾	\$	\$
Proceeds, before expenses, to us	\$	\$

(1) We have agreed to reimburse the underwriters for certain expenses. See Underwriting. We have granted the underwriters an option for a period of 30 days to purchase up to an additional shares of our common stock. If the underwriters exercise their option in full, the total underwriting discounts and commissions payable by us will be \$ and the total proceeds to us, before expenses, will be \$.

The underwriters expect to deliver shares of common stock to purchasers on April , 2015.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the adequacy or accuracy of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

Joint Book-Running Managers

Stifel

Roth Capital Partners

The date of this prospectus supplement is April , 2015.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Prospectus Supplement	
<u>About this Prospectus Supplement</u>	S-1
<u>Prospectus Supplement Summary</u>	S-2
<u>Risk Factors</u>	S-6
<u>Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-looking Statements</u>	S-7
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	S-8
<u>Dilution</u>	S-9
<u>Underwriting</u>	S-10
<u>Legal Matters</u>	S-15
<u>Experts</u>	S-15
<u>Where You Can Find More Information: Information Incorporated by Reference</u>	S-15
Prospectus	
<u>About this Prospectus</u>	1
<u>Where You Can Find More Information: Incorporation by Reference</u>	2
<u>The Company</u>	4
<u>Risk Factors</u>	6
<u>Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-looking Statements</u>	6
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	7
<u>Dividend Policy</u>	7
<u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u>	8
<u>Description of Capital Stock</u>	9
<u>Description of Debt Securities</u>	14
<u>Description of Warrants</u>	21
<u>Description of Units</u>	23
<u>Global Securities</u>	24
<u>Plan of Distribution</u>	27
<u>Legal Matters</u>	29
<u>Experts</u>	29

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus dated August 25, 2014 are part of a registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, utilizing a shelf registration process. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus relate to the offer by us of shares of our common stock to certain investors. We provide information to you about this offering of shares of our common stock in two separate documents that are bound together: (1) this prospectus supplement, which describes the specific details regarding this offering; and (2) the accompanying prospectus, which provides general information, some of which may not apply to this offering. Generally, when we refer to this prospectus, we are referring to both documents combined. If information in this prospectus supplement is inconsistent with the accompanying prospectus, you should rely on this prospectus supplement. However, if any statement in one of these documents is inconsistent with a statement in another document having a later date—for example, a document incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus—the statement in the document having the later date modifies or supersedes the earlier statement as our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since the earlier dates. You should read this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, the documents and information incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering when making your investment decision. You should also read and consider the information in the documents we have referred you to under the headings **Where You Can Find More Information**; **Information Incorporated by Reference**.

You should rely only on information contained in or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. We have not, and the underwriters have not, authorized anyone to provide you with information that is different. We are offering to sell and seeking offers to buy shares of our common stock only in jurisdictions where offers and sales are permitted. The information contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, the documents and information incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering are accurate only as of their respective dates, regardless of the time of delivery of this prospectus supplement or of any sale of our common stock.

When we refer to **Conatus**, **we**, **our**, **us** and the **Company** in this prospectus, we mean Conatus Pharmaceuticals unless otherwise specified.

We use our registered trademark, **CONATUS PHARMACEUTICALS**, in this prospectus. This prospectus also includes trademarks, tradenames and service marks that are the property of other organizations. Solely for convenience, trademarks and tradenames referred to in this prospectus appear without the ® and ™ symbols, but those references are not intended to indicate, in any way, that we will not assert, to the fullest extent under applicable law, our rights or that the applicable owner will not assert its rights, to these trademarks and tradenames.

Table of Contents**PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT SUMMARY**

The items in the following summary are described in more detail later in this prospectus supplement and in the accompanying prospectus. This summary provides an overview of selected information and does not contain all the information you should consider before investing in our common stock. Therefore, you should read the entire prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering carefully, including the Risk Factors section, and other documents or information included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus before making any investment decision.

Conatus Pharmaceuticals Inc.**Overview**

We are a biotechnology company focused on the development and commercialization of novel medicines to treat liver disease. Our lead compound, emricasan, is a first-in-class, orally active pan-caspase protease inhibitor designed to reduce the activity of human caspases, which are enzymes that mediate inflammation and apoptosis.

We believe that by reducing the activity of these enzymes, emricasan has the potential to interrupt the progression of liver disease and potentially provide treatment options in multiple areas of liver disease. We have observed compelling preclinical and clinical trial results that suggest emricasan may have clinical utility in slowing progression of liver disease regardless of the original cause of the disease. To date, emricasan has been studied in over 550 subjects in fourteen clinical trials. In multiple clinical trials, emricasan has demonstrated statistically significant, consistent, rapid and sustained reductions in elevated levels of key biomarkers of inflammation and apoptosis implicated in the severity and progression of liver disease.

We are conducting a comprehensive clinical program to demonstrate the therapeutic benefit of emricasan in patients with chronic liver disease across the spectrum of liver disease, including: liver cirrhosis, or LC; liver cirrhosis with portal hypertension, or PH; post-orthotopic liver transplant, or POLT, recipients with reestablished liver fibrosis post-transplant as a result of recurrent hepatitis C virus, or HCV, infection who have successfully achieved a sustained viral response, or SVR, following HCV antiviral therapy, or POLT-HCV-SVR; and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, or NAFLD, including patients with inflammatory and/or fibrotic nonalcoholic steatohepatitis, or NASH. The following table summarizes our current development programs for emricasan.

Target Therapeutic Area
Liver Cirrhosis (LC)

Description of Patient Population

In LC patients, healthy liver tissue is replaced with scar tissue resulting in abnormal structure and function of the liver.

Development Program

In September 2014, we initiated a Phase 2 clinical trial in LC patients. Initial results from this clinical trial are expected to be available in the fourth quarter of 2015.

Portal Hypertension (PH)

These cirrhosis patients have an increase in the pressure within the portal vein, which is caused by a

In September 2014, we initiated an exploratory, open-label Phase 2 clinical trial in PH patients. Top-line

blockage in the blood flow through the liver. results from this clinical trial are expected to be available in the third quarter of 2015.

S-2

Table of Contents

Target Therapeutic Area	Description of Patient Population	Development Program
<i>Post Liver Transplant Clearance of Hepatitis C Virus Infection with Sustained Viral Response (POLT-HCV-SVR)</i>	Liver transplant patients with fibrosis from recurrent HCV and subsequent SVR.	In May 2014, we initiated a placebo-controlled Phase 2b clinical trial tracking biomarkers and histology in POLT patients who respond to antiviral therapy but still have underlying liver fibrosis. We expect to have initial baseline data from this clinical trial in the second quarter of 2015.
<i>Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), including non-alcoholic Steatohepatitis (NASH)</i>	NAFLD patients, including NASH patients, suffer from inflammation due to fat buildup in the liver, which can progress to cirrhosis, liver cancer and liver failure.	In March 2015, we reported top-line results from a Phase 2 clinical trial in patients with NAFLD, including NASH. Our goal is to accumulate sufficient and relevant clinical data to allow rapid advancement of emricasan as appropriate regulatory pathways are defined.
<i>Pharmacokinetic, or PK, and Pharmacodynamic, or PD, Clinical Trials in Subjects with Varying Degrees of Organ Impairment</i>	In the later stages of liver disease, the level of organ impairment increases, potentially leading to changes in PK and PD properties of drug candidates.	In January 2015, we reported data from three PK/PD trials (subjects with acute-on-chronic liver failure, subjects with severe renal impairment and subjects with mild, moderate or severe hepatic impairment).

Recent Developments

On March 26, 2015, we announced top-line results from our Phase 2 double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial of emricasan, in 38 patients with NAFLD, including the subset of NAFLD patients with NASH. The trial met its primary endpoint, showing a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) reduction in alanine amino transferase, or ALT, in patients treated for 28 days with emricasan at 25 mg twice per day dosing compared to patients in the placebo control group. Reductions from baseline in ALT at Day 28 of approximately 39% in the emricasan treatment arm and approximately 14% in the placebo arm were similar to results observed in previous trials. Elevated baseline levels of three key serum biomarkers – caspase-cleaved cytokeratin 18, or cCK18, full length cytokeratin 18, and caspase 3/7 – also showed statistically significant reductions from baseline in emricasan-treated patients at Day 28. The baseline elevation in cCK18 confirmed that the underlying targets of emricasan’s mechanism, apoptosis and inflammation, which are believed to drive liver disease progression, were engaged in the NAFLD/NASH patients in this trial. A reduction from baseline in cCK18 at Day 28 of approximately 30% in the emricasan treatment arm and an increase from baseline of approximately 4% in the placebo arm were similar to results observed in previous trials. The reduction in serum cCK18 levels demonstrated that emricasan can effectively reduce inflammation and elevated levels of apoptosis in NAFLD/NASH patients. These results were consistent with data obtained from our previous clinical trials in other liver disease patient populations. Emricasan was safe and well tolerated in the NAFLD/NASH trial, with no

Table of Contents

dose-limiting toxicities and no drug-related serious adverse events. Treatment with emricasan also had no adverse effects on lipid levels or insulin sensitivity, important safety assessments in NAFLD/NASH patients who are at risk for cardiovascular disease. Detailed results from the NAFLD/NASH trial will be presented in a late-breaker poster at The International Liver Congress 2015, the 50th Annual Meeting of the European Association for the Study of the Liver in Vienna, Austria, April 22-26, 2015.

Corporate Information

We were incorporated under the laws of the state of Delaware in 2005. Our principal executive offices are located at 16745 West Bernardo Drive, Suite 200, San Diego, California 92127, and our telephone number is (858) 376-2600. Our website address is www.conatuspharma.com. The information on, or accessible through, our website is not part of, and is not incorporated into, this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus and should not be considered part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus.

S-4

Table of Contents

THE OFFERING

Common stock offered by us	shares
Common stock to be outstanding after this offering	shares (or shares if the underwriters exercise in full their option to purchase additional shares)
Option to purchase additional shares	We have granted the underwriters an option to purchase up to an additional shares of our common stock. This option is exercisable, in whole or in part, for a period of 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement.
Use of proceeds	We intend to use the net proceeds from this offering to fund clinical development of emricasan, including preparation for registration trials, and for working capital and other general corporate purposes. See Use of Proceeds on page S-8.
Risk factors	You should read the Risk Factors section of this prospectus supplement and in the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement for a discussion of factors to consider before deciding to invest in our common stock.
Nasdaq Global Market symbol	CNAT
The number of shares of common stock to be outstanding after this offering is based on 15,695,834 shares outstanding as of December 31, 2014, which includes 135,220 shares that are subject to repurchase by us as of such date, and excludes:	
1,859,034 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of options outstanding as of December 31, 2014, at a weighted average exercise price of \$6.84 per share;	
149,704 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of warrants outstanding as of December 31, 2014, at a weighted average exercise price of \$7.43 per share;	
703,859 shares of common stock reserved for future issuance under our 2013 incentive award plan and employee stock purchase plan as of December 31, 2014; and	

shares of our common stock issuable upon the optional conversion of a promissory note in the principal amount of \$1.0 million (including accrued interest thereon) that we issued to Pfizer Inc. in July 2010, at a price per share equal to the fair market value of our common stock on the date of conversion.

Except as otherwise indicated, all information in this prospectus supplement assumes no exercise by the underwriters of their option to purchase up to an additional shares of our common stock.

S-5

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

You should consider carefully the risks described below and discussed under the section captioned Risk Factors contained in our annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, as updated by our subsequent filings under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus in their entirety, together with other information in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the information and documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering before you make a decision to invest in our common stock. If any of the following events actually occur, our business, operating results, prospects or financial condition could be materially and adversely affected. This could cause the trading price of our common stock to decline and you may lose all or part of your investment. The risks described below are not the only ones that we face. Additional risks not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial may also affect our business operations.

Risks Relating to this Offering

If you purchase shares of our common stock sold in this offering, you will experience immediate and substantial dilution in the net tangible book value of your shares. In addition, we may issue additional equity or convertible debt securities in the future, which may result in additional dilution to investors.

The offering price per share of common stock in this offering is considerably more than the net tangible book value per share of our outstanding common stock. As a result, investors purchasing shares of common stock in this offering will pay a price per share that substantially exceeds the value of our tangible assets after subtracting liabilities. Investors will incur immediate dilution of \$ per share, based on the public offering price of \$ per share and the net tangible book value as of December, 31 2014. For a more detailed discussion of the foregoing, see the section entitled Dilution below. To the extent outstanding stock options or warrants are exercised, there will be further dilution to new investors. In addition, to the extent we need to raise additional capital in the future and we issue additional equity or convertible debt securities, our then existing stockholders may experience dilution and the new securities may have rights senior to those of our common stock offered in this offering.

Our management team may invest or spend the proceeds of this offering in ways with which you may not agree or in ways which may not yield a significant return.

Our management will have broad discretion over the use of proceeds from this offering. We intend to use the net proceeds from this offering to fund clinical development of emricasan, including preparation for registration trials, and for working capital and other general corporate purposes. Our management will have considerable discretion in the application of the net proceeds, and you will not have the opportunity, as part of your investment decision, to assess whether the proceeds are being used appropriately. The net proceeds may be used for corporate purposes that do not increase our operating results or enhance the value of our common stock.

Table of Contents

CAUTIONARY NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including the documents incorporated by reference herein and therein, and any free writing prospectus that we have authorized for use in connection with this offering contain forward-looking statements. All statements other than statements of historical facts contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein are forward-looking statements, including statements regarding our future results of operations and financial position, business strategy, prospective products, product approvals, research and development costs, timing and likelihood of success, plans and objectives of management for future operations and future results of anticipated products. These statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other important factors that may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. This prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein also contain estimates and other statistical data made by independent parties and by us relating to market size and growth and other data about our industry. This data involves a number of assumptions and limitations, and you are cautioned not to give undue weight to such estimates. In addition, projections, assumptions and estimates of our future performance and the future performance of the markets in which we operate are necessarily subject to a high degree of uncertainty and risk.

In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terms such as may, will, should, expect, anticipate, could, intend, target, project, contemplates, believes, estimates, predicts, potential, or the negative of these terms or other similar expressions. The forward-looking statements in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein are only predictions. We have based these forward-looking statements largely on our current expectations and projections about future events and financial trends that we believe may affect our business, financial condition and results of operations. These forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this prospectus supplement and are subject to a number of risks, uncertainties and assumptions, which we discuss in greater detail in the documents incorporated by reference herein, including under the heading Risk Factors. The events and circumstances reflected in our forward-looking statements may not be achieved or occur and actual results could differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. Moreover, we operate in an evolving environment. New risk factors and uncertainties may emerge from time to time, and it is not possible for management to predict all risk factors and uncertainties. Given these risks and uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. Except as required by applicable law, we do not plan to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or the documents incorporated by reference herein, whether as a result of any new information, future events, changed circumstances or otherwise. For all forward-looking statements, we claim the protection of the safe harbor for forward-looking statements contained in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995.

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

We estimate that we will receive net proceeds of approximately \$ million from the sale of the shares of common stock offered by us in this offering, or approximately \$ million if the underwriters exercise in full their option to purchase additional shares of common stock, after deducting the underwriting discounts and commissions and estimated offering costs payable by us.

We intend to use the net proceeds from this offering to fund clinical development of emricasan, including preparation for registration trials, and for working capital and other general corporate purposes.

The amounts and timing of our actual expenditures will depend on numerous factors, including interactions with and feedback from regulatory authorities, the progress of our clinical trials, other development efforts for emricasan and other factors, as well as the amount of cash used in our operations. We therefore cannot estimate with certainty the amount of net proceeds to be used for the purposes described above. We may find it necessary or advisable to use the net proceeds for other purposes, and we will have broad discretion in the application of the net proceeds. Pending the uses described above, we plan to invest the net proceeds from this offering in short- and intermediate-term, interest-bearing obligations, investment-grade instruments, certificates of deposit or direct or guaranteed obligations of the U.S. government.

Table of Contents**DILUTION**

If you invest in our common stock in this offering, your interest will be diluted to the extent of the difference between the public offering price per share and the net tangible book value per share of our common stock after this offering. As of December 31, 2014, our historical net tangible book value was \$33,272,648, or \$2.14 per share, based on 15,560,614 shares of our common stock outstanding as of December 31, 2014. Our historical net tangible book value per share represents the amount of our total tangible assets reduced by the amount of our total liabilities, divided by the total number of shares of our common stock outstanding as of December 31, 2014. After giving effect to our sale in this offering of _____ shares of common stock at the public offering price of \$ _____ per share, and after deducting underwriting discounts and commissions and estimated offering costs payable by us, our net tangible book value as of December 31, 2014 would have been \$ _____ million, or \$ _____ per share. This represents an immediate increase of net tangible book value of \$ _____ per share to our existing stockholders and an immediate dilution of \$ _____ per share to investors purchasing shares in this offering. The following table illustrates this per share dilution.

Public offering price per share	\$
Historical net tangible book value per share at December 31, 2014	\$ 2.14
Increase per share attributable to investors purchasing shares in this offering	
Pro forma net tangible book value per share, as adjusted to give effect to this offering	
Dilution to investors in this offering	\$

If the underwriters exercise in full their option to purchase up to an additional _____ shares of our common stock at the public offering price of \$ _____ per share, the pro forma net tangible book value after this offering would be \$ _____ per share, representing an increase in net tangible book value of \$ _____ per share to our existing stockholders and immediate dilution in net tangible book value of \$ _____ per share to investors purchasing shares in this offering.

The above discussion and table are based on 15,560,614 shares outstanding as of December 31, 2014 and exclude:

1,859,034 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of options outstanding as of December 31, 2014, at a weighted average exercise price of \$6.84 per share;

149,704 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of warrants outstanding as of December 31, 2014, at a weighted average exercise price of \$7.43 per share;

703,859 shares of common stock reserved for future issuance under our 2013 incentive award plan and employee stock purchase plan as of December 31, 2014;

135,220 unvested shares outstanding from the early exercise of stock options that are subject to repurchase by us as of December 31, 2014; and

shares of our common stock issuable upon the optional conversion of a promissory note in the principal amount of \$1.0 million (including accrued interest thereon) that we issued to Pfizer Inc. in July 2010, at a price per share equal to the fair market value of our common stock on the date of conversion.

To the extent that outstanding exercisable options or warrants are exercised, you may experience further dilution. In addition, we may choose to raise additional capital due to market conditions or strategic considerations even if we believe we have sufficient funds for our current or future operating plans. To the extent that we raise additional capital by issuing equity or convertible debt securities, your ownership will be further diluted.

Table of Contents**UNDERWRITING**

Subject to the terms and conditions set forth in an underwriting agreement between us, Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Incorporated and Roth Capital Partners, LLC, as representatives of the several underwriters, each of the underwriters named below has severally agreed to purchase from us the aggregate number of shares set forth opposite its name below:

Underwriters	Number of Shares
Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Incorporated	
Roth Capital Partners, LLC	
Total	

The underwriting agreement provides that the obligations of the several underwriters are subject to various conditions, including approval of legal matters by counsel. The nature of the underwriters' obligations commits the underwriters to purchase and pay for all of the shares listed above if any are purchased.

The underwriters expect to deliver the shares to purchasers on or about April 1, 2015.

Option to Purchase Additional Shares

We have granted to the underwriters an option, exercisable for 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement, to purchase, from time to time, in whole or in part, up to an aggregate of _____ shares of our common stock from us, at the public offering price, less the underwriting discount payable by us, as set forth on the cover page of this prospectus supplement. If the underwriters exercise this option in whole or in part, then each of the underwriters will be separately committed, subject to the conditions described in the underwriting agreement, to purchase the additional shares of our common stock in proportion to their respective commitments set forth in the table above.

Commissions and Discounts

The underwriters propose to offer the shares directly to the public at the public offering price set forth on the cover page of this prospectus supplement, and at this price less a concession not in excess of \$ _____ per share of common stock to other dealers. After this offering, the offering price and other selling terms may be changed by the representatives. Our shares are offered subject to receipt and acceptance by the underwriters and to other conditions, including the right to reject orders in whole or in part.

The following table summarizes the compensation to be paid to the underwriters by us and the proceeds, before expenses, payable to us:

	Per Share		Total	
	No Exercise	Full Exercise	No Exercise	Full Exercise
Public offering price	\$	\$	\$	\$

Underwriting discount	\$	\$	\$	\$
Proceeds, before expenses, to us	\$	\$	\$	\$

The expenses of the offering, not including the underwriting discount, payable by us are estimated to be \$, which includes up to \$ that we have agreed to reimburse the underwriters for their out-of-pocket expenses, including reasonable fees and disbursements of underwriters counsel, incurred in connection with this offering.

Indemnification of Underwriters

We will indemnify the underwriters against some civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. If we are unable to provide this indemnification, we will contribute to payments the underwriters may be required to make in respect of those liabilities.

Table of Contents

No Sales of Similar Securities

We and our directors and executive officers have agreed that, without the prior written consent of each of Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Incorporated and Roth Capital Partners, LLC, we and they will not directly or indirectly:

offer, sell, contract to sell (including any short sale), pledge, hypothecate, establish an open put equivalent position within the meaning of Rule 16a-1(h) under the Exchange Act, grant any option, right or warrant for the sale of, purchase any option or contract to sell, sell any option or contract to purchase, or otherwise encumber, dispose of or transfer, or grant any rights with respect to, directly or indirectly, any shares of common stock or securities convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for any shares of common stock;

enter into a transaction which would have the same effect, or enter into any swap, hedge or other arrangement that transfers, in whole or in part, any of the economic consequences of ownership of the common stock, whether any such transaction is to be settled by delivery of the common stock or other securities, in cash or otherwise; or

publicly disclose the intention to do any of the foregoing, for a period of 90 days after the date of this prospectus supplement. However, in the case of our directors and executive officers, these lock-up restrictions will not apply to:

bona fide gifts made by the holder;

the surrender or forfeiture of shares of common stock to us to satisfy tax withholding obligations upon exercise or vesting of stock options or equity awards;

transfers of common stock or any security convertible into or exercisable for common stock to an immediate family member, an immediate family member of a domestic partner or a trust for the benefit of the undersigned, a domestic partner or an immediate family member;

transfers of shares of common stock or any security convertible into or exercisable for common stock to any corporation, partnership, limited liability company or other entity all of the beneficial ownership interests of which are held exclusively by the holder, a domestic partner and/or one or more family members of the holder or the holder's domestic partner in a transaction not involving a disposition for value;

transfers of shares of common stock or any security convertible into or exercisable for common stock upon death by will or intestate succession;

distributions of shares of common stock or securities convertible into or exercisable for common stock to members, partners or stockholders of the holder;

the exercise of any option, warrant or other right to acquire shares of common stock, the settlement of any stock-settled stock appreciation rights, restricted stock or restricted stock units, or the conversion of any convertible security into our securities;

securities transferred to one or more affiliates of the holder and distributions of securities to partners, members or stockholders of the holder;

transactions relating to securities acquired in open market transactions after the date of this prospectus supplement;

the entry into a trading plan established pursuant to Rule 10b5-1 under the Exchange Act, provided that such plan does not provide for any sales or other dispositions of shares of common stock during the 90-day restricted period; or

any shares purchased by the holder in this offering.

Except for transfers related to securities acquired on the open market or in this offering or to the surrender or forfeiture of shares of common stock to us to satisfy tax withholding obligations upon exercise or vesting of stock options or equity awards, as described above, any transferee under the excepted transfers above must agree in writing, prior to the transfer, to be bound by the lock-up agreements.

Table of Contents

Additionally, in our case, the lock-up restrictions will not apply to:

shares sold in this offering;

equity based awards granted pursuant to our equity incentive plans referred to in this prospectus supplement, including any amendments to those plans, and shares of common stock issued upon the exercise of any equity based awards;

shares of common stock issued upon the conversion of outstanding securities;

the filing of a registration statement on Form S-8 relating to the registration of shares issuable pursuant to our equity incentive plans;

shares of common stock issued in satisfaction of the accumulated dividend on our outstanding convertible preferred stock; or

shares of common stock or any securities convertible into, or exercisable, or exchangeable for, shares of common stock, issued to lenders or financial institutions in connection with bona fide debt or credit arrangements as long as (x) the aggregate number of shares of common stock issued or issuable does not exceed 5% of the number of shares of common stock outstanding immediately after this offering, and (y) each recipient of any such shares or other securities agrees to restrictions on the resale of such securities that are consistent with the lock-up agreements described above.

Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Incorporated and Roth Capital Partners, LLC, in their sole discretion, may release the common stock and other securities subject to the lock-up agreements described above in whole or in part at any time with or without notice. When determining whether or not to release common stock and other securities from lock-up agreements, Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Incorporated and Roth Capital Partners, LLC will consider, among other factors, the holder's reasons for requesting the release, the number of shares of common stock and other securities for which the release is being requested and market conditions at the time.

Passive Market-Making

In connection with the offering, the underwriters may engage in passive market-making transactions in the common stock on the Nasdaq Global Market in accordance with Rule 103 of Regulation M under the Exchange Act during the period before the commencement of offers or sales of common stock and extending through the completion and distribution. A passive market-maker must display its bids at a price not in excess of the highest independent bid of the security. However, if all independent bids are lowered below the passive market-maker's bid, that bid must be lowered when specified purchase limits are exceeded.

Short Sales, Stabilizing Transactions and Penalty Bids

In order to facilitate this offering, persons participating in this offering may engage in transactions that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the price of our common stock during and after this offering. Specifically, the underwriters may engage in the following activities in accordance with the rules of the SEC.

Short sales. Short sales involve the sales by the underwriters of a greater number of shares than they are required to purchase in the offering. Covered short sales are short sales made in an amount not greater than the underwriters option to purchase additional shares from us in this offering. The underwriters may close out any covered short position by either exercising their option to purchase additional shares or by purchasing shares in the open market. In determining the source of shares to close out the covered short position, the underwriters will consider, among other things, the price of shares available for purchase in the open market as compared to the price at which they may purchase shares through the option to purchase additional shares. Naked short sales are any short sales in excess of such option to purchase additional shares. The underwriters must close out any naked short position by purchasing shares in the open market. A naked short position is more likely to be created if the underwriters are concerned that there may be downward pressure on the price of the common stock in the open market after pricing that could adversely affect investors who purchase in this offering.

Table of Contents

Stabilizing transactions. The underwriters may make bids for or purchases of the shares for the purpose of pegging, fixing, or maintaining the price of the shares, so long as stabilizing bids do not exceed a specified maximum.

Penalty bids. If the underwriters purchase shares in the open market in a stabilizing transaction or syndicate covering transaction, they may reclaim a selling concession from the underwriters and selling group members who sold those shares as part of this offering. Stabilization and syndicate covering transactions may cause the price of the shares to be higher than it would be in the absence of these transactions. The imposition of a penalty bid might also have an effect on the price of the shares if it discourages presales of the shares.

The transactions above may occur on the Nasdaq Global Market or otherwise. Neither we nor the underwriters make any representation or prediction as to the effect that the transactions described above may have on the price of the shares. If these transactions are commenced, they may be discontinued without notice at any time.

Miscellaneous

Our common stock is traded on the Nasdaq Global Market under the symbol CNAT.

The underwriters have in the past and may in the future provide various investment banking and other financial services for us for which services they have received or may in the future receive, customary fees.

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is American Stock Transfer & Trust Company, LLC.

European Economic Area

In relation to each member state of the European Economic Area that has implemented the Prospectus Directive (each, a relevant member state), with effect from and including the date on which the Prospectus Directive is implemented in that relevant member state (the relevant implementation date), an offer of securities described in this prospectus may not be made to the public in that relevant member state other than:

to any legal entity that is authorized or regulated to operate in the financial markets or, if not so authorized or regulated, whose corporate purpose is solely to invest in securities;

to any legal entity that has two or more of (1) an average of at least 250 employees during the last financial year; (2) a total balance sheet of more than 43,000,000 and (3) an annual net turnover of more than 50,000,000, as shown in its last annual or consolidated accounts;

to fewer than 100 natural or legal persons (other than qualified investors as defined in the Prospectus Directive) subject to obtaining the prior consent of the representatives; or

in any other circumstances that do not require the publication of a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the Prospectus Directive,

provided that no such offer of securities shall require us or any underwriter to publish a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the Prospectus Directive. For purposes of this provision, the expression an offer of securities to the public in any relevant member state means the communication in any form and by any means of sufficient information on the terms of the offer and the securities to be offered so as to enable an investor to decide to purchase or subscribe the securities, as the expression may be varied in that member state by any measure implementing the Prospectus Directive in that member state, and the expression Prospectus Directive means Directive 2003/71/EC and includes any relevant implementing measure in each relevant member state.

We have not authorized and do not authorize the making of any offer of securities through any financial intermediary on their behalf, other than offers made by the underwriters with a view to the final placement of the securities as contemplated in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. Accordingly, no purchaser of the securities, other than the underwriters, is authorized to make any further offer of the securities on behalf of us or the underwriters.

United Kingdom

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are only being distributed to, and are only directed at, persons in the United Kingdom that are qualified investors within the meaning of Article 2(1)(e) of

Table of Contents

the Prospectus Directive (Qualified Investors) that are also (i) investment professionals falling within Article 19(5) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005 (the Order) or (ii) high net worth entities, and other persons to whom it may lawfully be communicated, falling within Article 49(2)(a) to (d) of the Order (all such persons together being referred to as relevant persons). This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and their contents are confidential and should not be distributed, published or reproduced (in whole or in part) or disclosed by recipients to any other persons in the United Kingdom. Any person in the United Kingdom who is not a relevant person should not act or rely on this document or any of its contents.

S-14

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the issuance of the securities offered hereby will be passed upon by our counsel, Latham & Watkins LLP, San Diego, California. The underwriters are being represented in connection with this offering by Goodwin Procter LLP, New York, New York.

EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our consolidated financial statements included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, as set forth in their report, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement. Our financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's report, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION; INFORMATION INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Available Information

We have filed with the SEC a registration statement on Form S-3 under the Securities Act, of which this prospectus supplement forms a part. The rules and regulations of the SEC allow us to omit from this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus certain information included in the registration statement. For further information about us and the securities we are offering under this prospectus supplement, you should refer to the registration statement and the exhibits and schedules filed with the registration statement. With respect to the statements contained in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus regarding the contents of any agreement or any other document, in each instance, the statement is qualified in all respects by the complete text of the agreement or document, a copy of which has been filed as an exhibit to the registration statement.

We file reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Information filed with the SEC by us can be inspected and copied at the Public Reference Room maintained by the SEC at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. You may also obtain copies of this information by mail from the Public Reference facilities of the SEC at prescribed rates. Further information on the operation of the SEC's Public Reference Room in Washington, D.C. can be obtained by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. The SEC also maintains a website that contains reports, proxy and information statements and other information about issuers, such as us, who file electronically with the SEC. The address of that website is <http://www.sec.gov>.

Our website address is www.conatuspharma.com. The information on, or accessible through, our website is not part of, and is not incorporated into, this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus and should not be considered part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus.

Incorporation by Reference

The SEC's rules allow us to incorporate by reference information into this prospectus supplement, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is deemed to be part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, and subsequent information that we file with the SEC will automatically update and supersede that information. Any statement contained in a previously filed document incorporated by reference will be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus supplement and accompanying prospectus to the extent that a

statement contained in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus modifies or replaces that statement.

We incorporate by reference our documents listed below and any future filings made by us with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, which we refer to as the Exchange Act in this prospectus supplement, between the date of this prospectus supplement and the

S-15

Table of Contents

termination of the offering of the securities described in this prospectus supplement. We are not, however, incorporating by reference any documents or portions thereof, whether specifically listed below or filed in the future, that are not deemed filed with the SEC, including our Compensation Committee report and performance graph or any information furnished pursuant to Items 2.02 or 7.01 of Form 8-K or related exhibits furnished pursuant to Item 9.01 of Form 8-K.

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus incorporate by reference the documents set forth below that have previously been filed with the SEC:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, filed with the SEC on March 13, 2015;

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on January 8, 2015, February 25, 2015, March 5, 2015 and March 26, 2015;

our Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A, filed with the SEC on April 28, 2014; and

the description of our Common Stock contained in our registration statement on Form 8-A, filed with the SEC on July 12, 2013 and any amendment or report filed with the SEC for the purpose of updating the description. All reports and other documents we subsequently file pursuant to Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act prior to the termination of this offering, including, but excluding any information furnished to, rather than filed with, the SEC, will also be incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus and deemed to be part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus from the date of the filing of such reports and documents.

You may request a free copy of any of the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus (other than exhibits, unless they are specifically incorporated by reference in the documents) by writing or telephoning us at the following address:

Conatus Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Attn: Corporate Secretary

16745 West Bernardo Drive, Suite 200

San Diego, California 92127

(858) 376-2600

Table of Contents

PROSPECTUS

\$150,000,000

Common Stock

Preferred Stock

Debt Securities

Warrants

Units

We may offer and sell up to \$150.0 million in the aggregate of the securities identified above from time to time in one or more offerings. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities.

Each time we offer and sell securities, we will provide a supplement to this prospectus that contains specific information about the offering and the amounts, prices and terms of the securities. The supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus with respect to that offering. You should carefully read this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement before you invest in any of our securities.

We may offer and sell the securities described in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement to or through one or more underwriters, dealers and agents, or directly to purchasers, or through a combination of these methods. If any underwriters, dealers or agents are involved in the sale of any of the securities, their names and any applicable purchase price, fee, commission or discount arrangement between or among them will be set forth, or will be calculable from the information set forth, in the applicable prospectus supplement. See the sections of this prospectus entitled **About this Prospectus** and **Plan of Distribution** for more information. No securities may be sold without delivery of this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement describing the method and terms of the offering of such securities.

INVESTING IN OUR SECURITIES INVOLVES RISKS. SEE THE RISK FACTORS ON PAGE 6 OF THIS PROSPECTUS AND ANY SIMILAR SECTION CONTAINED IN THE APPLICABLE PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT CONCERNING FACTORS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER BEFORE INVESTING IN OUR SECURITIES.

Our common stock is listed on The Nasdaq Global Market under the symbol CNAT. On August 12, 2014, the last reported sale price of our common stock on The Nasdaq Global Market was \$7.76 per share.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the adequacy or accuracy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is August 25, 2014.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS</u>	1
<u>WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION; INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE</u>	2
<u>THE COMPANY</u>	4
<u>RISK FACTORS</u>	6
<u>CAUTIONARY NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS</u>	6
<u>USE OF PROCEEDS</u>	7
<u>DIVIDEND POLICY</u>	7
<u>RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES</u>	8
<u>DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK</u>	9
<u>DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES</u>	14
<u>DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS</u>	21
<u>DESCRIPTION OF UNITS</u>	23
<u>GLOBAL SECURITIES</u>	24
<u>PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION</u>	27
<u>LEGAL MATTERS</u>	29
<u>EXPERTS</u>	29

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, using a shelf registration process. By using a shelf registration statement, we may sell securities from time to time and in one or more offerings up to a total dollar amount of \$150.0 million as described in this prospectus. Each time that we offer and sell securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement to this prospectus that contains specific information about the securities being offered and sold and the specific terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus with respect to that offering. If there is any inconsistency between the information in this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, you should rely on the prospectus supplement. Before purchasing any securities, you should carefully read both this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, together with the additional information described under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information; Incorporation by Reference**.

You should rely only on the information contained in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or any related prospectus supplement. We have not authorized any other person to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. We will not make an offer to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement to this prospectus is accurate only as of the date on its respective cover, and that any information incorporated by reference is accurate only as of the date of the document incorporated by reference, unless we indicate otherwise. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

When we refer to **Conatus**, **we**, **our**, **us** and the **Company** in this prospectus, we mean Conatus Pharmaceuticals Inc. unless otherwise specified. When we refer to **you**, we mean the holders of the applicable series of securities.

We use our registered trademark, **CONATUS PHARMACEUTICALS**, in this prospectus. This prospectus also includes trademarks, tradenames and service marks that are the property of other organizations. Solely for convenience, trademarks and tradenames referred to in this prospectus appear without the ® and ™ symbols, but those references are not intended to indicate, in any way, that we will not assert, to the fullest extent under applicable law, our rights or that the applicable owner will not assert its rights, to these trademarks and tradenames.

Table of Contents

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION; INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Available Information

We file reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. Information filed with the SEC by us can be inspected and copied at the Public Reference Room maintained by the SEC at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. You may also obtain copies of this information by mail from the Public Reference facilities of the SEC at prescribed rates. Further information on the operation of the SEC's Public Reference Room in Washington, D.C. can be obtained by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. The SEC also maintains a web site that contains reports, proxy and information statements and other information about issuers, such as us, who file electronically with the SEC. The address of that website is <http://www.sec.gov>.

Our web site address is www.conatuspharma.com. The information on our web site, however, is not, and should not be deemed to be, a part of this prospectus.

This prospectus and any prospectus supplement are part of a registration statement that we filed with the SEC and do not contain all of the information in the registration statement. The full registration statement may be obtained from the SEC or us, as provided below. Forms of the indenture and other documents establishing the terms of the offered securities are or may be filed as exhibits to the registration statement. Statements in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement about these documents are summaries and each statement is qualified in all respects by reference to the document to which it refers. You should refer to the actual documents for a more complete description of the relevant matters. You may inspect a copy of the registration statement at the SEC's Public Reference Room in Washington, D.C. or through the SEC's website, as provided above.

Incorporation by Reference

The SEC's rules allow us to incorporate by reference information into this prospectus, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is deemed to be part of this prospectus, and subsequent information that we file with the SEC will automatically update and supersede that information. Any statement contained in a previously filed document incorporated by reference will be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent that a statement contained in this prospectus modifies or replaces that statement.

We incorporate by reference our documents listed below and any future filings made by us with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, which we refer to as the Exchange Act in this prospectus, between the date of this prospectus and the termination of the offering of the securities described in this prospectus. We are not, however, incorporating by reference any documents or portions thereof, whether specifically listed below or filed in the future, that are not deemed filed with the SEC, including our Compensation Committee report and performance graph or any information furnished pursuant to Items 2.02 or 7.01 of Form 8-K or related exhibits furnished pursuant to Item 9.01 of Form 8-K.

This prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplement incorporate by reference the documents set forth below that have previously been filed with the SEC:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2013, filed with the SEC on March 28, 2014;

our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2014 and June 30, 2014, filed with the SEC on May 14, 2014 and August 14, 2014, respectively;

our Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A, filed with the SEC on April 28, 2014;

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on February 10, 2014, April 16, 2014 and June 23, 2014; and

Table of Contents

the description of our Common Stock contained in our registration statement on Form 8-A, filed with the SEC on July 12, 2013 and any amendment or report filed with the SEC for the purpose of updating the description.

All reports and other documents we subsequently file pursuant to Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act prior to the termination of this offering, including all such documents we may file with the SEC after the date of the initial registration statement and prior to the effectiveness of the registration statement, but excluding any information furnished to, rather than filed with, the SEC, will also be incorporated by reference into this prospectus and deemed to be part of this prospectus from the date of the filing of such reports and documents.

You may request a free copy of any of the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus (other than exhibits, unless they are specifically incorporated by reference in the documents) by writing or telephoning us at the following address:

Conatus Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Attn: Corporate Secretary

16745 West Bernardo Drive, Suite 200

San Diego, California 92127

(858) 376-2600

Table of Contents

THE COMPANY

We are a biotechnology company focused on the development and commercialization of novel medicines to treat liver disease. We are developing our lead compound, emricasan, for the treatment of patients with chronic liver disease and acute exacerbations of chronic liver disease. Emricasan is a first-in-class, orally active pan-caspase protease inhibitor designed to reduce the activity of all ten human caspases, which are enzymes that mediate inflammation and cell death, or apoptosis. We believe that by reducing the activity of these enzymes, emricasan has the potential to interrupt the progression of liver disease and potentially provide treatment options in multiple areas of liver disease. We have observed compelling preclinical and clinical trial results that suggest emricasan may have clinical utility in slowing progression of liver diseases regardless of the original cause of the disease. To date, emricasan has been studied in over 500 subjects in ten clinical trials. In a randomized Phase 2b clinical trial in patients with liver disease, emricasan demonstrated a statistically significant, consistent, rapid and sustained reduction in elevated levels of two key biomarkers of inflammation and cell death, alanine aminotransferase, or ALT, and cleaved Cytokeratin 18, or cCK18, respectively, both of which are implicated in the severity and progression of liver disease.

We have designed a comprehensive clinical program to demonstrate the therapeutic benefit of emricasan across the spectrum of liver diseases. Our development strategy for emricasan targets indications with high unmet clinical need, such as patients with acute-on-chronic liver failure, or ACLF, and chronic liver failure, or CLF, and other chronic liver indications. The other chronic liver indications we are targeting include patients who have developed liver fibrosis post-orthotopic liver transplant, or POLT, due to hepatitis C virus, or HCV, infection and have subsequently achieved sustained viral response, or SVR, following anti-HCV therapy, or POLT-HCV-SVR, and patients with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, or NAFLD, specifically non-alcoholic steatohepatitis, or NASH.

We are conducting three clinical trials of emricasan in patients with impaired organ function to support dose selection and prioritization for advancement in our overall clinical development program: a Phase 2b clinical trial initiated in September 2013 in ACLF patients who may have simultaneous impairment of both liver and kidney function; a Phase 1 clinical trial initiated in January 2014 in patients with severe renal impairment; and a Phase 1 clinical trial initiated in April 2014 in patients with various degrees of hepatic impairment. Top-line pharmacokinetic, or PK, data from these three clinical trials are expected in the second half of 2014. We expect to complete dosing in the ACLF clinical trial by the end of 2014. We do not expect to dose the maximum of 60 patients stipulated in the protocol, but we expect that enrollment and results will be sufficient to determine the future direction for the clinical development of emricasan in this critically ill patient population by the end of 2014.

We believe that emricasan may provide meaningful clinical benefit for CLF patients with long-term cirrhosis whose disease symptoms progress in severity over time. Patients with more advanced cirrhosis may include those on the transplant waiting list and those not eligible for the transplant waiting list. We believe emricasan may help stabilize these patients long enough to get a liver transplant or improve their condition enough to qualify for a transplant. Dosing and PK information from the severe renal impairment clinical trial and the hepatic impairment clinical trial is expected to support the design of a Phase 2 CLF clinical trial, which we expect to initiate in the second half of 2014.

In May 2014, we initiated a Phase 2b clinical trial in POLT-HCV-SVR patients with fibrosis. The primary endpoint in this exploratory proof-of-concept clinical trial is the change in the Ishak Fibrosis Score compared to placebo. The clinical trial will also evaluate other histological markers, key serum biomarkers, and the safety and tolerability of emricasan in the target patient population. Initial open-label data from the POLT-HCV-SVR Phase 2b clinical trial are expected in the first half of 2015. If, as expected, a subset of patients in this clinical trial also has histological evidence of fat in their livers (steatosis), their baseline NAFLD Activity Scores (NAS) and subsequent changes will be evaluated.

Table of Contents

In March 2014, we initiated a Phase 2 clinical trial of emricasan in patients with NAFLD, including patients with NASH. The clinical trial is intended to confirm the appropriate dosing in this patient population for potential future studies, to expand emricasan's safety database, and to evaluate changes in relevant biomarkers of liver damage. Announcement of top-line results from the Phase 2 NAFLD/NASH clinical trial is being deferred to the first quarter of 2015.

Target Therapeutic Area	Description of Patient Population	Development Plans
<i>Acute-on-Chronic Liver Failure</i>	ACLF occurs in patients who have compensated or decompensated cirrhosis but are in relatively stable condition until an acute event sets off a rapid worsening of liver function.	In September 2013, we initiated a Phase 2b clinical trial in ACLF. We expect to have top-line PK data from the ACLF clinical trial in the second half of 2014 and to determine the future direction for the clinical development in this population by the end of 2014.
<i>Chronic Liver Failure</i>	Patients with CLF suffer from compensated or decompensated cirrhosis.	Our planned clinical trials in CLF will assess whether emricasan can delay or prevent disease progression. We expect to initiate a Phase 2 CLF clinical trial in the second half of 2014.
<i>Post Liver Transplant Clearance of Hepatitis C Virus Infection with Sustained Viral Response</i>	In patients with POLT-HCV-SVR, liver fibrosis may persist for many years.	In May 2014, we initiated a placebo-controlled (open to sponsor) Phase 2b clinical trial tracking biomarkers and histology in POLT patients who respond to antiviral therapy but still have underlying liver fibrosis. We expect to have initial data from the sponsor-open clinical trial in the first half of 2015.
<i>Non-alcoholic Steatohepatitis</i>	NASH patients suffer from inflammation due to fat buildup in the liver.	In March 2014, we initiated a Phase 2 clinical trial in the United States for NAFLD, and NASH. Our goal is to accumulate sufficient and relevant clinical data to allow rapid advancement of emricasan once appropriate regulatory pathways are defined. We expect to have top-line data from this clinical trial in the first quarter of 2015.

We were incorporated under the laws of the state of Delaware in 2005. Our principal executive offices are located at 16745 West Bernardo Drive, Suite 200, San Diego, California 92127, and our telephone number is (858) 376-2600.

Table of Contents

RISK FACTORS

Investment in any securities offered pursuant to this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement involves risks. You should carefully consider the risk factors incorporated by reference to our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and any subsequent Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q or Current Reports on Form 8-K we file after the date of this prospectus, and all other information contained or incorporated by reference into this prospectus, as updated by our subsequent filings under the Exchange Act, and the risk factors and other information contained in the applicable prospectus supplement before acquiring any of such securities. The occurrence of any of these risks might cause you to lose all or part of your investment in the offered securities.

CAUTIONARY NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein contain forward-looking statements. All statements other than statements of historical facts contained in this prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein are forward-looking statements. These statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other important factors that may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. This prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein also contain estimates and other statistical data made by independent parties and by us relating to market size and growth and other data about our industry. This data involves a number of assumptions and limitations, and you are cautioned not to give undue weight to such estimates. In addition, projections, assumptions and estimates of our future performance and the future performance of the markets in which we operate are necessarily subject to a high degree of uncertainty and risk.

In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terms such as may, will, should, expect, plan, anticipate, could, intend, target, project, contemplates, believes, estimates, predicts, potential or negative of these terms or other similar expressions. The forward-looking statements in this prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein are only predictions. We have based these forward-looking statements largely on our current expectations and projections about future events and financial trends that we believe may affect our business, financial condition and results of operations. These forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this prospectus and are subject to a number of risks, uncertainties and assumptions, including those under Risk Factors and elsewhere in this prospectus. The events and circumstances reflected in our forward-looking statements may not be achieved or occur and actual results could differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. Moreover, we operate in an evolving environment. New risk factors and uncertainties may emerge from time to time, and it is not possible for management to predict all risk factors and uncertainties. Except as required by applicable law, we do not plan to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements contained in this prospectus or the documents incorporated by reference herein, whether as a result of any new information, future events, changed circumstances or otherwise.

Table of Contents

USE OF PROCEEDS

We intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of the securities as set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

DIVIDEND POLICY

We have never declared or paid any cash dividends on our capital stock. We intend to retain future earnings, if any, to finance the operation of our business and do not anticipate paying any cash dividends in the foreseeable future. Any future determination related to our dividend policy will be made at the discretion of our board of directors after considering our financial condition, results of operations, capital requirements, business prospects and other factors the board of directors deems relevant, and subject to the restrictions contained in any future financing instruments. In addition, our ability to pay cash dividends is currently prohibited by the terms of a promissory note in the principal amount of \$1.0 million issued by us to Pfizer Inc. in July 2010.

Table of Contents**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

The following table sets forth the historical ratios of earnings to fixed charges for Conatus for the periods indicated.

	Year Ended December 31,			Six Months Ended
	2011	2012	2013	June 30, 2014
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges (1)				

(1) Our earnings were inadequate to cover fixed charges for the years ended December 31, 2011, 2012 and 2013 by \$12.0 million, \$8.7 million and \$15.6 million, respectively, and by \$10.5 million for the six months ended June 30, 2014.

For purposes of calculating the ratio of earnings to fixed charges, earnings represent net income (loss) before provision for income taxes plus fixed charges. Fixed charges consist of interest expense and an estimate of the interest factor inherent in our operating leases.

For the periods indicated above, we had no outstanding shares of preferred stock with required dividend payments. Therefore, the ratios of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends are identical to the ratios presented in the tables above.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

The following description of our capital stock is not complete and may not contain all the information you should consider before investing in our capital stock. This description is summarized from, and qualified in its entirety by reference to, our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, which has been publicly filed with the SEC. See [Where You Can Find More Information](#); [Incorporation by Reference](#).

Our authorized capital stock consists of:

200,000,000 shares of common stock, \$0.0001 par value; and

10,000,000 shares of preferred stock, \$0.0001 par value.

Common Stock

As of August 1, 2014, there were 15,663,866 shares of our common stock outstanding and held of record by 53 stockholders. Under the terms of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share held on all matters submitted to a vote of stockholders, including the election of directors, and do not have cumulative voting rights. Accordingly, the holders of a majority of the outstanding shares of common stock entitled to vote in any election of directors can elect all of the directors standing for election, if they so choose, other than any directors that holders of any preferred stock we may issue may be entitled to elect. Subject to preferences that may be applicable to any then outstanding preferred stock, holders of common stock are entitled to receive ratably those dividends, if any, as may be declared by the board of directors out of legally available funds. In the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holders of common stock will be entitled to share ratably in the assets legally available for distribution to stockholders after the payment of or provision for all of our debts and other liabilities, subject to the prior rights of any preferred stock then outstanding. Holders of common stock have no preemptive or conversion rights or other subscription rights and there are no redemption or sinking funds provisions applicable to the common stock. All outstanding shares of common stock are duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable. The rights, preferences and privileges of holders of common stock are subject to and may be adversely affected by the rights of the holders of shares of any series of preferred stock that we may designate and issue in the future.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is American Stock Transfer & Trust Company, LLC.

Preferred Stock

We currently have no outstanding shares of preferred stock. Under the terms of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, our board of directors has the authority, without further action by our stockholders, to issue up to 10,000,000 shares of preferred stock in one or more series, to establish from time to time the number of shares to be included in each such series, to fix the dividend, voting and other rights, preferences and privileges of the shares of each wholly unissued series and any qualifications, limitations or restrictions thereon, and to increase or decrease the number of shares of any such series, but not below the number of shares of such series then outstanding. Prior to the issuance of shares of each series, the board of directors is required by the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware, or the DGCL, and our amended and restated certificate of incorporation to adopt resolutions and file a

certificate of designation with the Secretary of State of the State of Delaware. The certificate of designation fixes for each class or series the designations, powers, preferences, rights, qualifications, limitations and restrictions, including dividend rights, conversion rights, redemption privileges and liquidation preferences.

All shares of preferred stock offered by this prospectus will, when issued, be fully paid and nonassessable and will not have any preemptive or similar rights. Our board of directors may authorize the issuance of preferred

Table of Contents

stock with voting or conversion rights that could adversely affect the voting power or other rights of the holders of the common stock. The issuance of preferred stock, while providing flexibility in connection with possible acquisitions and other corporate purposes, could, among other things, have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in our control and may adversely affect the market price of the common stock and the voting and other rights of the holders of common stock.

We will describe in a prospectus supplement relating to the class or series of preferred stock being offered the following terms:

the title and stated value of the preferred stock;

the number of shares of the preferred stock offered, the liquidation preference per share and the offering price of the preferred stock;

the dividend rate(s), period(s) or payment date(s) or method(s) of calculation applicable to the preferred stock;

whether dividends are cumulative or non-cumulative and, if cumulative, the date from which dividends on the preferred stock will accumulate;

the procedures for any auction and remarketing, if any, for the preferred stock;

the provisions for a sinking fund, if any, for the preferred stock;

the provision for redemption, if applicable, of the preferred stock;

any listing of the preferred stock on any securities exchange;

the terms and conditions, if applicable, upon which the preferred stock will be convertible into common stock, including the conversion price or manner of calculation and conversion period;

voting rights, if any, of the preferred stock;

a discussion of any material or special U.S. federal income tax considerations applicable to the preferred stock;

the relative ranking and preferences of the preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights upon the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our affairs;

any limitations on issuance of any class or series of preferred stock ranking senior to or on a parity with the class or series of preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights upon liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our affairs; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights, limitations or restrictions of the preferred stock.

Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the preferred stock will rank, relating to dividends and upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up:

senior to all classes or series of our common stock and to all of our equity securities ranking junior to the preferred stock;

on a parity with all of our equity securities the terms of which specifically provide that the equity securities rank on a parity with the preferred stock; and

junior to all of our equity securities the terms of which specifically provide that the equity securities rank senior to the preferred stock.

The term equity securities does not include convertible debt securities.

Table of Contents

Warrants

As of August 1, 2014, there were outstanding warrants to purchase 149,704 shares of our common stock. The warrants contain customary anti-dilution and net issuance provisions and are not callable by us.

Registration Rights

As of August 1, 2014, holders of 5,172,568 shares of our common stock, which includes 70,356 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of warrants, or their transferees will be entitled to the following rights with respect to the registration of such shares for public resale under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, pursuant to an investor rights agreement by and among us and certain of our stockholders. The registration of shares of common stock as a result of the following rights being exercised would enable holders to trade these shares without restriction under the Securities Act when the applicable registration statement is declared effective.

Demand Registration Rights

If at any time the holders of at least 30% of the registrable securities request in writing that we effect a registration with respect to at least 30% of the registrable securities then outstanding or a lesser percentage if shares in an offering with an anticipated aggregate offering price of at least \$5.0 million, we may be required to register their shares. We are obligated to effect at most two registrations in any 12-month period for the holders of registrable securities in response to these demand registration rights. If the holders requesting registration intend to distribute their shares by means of an underwriting, the managing underwriter of such offering will have the right to limit the numbers of shares to be underwritten for reasons related to the marketing of the shares.

Piggyback Registration Rights

If at any time we propose to register any shares of our common stock under the Securities Act, subject to certain exceptions, the holders of registrable securities will be entitled to notice of the registration and to include their shares of registrable securities in the registration. If our proposed registration involves an underwriting, the managing underwriter of such offering will have the right to limit the number of shares to be underwritten for reasons related to the marketing of the shares.

Form S-3 Registration Rights

If at any time a holder of registrable securities requests in writing that we register their shares for public resale on Form S-3 and the reasonably anticipated price to the public of the offering is \$1.0 million or more, we will be required to use our best efforts to effect such registration; provided, however, that we will not be required to effect such a registration if, within the preceding 12 months, we have already effected two registrations on Form S-3 for the holders of registrable securities.

Expenses

Ordinarily, other than underwriting discounts and commissions, we will be required to pay all expenses incurred by us related to any registration effected pursuant to the exercise of these registration rights. These expenses may include all registration and filing fees, printing expenses, fees and disbursements of our counsel, reasonable fees and disbursements of a counsel for the selling securityholders, blue sky fees and expenses and the expenses of any special audits incident to the registration.

Termination of Registration Rights

The registration rights terminate upon the earlier of July 24, 2020, or, with respect to the registration rights of an individual holder, when the holder can sell all of such holder's registrable securities in a three-month period in compliance with Rule 144 of the Securities Act.

Table of Contents

Anti-Takeover Effects of Delaware Law and Our Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws

Some provisions of Delaware law, our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and our amended and restated bylaws contain provisions that could make the following transactions more difficult: an acquisition of us by means of a tender offer; an acquisition of us by means of a proxy contest or otherwise; or the removal of our incumbent officers and directors. It is possible that these provisions could make it more difficult to accomplish or could deter transactions that stockholders may otherwise consider to be in their best interest or in our best interests, including transactions which provide for payment of a premium over the market price for our shares.

These provisions, summarized below, are intended to discourage coercive takeover practices and inadequate takeover bids. These provisions are also designed to encourage persons seeking to acquire control of us to first negotiate with our board of directors. We believe that the benefits of the increased protection of our potential ability to negotiate with the proponent of an unfriendly or unsolicited proposal to acquire or restructure us outweigh the disadvantages of discouraging these proposals because negotiation of these proposals could result in an improvement of their terms.

Undesignated Preferred Stock

The ability of our board of directors, without action by the stockholders, to issue up to 10,000,000 shares of undesignated preferred stock with voting or other rights or preferences as designated by our board of directors could impede the success of any attempt to change control of us. These and other provisions may have the effect of deferring hostile takeovers or delaying changes in control or management of our company.

Stockholder Meetings

Our amended and restated bylaws provide that a special meeting of stockholders may be called only by our chairman of the board, chief executive officer or president, or by a resolution adopted by a majority of our board of directors.

Requirements for Advance Notification of Stockholder Nominations and Proposals

Our amended and restated bylaws establish advance notice procedures with respect to stockholder proposals to be brought before a stockholder meeting and the nomination of candidates for election as directors, other than nominations made by or at the direction of the board of directors or a committee of the board of directors.

Elimination of Stockholder Action by Written Consent

Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and amended and restated bylaws eliminate the right of stockholders to act by written consent without a meeting.

Staggered Board

Our board of directors is divided into three classes. The directors in each class will serve for a three-year term, one class being elected each year by our stockholders. This system of electing and removing directors may tend to discourage a third-party from making a tender offer or otherwise attempting to obtain control of us, because it generally makes it more difficult for stockholders to replace a majority of the directors.

Removal of Directors

Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation provides that no member of our board of directors may be removed from office by our stockholders except for cause and, in addition to any other vote required by law, upon the approval of not less than two-thirds of the total voting power of all of our outstanding voting stock then entitled to vote in the election of directors.

Table of Contents

Stockholders Not Entitled to Cumulative Voting

Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation does not permit stockholders to cumulate their votes in the election of directors. Accordingly, the holders of a majority of the outstanding shares of our common stock entitled to vote in any election of directors can elect all of the directors standing for election, if they choose, other than any directors that holders of our preferred stock may be entitled to elect.

Delaware Anti-Takeover Statute

We are subject to Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law, which prohibits persons deemed to be interested stockholders from engaging in a business combination with a publicly held Delaware corporation for three years following the date these persons become interested stockholders unless the business combination is, or the transaction in which the person became an interested stockholder was, approved in a prescribed manner or another prescribed exception applies. Generally, an interested stockholder is a person who, together with affiliates and associates, owns, or within three years prior to the determination of interested stockholder status did own, 15% or more of a corporation's voting stock. Generally, a business combination includes a merger, asset or stock sale, or other transaction resulting in a financial benefit to the interested stockholder. The existence of this provision may have an anti-takeover effect with respect to transactions not approved in advance by the board of directors.

Amendment of Charter Provisions

The amendment of any of the above provisions, except for the provision making it possible for our board of directors to issue preferred stock, would require approval by holders of at least two-thirds of the total voting power of all of our outstanding voting stock.

The provisions of Delaware law, our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and our amended and restated bylaws could have the effect of discouraging others from attempting hostile takeovers and, as a consequence, they may also inhibit temporary fluctuations in the market price of our common stock that often result from actual or rumored hostile takeover attempts. These provisions may also have the effect of preventing changes in the composition of our board and management. It is possible that these provisions could make it more difficult to accomplish transactions that stockholders may otherwise deem to be in their best interests.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following description, together with the additional information we include in any applicable prospectus supplement, summarizes certain general terms and provisions of the debt securities that we may offer under this prospectus. When we offer to sell a particular series of debt securities, we will describe the specific terms of the series in a supplement to this prospectus. We will also indicate in the supplement to what extent the general terms and provisions described in this prospectus apply to a particular series of debt securities. To the extent the information contained in the prospectus supplement differs from this summary description, you should rely on the information in the prospectus supplement.

We may issue debt securities either separately, or together with, or upon the conversion or exercise of or in exchange for, other securities described in this prospectus. Debt securities may be our senior, senior subordinated or subordinated obligations and, unless otherwise specified in a supplement to this prospectus, the debt securities will be our direct, unsecured obligations and may be issued in one or more series.

The debt securities will be issued under an indenture between us and a trustee named in the prospectus supplement. We have summarized select portions of the indenture below. The summary is not complete. The form of the indenture has been filed as an exhibit to the registration statement and you should read the indenture for provisions that may be important to you. In the summary below, we have included references to the section numbers of the indenture so that you can easily locate these provisions. Capitalized terms used in the summary and not defined herein have the meanings specified in the indenture.

General

The terms of each series of debt securities will be established by or pursuant to a resolution of our board of directors and set forth or determined in the manner provided in a resolution of our board of directors, in an officer's certificate or by a supplemental indenture. (Section 2.2) The particular terms of each series of debt securities will be described in a prospectus supplement relating to such series (including any pricing supplement or term sheet).

We can issue an unlimited amount of debt securities under the indenture that may be in one or more series with the same or various maturities, at par, at a premium, or at a discount. (Section 2.1) We will set forth in a prospectus supplement (including any pricing supplement or term sheet) relating to any series of debt securities being offered, the aggregate principal amount and the following terms of the debt securities, if applicable:

the title and ranking of the debt securities (including the terms of any subordination provisions);

the price or prices (expressed as a percentage of the principal amount) at which we will sell the debt securities;

any limit on the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities;

the date or dates on which the principal on a particular series of debt securities is payable;

the rate or rates (which may be fixed or variable) per annum or the method used to determine the rate or rates (including any commodity, commodity index, stock exchange index or financial index) at which the debt securities will bear interest, the date or dates from which interest will accrue, the date or dates on which interest will commence and be payable and any regular record date for the interest payable on any interest payment date;

the place or places where principal of, and interest, if any, on the debt securities will be payable (and the method of such payment), where the debt securities of such series may be surrendered for registration of transfer or exchange, and where notices and demands to us in respect of the debt securities may be delivered;

the period or periods within which, the price or prices at which and the terms and conditions upon which we may redeem the debt securities;

Table of Contents

any obligation we have to redeem or purchase the debt securities pursuant to any sinking fund or analogous provisions or at the option of a holder of debt securities and the period or periods within which, the price or prices at which and the terms and conditions upon which the debt securities of a particular series shall be redeemed or purchased, in whole or in part, pursuant to such obligation;

the dates on which and the price or prices at which we will repurchase debt securities at the option of the holders of debt securities and other detailed terms and provisions of these repurchase obligations;

the denominations in which the debt securities will be issued, if other than denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof;

whether the debt securities will be issued in the form of certificated debt securities or global debt securities;

the portion of principal amount of the debt securities payable upon declaration of acceleration of the maturity date, if other than the principal amount;

the currency of denomination of the debt securities, which may be U.S. dollars or any foreign currency, and if such currency of denomination is a composite currency, the agency or organization, if any, responsible for overseeing such composite currency;

the designation of the currency, currencies or currency units in which payment of principal of, and premium and interest on, the debt securities will be made;

if payments of principal of, or premium or interest on, the debt securities will be made in one or more currencies or currency units other than that or those in which the debt securities are denominated, the manner in which the exchange rate with respect to these payments will be determined;

the manner in which the amounts of payment of principal of, and premium, if any, and interest on, the debt securities will be determined, if these amounts may be determined by reference to an index based on a currency or currencies or by reference to a commodity, commodity index, stock exchange index or financial index;

any provisions relating to any security provided for the debt securities;

any addition to, deletion of or change in the Events of Default described in this prospectus or in the indenture with respect to the debt securities and any change in the acceleration provisions described in this prospectus or in the indenture with respect to the debt securities;

any addition to, deletion of or change in the covenants described in this prospectus or in the indenture with respect to the debt securities;

any depositaries, interest rate calculation agents, exchange rate calculation agents or other agents with respect to the debt securities;

the provisions, if any, relating to conversion or exchange of any debt securities of such series, including if applicable, the conversion or exchange price and period, provisions as to whether conversion or exchange will be mandatory, the events requiring an adjustment of the conversion or exchange price and provisions affecting conversion or exchange;

any other terms of the debt securities, which may supplement, modify or delete any provision of the indenture as it applies to that series, including any terms that may be required under applicable law or regulations or advisable in connection with the marketing of the securities; and

whether any of our direct or indirect subsidiaries will guarantee the debt securities of that series, including the terms of subordination, if any, of such guarantees. (Section 2.2)

We may issue debt securities that provide for an amount less than their stated principal amount to be due and payable upon declaration of acceleration of their maturity pursuant to the terms of the indenture. We will provide you with information on the federal income tax considerations and other special considerations applicable to any of these debt securities in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Table of Contents

If we denominate the purchase price of any of the debt securities in a foreign currency or currencies or a foreign currency unit or units, or if the principal of, and premium, if any, and interest on, any series of debt securities is payable in a foreign currency or currencies or a foreign currency unit or units, we will provide you with information on the restrictions, elections, general tax considerations, specific terms and other information with respect to that issue of debt securities and such foreign currency or currencies or foreign currency unit or units in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Transfer and Exchange

Each debt security will be represented by either one or more global securities registered in the name of The Depository Trust Company (DTC or the Depository) or a nominee of the Depository (we will refer to any debt security represented by a global debt security as a book-entry debt security), or a certificate issued in definitive registered form (we will refer to any debt security represented by a certificated security as a certificated debt security) as set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Except as set forth under the heading Global Debt Securities and Book-Entry System below, book-entry debt securities will not be issuable in certificated form.

Certificated Debt Securities. You may transfer or exchange certificated debt securities at any office we maintain for this purpose in accordance with the terms of the indenture. (Section 2.4) No service charge will be made for any transfer or exchange of certificated debt securities, but we may require payment of a sum sufficient to cover any tax or other governmental charge payable in connection with a transfer or exchange. (Section 2.7)

You may effect the transfer of certificated debt securities and the right to receive the principal of, premium and interest on certificated debt securities only by surrendering the certificate representing those certificated debt securities and either reissuance by us or the trustee of the certificate to the new holder or the issuance by us or the trustee of a new certificate to the new holder.

Global Debt Securities and Book-Entry System. Each global debt security representing book-entry debt securities will be deposited with, or on behalf of, the Depository, and registered in the name of the Depository or a nominee of the Depository. Please see the section entitled Global Securities for more information.

Covenants

We will set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement any restrictive covenants applicable to any issue of debt securities. (Article IV)

No Protection in the Event of a Change of Control

Unless we state otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, the debt securities will not contain any provisions that may afford holders of the debt securities protection in the event we have a change in control or in the event of a highly leveraged transaction (whether or not such transaction results in a change in control) that could adversely affect holders of debt securities.

Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets

We may not consolidate with or merge with or into, or convey, transfer or lease all or substantially all of our properties and assets to, any person (a successor person) unless:

we are the surviving corporation or the successor person (if other than Conatus) is a corporation organized and validly existing under the laws of any U.S. domestic jurisdiction and expressly assumes our obligations on the debt securities and under the indenture;

immediately after giving effect to the transaction, no Default or Event of Default, shall have occurred and be continuing; and

certain other conditions are met.

Table of Contents

Notwithstanding the above, any of our subsidiaries may consolidate with, merge into or transfer all or part of its properties to us. (Section 5.1)

Events of Default

Event of Default means with respect to any series of debt securities, any of the following:

default in the payment of any interest upon any debt security of that series when it becomes due and payable, and continuance of such default for a period of 30 days (unless the entire amount of the payment is deposited by us with the trustee or with a paying agent prior to the expiration of the 30-day period);

default in the payment of principal of any debt security of that series at its maturity;

default in the performance or breach of any other covenant or warranty by us in the indenture or any debt security (other than a covenant or warranty that has been included in the indenture solely for the benefit of a series of debt securities other than that series), which default continues uncured for a period of 60 days after we receive written notice from the trustee or Conatus and the trustee receive written notice from the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series as provided in the indenture;

certain voluntary or involuntary events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of Conatus; or

any other Event of Default provided with respect to debt securities of that series that is described in the applicable prospectus supplement. (Section 6.1)

No Event of Default with respect to a particular series of debt securities (except as to certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization) necessarily constitutes an Event of Default with respect to any other series of debt securities. (Section 6.1) The occurrence of certain Events of Default or an acceleration under the indenture may constitute an event of default under certain indebtedness of ours or our subsidiaries outstanding from time to time.

We will provide the trustee written notice of any Default or Event of Default within 30 days of becoming aware of the occurrence of such Default or Event of Default, which notice will describe in reasonable detail the status of such Default or Event of Default and what action we are taking or propose to take in respect thereof. (Section 6.1)

If an Event of Default with respect to debt securities of any series at the time outstanding occurs and is continuing, then the trustee or the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may, by a notice in writing to us (and to the trustee if given by the holders), declare to be due and payable immediately the principal of (or, if the debt securities of that series are discount securities, that portion of the principal amount as may be specified in the terms of that series) and accrued and unpaid interest, if any, on all debt securities of that series. In the case of an Event of Default resulting from certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization, the principal (or such specified amount) of and accrued and unpaid interest, if any, on all outstanding debt securities will become and be immediately due and payable without any declaration or other act on the part of the trustee or any holder of outstanding debt securities. At any time after a declaration of acceleration with respect to debt

securities of any series has been made, but before a judgment or decree for payment of the money due has been obtained by the trustee, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may rescind and annul the acceleration if all Events of Default, other than the non-payment of accelerated principal and interest, if any, with respect to debt securities of that series, have been cured or waived as provided in the indenture. (Section 6.2) We refer you to the prospectus supplement relating to any series of debt securities that are discount securities for the particular provisions relating to acceleration of a portion of the principal amount of such discount securities upon the occurrence of an Event of Default.

Table of Contents

The indenture provides that the trustee may refuse to perform any duty or exercise any of its rights or powers under the indenture, unless the trustee receives indemnity satisfactory to it against any cost, liability or expense that might be incurred by it in performing such duty or exercising such right or power. (Section 7.1(e)) Subject to certain rights of the trustee, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series will have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee with respect to the debt securities of that series. (Section 6.12)

No holder of any debt security of any series will have any right to institute any proceeding, judicial or otherwise, with respect to the indenture or for the appointment of a receiver or trustee, or for any remedy under the indenture, unless:

that holder has previously given to the trustee written notice of a continuing Event of Default with respect to debt securities of that series; and

the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have made written request, and offered indemnity or security satisfactory to the trustee, to the trustee to institute the proceeding as trustee, and the trustee has not received from the holders of not less than a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series a direction inconsistent with that request and has failed to institute the proceeding within 60 days. (Section 6.7)

Notwithstanding any other provision in the indenture, the holder of any debt security will have an absolute and unconditional right to receive payment of the principal of, and premium and any interest on, that debt security on or after the due dates expressed in that debt security and to institute suit for the enforcement of payment. (Section 6.8)

The indenture requires us, within 120 days after the end of our fiscal year, to furnish to the trustee a statement as to compliance with the indenture. (Section 4.3) If a Default or Event of Default occurs and is continuing with respect to the securities of any series and if it is known to a responsible officer of the trustee, the trustee shall mail to each holder of the securities of that series notice of a Default or Event of Default within 90 days after it occurs or, if later, after a responsible officer of the trustee has knowledge of such Default or Event of Default. The indenture provides that the trustee may withhold notice to the holders of debt securities of any series of any Default or Event of Default (except in payment on any debt securities of that series) with respect to debt securities of that series if the trustee determines in good faith that withholding notice is in the interest of the holders of those debt securities. (Section 7.5)

Modification and Waiver

We and the trustee may modify, amend or supplement the indenture or the debt securities of any series without the consent of any holder of any debt security:

to cure any ambiguity, defect or inconsistency;

to comply with covenants in the indenture described above under the heading Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets;

to provide for uncertificated securities in addition to or in place of certificated securities;

to add guarantees with respect to debt securities of any series or secure debt securities of any series;

to surrender any of our rights or powers under the indenture;

to add covenants or Events of Default for the benefit of the holders of debt securities of any series;

to comply with the applicable procedures of the applicable depositary;

to make any change that does not adversely affect the rights of any holder of debt securities;

to provide for the issuance of and establish the form and terms and conditions of debt securities of any series as permitted by the indenture;

Table of Contents

to effect the appointment of a successor trustee with respect to the debt securities of any series and to add to or change any of the provisions of the indenture to provide for or facilitate administration by more than one trustee; or

to comply with requirements of the SEC in order to effect or maintain the qualification of the indenture under the Trust Indenture Act. (Section 9.1)

We may also modify and amend the indenture with the consent of the holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series affected by the modifications or amendments. We may not make any modification or amendment without the consent of the holders of each affected debt security then outstanding if that amendment will:

reduce the amount of debt securities whose holders must consent to an amendment, supplement or waiver;

reduce the rate of or extend the time for payment of interest (including default interest) on any debt security;

reduce the principal of or premium on or change the fixed maturity of any debt security or reduce the amount of, or postpone the date fixed for, the payment of any sinking fund or analogous obligation with respect to any series of debt securities;

reduce the principal amount of discount securities payable upon acceleration of maturity;

waive a Default or Event of Default in the payment of the principal of, or premium or interest on, any debt security (except a rescission of acceleration of the debt securities of any series by the holders of at least a majority in aggregate principal amount of the then outstanding debt securities of that series and a waiver of the payment default that resulted from such acceleration);

make the principal of, or premium or interest on, any debt security payable in currency other than that stated in the debt security;

make any change to certain provisions of the indenture relating to, among other things, the right of holders of debt securities to receive payment of the principal of, and premium and interest on, those debt securities and to institute suit for the enforcement of any such payment and to waivers or amendments; or

waive a redemption payment with respect to any debt security. (Section 9.3)

Except for certain specified provisions, the holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may on behalf of the holders of all debt securities of that series waive our compliance with provisions of the indenture. (Section 9.2) The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may on behalf of the holders of all the debt securities of such series waive any past default

under the indenture with respect to that series and its consequences, except a default in the payment of the principal of, or any interest on, any debt security of that series; provided, however, that the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may rescind an acceleration and its consequences, including any related payment default that resulted from the acceleration. (Section 6.13)

Defeasance of Debt Securities and Certain Covenants in Certain Circumstances

Legal Defeasance. The indenture provides that, unless otherwise provided by the terms of the applicable series of debt securities, we may be discharged from any and all obligations in respect of the debt securities of any series (subject to certain exceptions). We will be so discharged upon the deposit with the trustee, in trust, of money and/or U.S. government obligations or, in the case of debt securities denominated in a single currency other than U.S. dollars, government obligations of the government that issued or caused to be issued such currency, that, through the payment of interest and principal in accordance with their terms, will provide money or U.S. government obligations in an amount sufficient in the opinion of a nationally recognized firm of independent public accountants

Table of Contents

or investment bank to pay and discharge each installment of principal of, premium and interest on, and any mandatory sinking fund payments in respect of, the debt securities of that series on the stated maturity of those payments in accordance with the terms of the indenture and those debt securities.

This discharge may occur only if, among other things, we have delivered to the trustee an opinion of counsel stating that we have received from, or there has been published by, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service a ruling or, since the date of execution of the indenture, there has been a change in the applicable U.S. federal income tax law, in either case to the effect that, and based thereon such opinion shall confirm that, the holders of the debt securities of that series will not recognize income, gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a result of the deposit, defeasance and discharge and will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on the same amounts and in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the deposit, defeasance and discharge had not occurred. (Section 8.3)

Defeasance of Certain Covenants. The indenture provides that, unless otherwise provided by the terms of the applicable series of debt securities, upon compliance with certain conditions:

we may omit to comply with the covenant described under the heading Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets and certain other covenants set forth in the indenture, as well as any additional covenants that may be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement; and

any omission to comply with those covenants will not constitute a Default or an Event of Default with respect to the debt securities of that series (covenant defeasance).

The conditions include:

depositing with the trustee money and/or U.S. government obligations or, in the case of debt securities denominated in a single currency other than U.S. dollars, government obligations of the government that issued or caused to be issued such currency, that, through the payment of interest and principal in accordance with their terms, will provide money in an amount sufficient in the opinion of a nationally recognized firm of independent public accountants or investment bank to pay and discharge each installment of principal of, premium and interest on, and any mandatory sinking fund payments in respect of, the debt securities of that series on the stated maturity of those payments in accordance with the terms of the indenture and those debt securities; and

delivering to the trustee an opinion of counsel to the effect that we have received from, or there has been published by, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service a ruling or, since the date of execution of the indenture, there has been a change in the applicable U.S. federal income tax law, in either case to the effect that, and based thereon such opinion shall confirm that, the holders of the debt securities of that series will not recognize income, gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a result of the deposit and related covenant defeasance and will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on the same amounts and in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the deposit and related covenant defeasance had not occurred. (Section 8.4)

No Personal Liability of Directors, Officers, Employees or Stockholders

None of our past, present or future directors, officers, employees or stockholders, as such, will have any liability for any of our obligations under the debt securities or the indenture or for any claim based on, or in respect or by reason of, such obligations or their creation. By accepting a debt security, each holder waives and releases all such liability. This waiver and release is part of the consideration for the issue of the debt securities. However, this waiver and release may not be effective to waive liabilities under U.S. federal securities laws, and it is the view of the SEC that such a waiver is against public policy.

Governing Law

The indenture and the debt securities, including any claim or controversy arising out of or relating to the indenture or the debt securities, will be governed by the laws of the State of New York. (Section 10.10)

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

We may issue warrants for the purchase of shares of our common stock or preferred stock or of debt securities. We may issue warrants independently or together with other securities, and the warrants may be attached to or separate from any offered securities. Each series of warrants will be issued under a separate warrant agreement to be entered into between us and the investors or a warrant agent. The following summary of material provisions of the warrants and warrant agreements is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to, all the provisions of the warrant agreement and warrant certificate applicable to a particular series of warrants. The terms of any warrants offered under a prospectus supplement may differ from the terms described below. We urge you to read the applicable prospectus supplement, as well as the complete warrant agreements and warrant certificates that contain the terms of the warrants.

The particular terms of any issue of warrants will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to the issue. Those terms may include:

the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock purchasable upon the exercise of warrants to purchase such shares and the price at which such number of shares may be purchased upon such exercise;

the designation, stated value and terms (including, without limitation, liquidation, dividend, conversion and voting rights) of the series of preferred stock purchasable upon exercise of warrants to purchase preferred stock;

the principal amount of debt securities that may be purchased upon exercise of a debt warrant and the exercise price for the warrants, which may be payable in cash, securities or other property;

the date, if any, on and after which the warrants and the related debt securities, preferred stock or common stock will be separately transferable;

the terms of any rights to redeem or call the warrants;

the date on which the right to exercise the warrants will commence and the date on which the right will expire;

U.S. federal income tax consequences applicable to the warrants; and

any additional terms of the warrants, including terms, procedures, and limitations relating to the exchange, exercise and settlement of the warrants.

Holders of equity warrants will not be entitled to:

vote, consent or receive dividends;

receive notice as stockholders with respect to any meeting of stockholders for the election of our directors or any other matter; or

exercise any rights as stockholders of Conatus.

Each warrant will entitle its holder to purchase the principal amount of debt securities or the number of shares of preferred stock or common stock at the exercise price set forth in, or calculable as set forth in, the applicable prospectus supplement. Unless we otherwise specify in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the warrants may exercise the warrants at any time up to the specified time on the expiration date that we set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. After the close of business on the expiration date, unexercised warrants will become void.

A holder of warrant certificates may exchange them for new warrant certificates of different denominations, present them for registration of transfer and exercise them at the corporate trust office of the warrant agent or any

Table of Contents

other office indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement. Until any warrants to purchase debt securities are exercised, the holder of the warrants will not have any rights of holders of the debt securities that can be purchased upon exercise, including any rights to receive payments of principal, premium or interest on the underlying debt securities or to enforce covenants in the applicable indenture. Until any warrants to purchase common stock or preferred stock are exercised, the holders of the warrants will not have any rights of holders of the underlying common stock or preferred stock, including any rights to receive dividends or payments upon any liquidation, dissolution or winding up on the common stock or preferred stock, if any.

Table of Contents

DESCRIPTION OF UNITS

We may issue units consisting of any combination of the other types of securities offered under this prospectus in one or more series. We may evidence each series of units by unit certificates that we will issue under a separate agreement. We may enter into unit agreements with a unit agent. Each unit agent will be a bank or trust company that we select. We will indicate the name and address of the unit agent in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to a particular series of units.

The following description, together with the additional information included in any applicable prospectus supplement, summarizes the general features of the units that we may offer under this prospectus. You should read any prospectus supplement related to the series of units being offered, as well as the complete unit agreements that contain the terms of the units. Specific unit agreements will contain additional important terms and provisions and we will file as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, or will incorporate by reference from another report that we file with the SEC, the form of each unit agreement relating to units offered under this prospectus.

If we offer any units, certain terms of that series of units will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement, including, without limitation, the following, as applicable:

the title of the series of units;

identification and description of the separate constituent securities comprising the units;

the price or prices at which the units will be issued;

the date, if any, on and after which the constituent securities comprising the units will be separately transferable;

a discussion of certain U.S. federal income tax considerations applicable to the units; and

any other terms of the units and their constituent securities.

Table of Contents

GLOBAL SECURITIES

Book-Entry, Delivery and Form

Unless we indicate differently in a prospectus supplement, the securities initially will be issued in book-entry form and represented by one or more global notes or global securities, or, collectively, global securities. The global securities will be deposited with, or on behalf of DTC and registered in the name of Cede & Co., the nominee of DTC. Unless and until it is exchanged for individual certificates evidencing securities under the limited circumstances described below, a global security may not be transferred except as a whole by the depository to its nominee or by the nominee to the depository, or by the depository or its nominee to a successor depository or to a nominee of the successor depository.

DTC has advised us that it is:

a limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law;

a banking organization within the meaning of the New York Banking Law;

a member of the Federal Reserve System;

a clearing corporation within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code; and

a clearing agency registered pursuant to the provisions of Section 17A of the Exchange Act.

DTC holds securities that its participants deposit with DTC. DTC also facilitates the settlement among its participants of securities transactions, such as transfers and pledges, in deposited securities through electronic computerized book-entry changes in participants' accounts, thereby eliminating the need for physical movement of securities certificates. Direct participants in DTC include securities brokers and dealers, including underwriters, banks, trust companies, clearing corporations and other organizations. DTC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation, or DTCC. DTCC is the holding company for DTC, National Securities Clearing Corporation and Fixed Income Clearing Corporation, all of which are registered clearing agencies. DTCC is owned by the users of its regulated subsidiaries. Access to the DTC system is also available to others, which we sometimes refer to as indirect participants, that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a direct participant, either directly or indirectly. The rules applicable to DTC and its participants are on file with the SEC.

Purchases of securities under the DTC system must be made by or through direct participants, which will receive a credit for the securities on DTC's records. The ownership interest of the actual purchaser of a security, which we sometimes refer to as a beneficial owner, is in turn recorded on the direct and indirect participants' records. Beneficial owners of securities will not receive written confirmation from DTC of their purchases. However, beneficial owners are expected to receive written confirmations providing details of their transactions, as well as periodic statements of their holdings, from the direct or indirect participants through which they purchased securities. Transfers of ownership interests in global securities are to be accomplished by entries made on the books of participants acting on behalf of beneficial owners. Beneficial owners will not receive certificates representing their ownership interests in the global

securities, except under the limited circumstances described below.

To facilitate subsequent transfers, all global securities deposited by direct participants with DTC will be registered in the name of DTC's partnership nominee, Cede & Co., or such other name as may be requested by an authorized representative of DTC. The deposit of securities with DTC and their registration in the name of Cede & Co. or such other nominee will not change the beneficial ownership of the securities. DTC has no knowledge of the actual beneficial owners of the securities. DTC's records reflect only the identity of the direct participants to whose accounts the securities are credited, which may or may not be the beneficial owners. The participants are responsible for keeping account of their holdings on behalf of their customers.

Table of Contents

So long as the securities are in book-entry form, you will receive payments and may transfer securities only through the facilities of the depository and its direct and indirect participants. We will maintain an office or agency in the location specified in the prospectus supplement for the applicable securities, where notices and demands in respect of the securities and the indenture may be delivered to us and where certificated securities may be surrendered for payment, registration of transfer or exchange.

Conveyance of notices and other communications by DTC to direct participants, by direct participants to indirect participants and by direct participants and indirect participants to beneficial owners will be governed by arrangements among them, subject to any legal requirements in effect from time to time.

Redemption notices will be sent to DTC. If less than all of the securities of a particular series are being redeemed, DTC's practice is to determine by lot the amount of the interest of each direct participant in the securities of such series to be redeemed.

Neither DTC nor Cede & Co. (or such other DTC nominee) will consent or vote with respect to the securities. Under its usual procedures, DTC will mail an omnibus proxy to us as soon as possible after the record date. The omnibus proxy assigns the consenting or voting rights of Cede & Co. to those direct participants to whose accounts the securities of such series are credited on the record date, identified in a listing attached to the omnibus proxy.

So long as securities are in book-entry form, we will make payments on those securities to the depository or its nominee, as the registered owner of such securities, by wire transfer of immediately available funds. If securities are issued in definitive certificated form under the limited circumstances described below, we will have the option of making payments by check mailed to the addresses of the persons entitled to payment or by wire transfer to bank accounts in the United States designated in writing to the applicable trustee or other designated party at least 15 days before the applicable payment date by the persons entitled to payment, unless a shorter period is satisfactory to the applicable trustee or other designated party.

Redemption proceeds, distributions and dividend payments on the securities will be made to Cede & Co., or such other nominee as may be requested by an authorized representative of DTC. DTC's practice is to credit direct participants' accounts upon DTC's receipt of funds and corresponding detail information from us on the payment date in accordance with their respective holdings shown on DTC records. Payments by participants to beneficial owners will be governed by standing instructions and customary practices, as is the case with securities held for the account of customers in bearer form or registered in street name. Those payments will be the responsibility of participants and not of DTC or us, subject to any statutory or regulatory requirements in effect from time to time. Payment of redemption proceeds, distributions and dividend payments to Cede & Co., or such other nominee as may be requested by an authorized representative of DTC, is our responsibility; disbursement of payments to direct participants is the responsibility of DTC; and disbursement of payments to the beneficial owners is the responsibility of direct and indirect participants.

Except under the limited circumstances described below, purchasers of securities will not be entitled to have securities registered in their names and will not receive physical delivery of securities. Accordingly, each beneficial owner must rely on the procedures of DTC and its participants to exercise any rights under the securities and the indenture.

The laws of some jurisdictions may require that some purchasers of securities take physical delivery of securities in definitive form. Those laws may impair the ability to transfer or pledge beneficial interests in securities.

DTC may discontinue providing its services as securities depository with respect to the securities at any time by giving reasonable notice to us. Under such circumstances, in the event that a successor depository is not obtained,

securities certificates are required to be printed and delivered.

Table of Contents

As noted above, beneficial owners of a particular series of securities generally will not receive certificates representing their ownership interests in those securities. However, if:

DTC notifies us that it is unwilling or unable to continue as a depository for the global security or securities representing such series of securities or if DTC ceases to be a clearing agency registered under the Exchange Act at a time when it is required to be registered and a successor depository is not appointed within 90 days of the notification to us or of our becoming aware of DTC's ceasing to be so registered, as the case may be;

we determine, in our sole discretion, not to have such securities represented by one or more global securities;
or

an Event of Default has occurred and is continuing with respect to such series of securities, we will prepare and deliver certificates for such securities in exchange for beneficial interests in the global securities. Any beneficial interest in a global security that is exchangeable under the circumstances described in the preceding sentence will be exchangeable for securities in definitive certificated form registered in the names that the depository directs. It is expected that these directions will be based upon directions received by the depository from its participants with respect to ownership of beneficial interests in the global securities.

We have obtained the information in this section and elsewhere in this prospectus concerning DTC and DTC's book-entry system from sources that are believed to be reliable, but we take no responsibility for the accuracy of this information.

Table of Contents

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities from time to time pursuant to underwritten public offerings, negotiated transactions, block trades or a combination of these methods or through underwriters or dealers, through agents and/or directly to one or more purchasers. The securities may be distributed from time to time in one or more transactions:

at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed;

at market prices prevailing at the time of sale;

at prices related to such prevailing market prices; or

at negotiated prices.

Each time that we sell securities covered by this prospectus, we will provide a prospectus supplement or supplements that will describe the method of distribution and set forth the terms and conditions of the offering of such securities, including the offering price of the securities and the proceeds to us, if applicable.

Offers to purchase the securities being offered by this prospectus may be solicited directly. Agents may also be designated to solicit offers to purchase the securities from time to time. Any agent involved in the offer or sale of our securities will be identified in a prospectus supplement.

If a dealer is utilized in the sale of the securities being offered by this prospectus, the securities will be sold to the dealer, as principal. The dealer may then resell the securities to the public at varying prices to be determined by the dealer at the time of resale.

If an underwriter is utilized in the sale of the securities being offered by this prospectus, an underwriting agreement will be executed with the underwriter at the time of sale and the name of any underwriter will be provided in the prospectus supplement that the underwriter will use to make resales of the securities to the public. In connection with the sale of the securities, we or the purchasers of securities for whom the underwriter may act as agent, may compensate the underwriter in the form of underwriting discounts or commissions. The underwriter may sell the securities to or through dealers, and those dealers may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from the underwriters and/or commissions from the purchasers for which they may act as agent. Unless otherwise indicated in a prospectus supplement, an agent will be acting on a best efforts basis and a dealer will purchase securities as a principal, and may then resell the securities at varying prices to be determined by the dealer.

Any compensation paid to underwriters, dealers or agents in connection with the offering of the securities, and any discounts, concessions or commissions allowed by underwriters to participating dealers will be provided in the applicable prospectus supplement. Underwriters, dealers and agents participating in the distribution of the securities may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act, and any discounts and commissions received by them and any profit realized by them on resale of the securities may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions. We may enter into agreements to indemnify underwriters, dealers and agents against civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribute to payments they may be required to make in respect thereof and to reimburse those persons for certain expenses.

Any common stock or preferred stock will be listed on The Nasdaq Global Market, but any other securities may or may not be listed on a national securities exchange. To facilitate the offering of securities, certain persons participating in the offering may engage in transactions that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the price of the securities. This may include over-allotments or short sales of the securities, which involve the sale by persons participating in the offering of more securities than were sold to them. In these circumstances, these persons would cover such over-allotments or short positions by making purchases in the open market or by exercising their over-allotment option, if any. In addition, these persons may stabilize or maintain the price of the securities

Table of Contents

by bidding for or purchasing securities in the open market or by imposing penalty bids, whereby selling concessions allowed to dealers participating in the offering may be reclaimed if securities sold by them are repurchased in connection with stabilization transactions. The effect of these transactions may be to stabilize or maintain the market price of the securities at a level above that which might otherwise prevail in the open market. These transactions may be discontinued at any time.

If indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, underwriters or other persons acting as agents may be authorized to solicit offers by institutions or other suitable purchasers to purchase the securities at the public offering price set forth in the prospectus supplement, pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on the date or dates stated in the prospectus supplement. These purchasers may include, among others, commercial and savings banks, insurance companies, pension funds, investment companies and educational and charitable institutions. Delayed delivery contracts will be subject to the condition that the purchase of the securities covered by the delayed delivery contracts will not at the time of delivery be prohibited under the laws of any jurisdiction in the United States to which the purchaser is subject. The underwriters and agents will not have any responsibility with respect to the validity or performance of these contracts.

We may engage in at the market offerings into an existing trading market in accordance with Rule 415(a)(4) under the Securities Act. In addition, we may enter into derivative transactions with third parties, or sell securities not covered by this prospectus to third parties in privately negotiated transactions. If the applicable prospectus supplement so indicates, in connection with those derivatives, the third parties may sell securities covered by this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, including in short sale transactions. If so, the third party may use securities pledged by us or borrowed from us or others to settle those sales or to close out any related open borrowings of stock, and may use securities received from us in settlement of those derivatives to close out any related open borrowings of stock. The third party in such sale transactions will be an underwriter and, if not identified in this prospectus, will be named in the applicable prospectus supplement (or a post-effective amendment). In addition, we may otherwise loan or pledge securities to a financial institution or other third party that in turn may sell the securities short using this prospectus and an applicable prospectus supplement. Such financial institution or other third party may transfer its economic short position to investors in our securities or in connection with a concurrent offering of other securities.

The specific terms of any lock-up provisions in respect of any given offering will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

In compliance with the guidelines of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc., or FINRA, the maximum consideration or discount to be received by any FINRA member or independent broker dealer may not exceed 8% of the aggregate proceeds of the offering.

The underwriters, dealers and agents may engage in transactions with us, or perform services for us, in the ordinary course of business for which they receive compensation.

Table of Contents

LEGAL MATTERS

Latham & Watkins LLP, San Diego, California, will pass upon certain legal matters relating to the issuance and sale of the securities offered hereby on behalf of Conatus Pharmaceuticals Inc. Additional legal matters may be passed upon for us or any underwriters, dealers or agents, by counsel that we will name in the applicable prospectus supplement.

EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our consolidated financial statements included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2013, as set forth in their report, which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement. Our financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's report, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

Table of Contents

Shares

Common Stock

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

April , 2015

Joint Book-Running Managers

Stifel

Roth Capital Partners

Neither we nor any of the underwriters have authorized anyone to provide information different from that contained in this prospectus supplement. When you make a decision about whether to invest in our common stock, you should not rely upon any information other than the information in this prospectus supplement. Neither the delivery of this prospectus supplement nor the sale of shares of our common stock means that information contained in this prospectus supplement is correct after the date of this prospectus supplement. This prospectus supplement is not an offer to sell or solicitation of an offer to buy shares of our common stock in any circumstances under which the offer or solicitation is unlawful.