

DURECT CORP
Form 424B2
October 10, 2018
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Registration No. 333-226518

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

Up to \$75,000,000

Common Stock

DURECT Corporation has previously entered into a Controlled Equity OfferingSM sales agreement with Cantor Fitzgerald & Co., relating to shares of our common stock, par value US\$0.0001, offered by this prospectus supplement. In accordance with the terms of the sales agreement, we may offer and sell shares of our common stock having an aggregate offering price of up to \$75,000,000 from time to time through Cantor Fitzgerald & Co., acting as agent. Sales of the shares of common stock, if any, may be made on the NASDAQ Global Market at market prices and such other sales as agreed upon by DURECT Corporation and Cantor Fitzgerald & Co.

Our common stock trades on the NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol **DRRX**. On September 26, 2018, the last reported sale price of the common stock on the NASDAQ Global Market was \$1.20 per share.

Sales of our common stock, if any, under this prospectus supplement may be made in sales deemed to be an **at the market offering** as defined in Rule 415(a)(4) promulgated under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act. Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will act as sales agent on a best efforts basis and use commercially reasonable efforts to sell on our behalf all of the shares of common stock requested to be sold by us, consistent with its normal trading and sales practices, on mutually agreed terms between Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. and us. There is no arrangement for funds to be received in any escrow, trust or similar arrangement.

Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will be entitled to compensation at a fixed commission rate of 3.0% of the gross sales price per share sold. In connection with the sale of our common stock on our behalf, Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will be deemed to be an **underwriter** within the meaning of the Securities Act and the compensation of Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. will be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts.

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should carefully read and consider the risk factors described in this prospectus supplement, any accompanying prospectus supplement and in the

documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement. See **Risk Factors** beginning on page S-4.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus supplement is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus supplement is October 9, 2018

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus supplement is part of a registration statement that we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, utilizing a shelf registration process. Under the shelf registration process, we may offer shares of our common stock having an aggregate offering price of up to \$75,000,000 from time to time under this prospectus supplement at prices and on terms to be determined by market conditions at the time of offering.

We provide information to you about this offering of shares of our common stock in two separate documents that are bound together: (1) this at-the-market sales agreement prospectus supplement, which describes the specific details regarding this offering; and (2) the accompanying base 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 at-the-market prospectus supplement is inconsistent with the accompanying base 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—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 date.

You should rely only on the information contained in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus and in any free writing prospectus that we may authorize for use in connection with this offering. We have not, and Cantor Fitzgerald & Co., or Cantor, has 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 are not, and Cantor is not, making an offer to sell or soliciting an offer to buy our securities in any jurisdiction in which an offer or solicitation is not authorized or in which the person making that offer or solicitation is not qualified to do so or to anyone to whom it is unlawful to make an offer or solicitation. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus, the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and in any free writing prospectus that we may authorize for use in connection with this offering, is accurate only as of the date of those respective documents. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates. You should read this prospectus, the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and any free writing prospectus that we may authorize for use in connection with this offering, in their entirety before making an investment decision. You should also read and consider the information in the documents to which we have referred you in the sections of this prospectus entitled *Where You Can Find More Information* and *Incorporation of Certain Documents By Reference*.

We are offering to sell, and seeking offers to buy, shares of common stock only in jurisdictions where offers and sales are permitted. The distribution of this prospectus and the offering of the common stock in certain jurisdictions may be restricted by law. Persons outside the United States who come into possession of this prospectus must inform themselves about, and observe any restrictions relating to, the offering of the common stock and the distribution of this prospectus outside the United States. This prospectus does not constitute, and may not be used in connection with, an offer to sell, or a solicitation of an offer to buy, any securities offered by this prospectus by any person in any jurisdiction in which it is unlawful for such person to make such an offer or solicitation.

For purposes of this prospectus, references to the terms *DURECT*, *we*, *us* and *our* refer to DURECT Corporation, unless the context otherwise requires.

This prospectus and the information incorporated by reference herein and therein include trademarks, service marks and trade names owned by us or other companies. All trademarks, service marks and trade names included or incorporated by reference into this prospectus are the property of their respective owners.

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PROSPECTUS SUMMARY

The following summary highlights certain information contained elsewhere in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying base prospectus, any free writing prospectus that we have been authorized to use and the documents incorporated by reference herein and in the accompanying base prospectus. This summary does not contain all the information you will need in making your investment decision. You should carefully read this entire prospectus supplement, the accompanying base prospectus, any free writing prospectus that we have been authorized to use and the documents incorporated by reference herein and in the accompanying base prospectus. You should pay special attention to the Risk Factors section of this prospectus and the financial statements and other information incorporated by reference in this prospectus.

Our Business

We are a biopharmaceutical company with research and development programs broadly falling into two categories: (i) new chemical entities derived from our Epigenetic Regulator Program, in which we attempt to discover and develop molecules which have not previously been approved and marketed as therapeutics, and (ii) Drug Delivery Programs, in which we apply our formulation expertise and technologies largely to active pharmaceutical ingredients whose safety and efficacy have previously been established but which we aim to improve in some manner through a new formulation. We also manufacture and sell osmotic pumps used in laboratory research and design, develop and manufacture a wide range of standard and custom biodegradable polymers and excipients for pharmaceutical and medical device clients for use as raw materials in their products. In addition, we conduct research and development of pharmaceutical products in collaboration with third party pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.

Additional details of our programs and related strategic agreements are contained in our annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2017 and in our Note 2 of our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended June 30, 2018, as well as in reports subsequently filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. *See Incorporation of Certain Documents by Reference* below.

Our Corporate Information

We were incorporated in Delaware in February 1998. We completed our initial public offering on September 28, 2000. Our principal executive offices are located at 10260 Bubb Road, Cupertino, California, 95014. Our telephone number is (408) 777-1417, and our website address is www.durect.com. The information on or accessible through our website does not constitute part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus and should not be relied upon in connection with making any investment in our securities. We make our annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, and amendments to these reports available free of charge on our website as soon as reasonably practicable after we file these reports with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Our Code of Ethics can be found on our website.

The common stock of DURECT is listed on NASDAQ under the symbol DRRX.

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THE OFFERING

Common stock to be offered by us	Shares of our common stock having an aggregate offering price of up to \$75,000,000.
Common shares to be outstanding after this offering	224,501,652
Plan of Distribution	At the market offering that may be made from time to time through our sales agent, Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. See Plan of Distribution.
Use of Proceeds	We currently expect to use the net proceeds primarily for general corporate purposes, which may include clinical trials, research and development activities, capital expenditures, selling, general and administrative costs, facilities expansion and to meet working capital needs. See Use of Proceeds.
Risk Factors	Before investing in our common stock, you should carefully read and consider the Risk Factors.
NASDAQ Global Market symbol	DRRX.

The number of shares of common stock to be outstanding after this offering is based on 162,001,652 shares of common stock outstanding as of June 30, 2018 and a total offering of an aggregate of 62,500,000 shares of our common stock at a public offering price of \$1.20 per share, which was the last reported sale price of our common stock on the NASDAQ Global Market on September 26, 2018, and excludes as of June 30, 2018:

31,346,469 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options outstanding under our stock option plans at a weighted average exercise price of \$1.64 per share and 8,229,079 additional shares of common stock reserved for potential future issuance under our stock option plan; and

an aggregate of 419,251 shares of common stock reserved for potential future issuance under our 2000 Employee Stock Purchase Plan.

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RISK FACTORS

*Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should carefully consider the specific risks described below and the risks described in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2017 and in our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the periods ended March 31, 2018 and June 30, 2018, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus in their entirety, as well as the other information contained in this prospectus and the other documents incorporated by reference, before making an investment decision. See the sections of this prospectus entitled *Where You Can Find More Information* and *Incorporation of Certain Information By Reference*. Any of the risks we describe below or in the information incorporated herein by reference in this prospectus could cause our business, financial condition or operating results to suffer. The market price of our common stock could decline if one or more of these risks and uncertainties develop into actual events. You could lose all or part of your investment.*

A substantial number of shares may be sold in the market following this offering, which may depress the market price for our common stock.

Sales of a substantial number of shares of our common stock in the public market following this offering could cause the market price of our common stock to decline. Although there can be no assurance that all \$75,000,000 worth of shares being offered under this prospectus will be sold or the price at which any such shares might be sold, assuming that an aggregate of 62,500,000 shares of our common stock are sold during the term of the sales agreement with Cantor, in each case, for example, at a price of \$1.20 per share, the last reported sale price of our common stock on the NASDAQ Global Select Market on September 26, 2018, upon completion of this offering, based on our shares outstanding as of June 30, 2018, we will have outstanding an aggregate of 224,501,652 shares of common stock, assuming no exercise of outstanding stock options and no purchases of stock under our employee stock purchase plan. A substantial majority of the outstanding shares of our common stock are, and all of the shares sold in this offering upon issuance will be, freely tradable without restriction or further registration under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, unless these shares are owned or purchased by affiliates as that term is defined in Rule 144 under the Securities Act. In addition, we have also registered all of the shares of common stock that we may issue under our stock option and employee stock purchase plans, and as of June 30, 2018, 31,346,469 shares of common stock were issuable upon the exercise of stock options outstanding under our stock option plans at a weighted average exercise price of \$1.64 per share, 8,229,079 additional shares of common stock were reserved for potential future issuance under our stock option plan, and an aggregate of 419,251 shares of common stock were reserved for potential future issuance under our 2000 Employee Stock Purchase Plan.

We may use the net proceeds of this offering in ways with which you may disagree.

We intend to use the net proceeds of this offering for general corporate purposes, which may include clinical trials, research and development activities, capital expenditures, facilities expansion and working capital needs. Our management will have broad discretion in the application of the net proceeds from this offering and could spend the proceeds in ways that do not improve our results of operations or enhance the value of our common stock. Accordingly, you will be relying on the judgment of our management with regard to the use of net proceeds, and you will not have the opportunity, as part of your investment decision, to assess whether the proceeds are being used appropriately. Our failure to apply these funds effectively could have a material adverse effect on our business, delay the development of our product candidates and cause the price of our common stock to decline.

You may experience future dilution as a result of future equity offerings or other equity issuances.

In order to raise additional capital, we may in the future offer and issue additional shares of our common stock or other securities convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock. We cannot assure you that we will be able to

sell shares or other securities in any other offering at a price per share that is equal to or greater

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than the price per share paid by investors in this offering, and investors purchasing shares or other securities in the future could have rights superior to existing stockholders. The price per share at which we sell additional shares of our common stock or other securities convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock in future transactions may be higher or lower than the price per share in this offering. As of June 30, 2018, 8,229,079 additional shares of common stock were reserved for potential future issuance under our stock option plan and an aggregate of 419,251 shares of common stock were reserved and available for future grant under our 2000 Employee Stock Purchase Plan. Also as of such date, options to purchase 31,346,469 shares of our common stock were outstanding. You will incur dilution upon the grant of any shares pursuant to such plan, upon vesting of any stock awards under any such plan, or upon exercise of any such outstanding options.

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CAUTIONARY NOTE REGARDING FORWARD LOOKING INFORMATION

This prospectus and the documents we incorporate by reference in this prospectus contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act. All statements, other than statements of historical facts, included or incorporated in this prospectus regarding our strategy, future operations, financial position, future revenues, projected costs, prospects, plans and objectives of management are forward-looking statements. We may, in some cases, use words such as believe, anticipate, should, intend, plan, will, estimate, project, expect and similar expressions. Not all forward-looking statements contain these identifying words. These statements are based on assumptions and assessments made by our management in light of its experience and its perception of historical trends, current conditions, expected future developments and other factors our management believes to be appropriate. These forward-looking statements are subject to a number of risks and uncertainties, including those risks described or incorporated by reference in this prospectus under Risk Factors above.

Forward-looking statements included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus include, for example, statements about:

the clinical trial plans for DUR-928;

potential regulatory filings for or approval of REMOXY ER, DUR-928, POSIMIR, or any of our or any third parties' other product candidates;

the progress of our third-party collaborations, including estimated milestones;

our intention to seek, and ability to enter into and maintain strategic alliances and collaborations;

the potential benefits and uses of our products;

responsibilities of our third-party collaborators, including the responsibility to make cost reimbursement, milestone, royalty and other payments to us, and our expectations regarding our collaborators' plans with respect to our products and continued development of our products;

our responsibilities to our third-party collaborators, including our responsibilities to conduct research and development, clinical trials and manufacture products;

our ability to protect intellectual property, including intellectual property licensed to our collaborators;

market opportunities for products in our product pipeline;

the progress and results of our research and development programs and our evaluation of additional development programs;

requirements for us to purchase supplies and raw materials from third parties, and the ability of third parties to provide us with required supplies and raw materials;

the results and timing of clinical trials, including for DUR-928, REMOXY ER and POSIMIR, the possible commencement of future clinical trials and announcements of the findings of our clinical trials;

conditions for obtaining regulatory approval of our product candidates;

submission and timing of applications for regulatory approval;

the impact of FDA, DEA, EMEA and other government regulation on our business;

the impact of potential Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS) on our business;

uncertainties associated with obtaining and protecting patents and other intellectual property rights, as well as avoiding the intellectual property rights of others;

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products and companies that will compete with the products we license to third-party collaborators;

the possibility we may commercialize our own products and build up our commercial, sales and marketing capabilities and other required infrastructure;

the possibility that we may develop additional manufacturing capabilities;

our employees, including the number of employees and the continued services of key management, technical and scientific personnel;

our future performance, including our anticipation that we will not derive meaningful revenues from our products in development for at least the next twelve months, potential for future inventory write-offs and our expectations regarding our ability to achieve profitability;

sufficiency of our cash resources, anticipated capital requirements and capital expenditures, our ability to comply with covenants of our term loan, and our need for additional financing, including potential sales under our shelf registration statement;

our expectations regarding marketing expenses, research and development expenses, and selling, general and administrative expenses;

the composition of future revenues; and

accounting policies and estimates, including revenue recognition policies.

Any such forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and actual results, developments and business decisions may differ from those contemplated by such forward-looking statements. We disclaim any duty to update any forward-looking statements. You should also carefully consider other information set forth in reports or other documents that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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USE OF PROCEEDS

The amount of proceeds from this offering will depend upon the number of shares of our common stock sold and the market price at which they are sold. There can be no assurance that we will be able to sell any shares under or fully utilize the sales agreement with Cantor as a source of financing. We intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of the shares of common stock under this prospectus for general corporate purposes, which may include clinical trials, research and development activities, capital expenditures, selling, general and administrative costs, facilities expansion, and to meet working capital needs. We expect from time to time to evaluate the acquisition of businesses, products and technologies for which a portion of the net proceeds may be used, although we currently are not planning or negotiating any such transactions

The amounts actually expended for each purpose may vary significantly depending upon numerous factors, including the amount and timing of the proceeds from this offering and progress with the development of our products. Expenditures will also depend upon the establishment of collaborative arrangements with other companies, the availability of additional financing and other factors. Investors will be relying on the judgment of our management regarding the application of the proceeds of any sale of shares of our common stock.

As of the date of this prospectus, we cannot specify with certainty all of the particular uses of the proceeds from this offering. Accordingly, we will retain broad discretion over the use of such proceeds. Pending the use of the net proceeds from this offering as described above, we intend to invest the net proceeds in investment-grade, interest-bearing securities.

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If you invest in our common stock, your interest will be diluted immediately to the extent of the difference between the public offering price per share of our common stock and the as adjusted net tangible book value per share of common stock after this offering.

The net tangible book value of our common stock as of June 30, 2018 was approximately \$21.9 million, or approximately \$0.13 per share. Net tangible book value per share represents the amount of our total tangible assets less total liabilities divided by the total number of shares of our common stock outstanding.

Dilution per share to new investors represents the difference between the amount per share paid by purchasers for our common stock in this offering and the net tangible book value per share of our common stock immediately following the completion of this offering.

After giving effect to the sale of shares of common stock offered by this prospectus at an assumed public offering price of \$1.20 per share (the last reported sale price of our common stock on the NASDAQ Global Market on September 26, 2018), and after deducting commissions and estimated aggregate offering expenses payable by us, our as adjusted net tangible book value as of June 30, 2018 would have been approximately \$94.5 million, or approximately \$0.42 per share. This represents an immediate increase in net tangible book value of approximately \$0.29 per share to our existing stockholders and an immediate dilution in as adjusted net tangible book value of approximately \$0.78 per share to purchasers of our common stock in this offering, as illustrated by the following table:

Assumed public offering price per share	\$	1.20
Net tangible book value per share at June 30, 2018	\$	0.13
Increase in net tangible book value per share attributable to investors purchasing our common stock in this offering	\$	0.29
As adjusted net tangible book value per share as of June 30, 2018 after giving effect to this offering	\$	0.42
Dilution per share to investors purchasing our common stock in this offering	\$	0.78

The table above assumes for illustrative purposes that an aggregate of 62,500,000 shares of our common stock are sold at a price of \$1.20 per share, the last reported sale price of our common stock on the NASDAQ Global Market on September 26, 2018, for aggregate gross proceeds of approximately \$75,000,000. The shares sold in this offering, if any, will be sold from time to time at various prices. An increase of \$0.50 per share in the price at which the shares are sold from the assumed offering price (i.e., to \$1.70 per share), assuming all of our common stock in the aggregate amount of \$75,000,000 is sold at that price, would decrease the number of shares sold in the offering to 44,117,647 shares, increase our as adjusted net tangible book value per share after the offering to \$0.46 per share and would increase the dilution in net tangible book value per share to new investors to \$1.24 per share, after deducting commissions and estimated aggregate offering expenses payable by us. A decrease of \$0.50 per share in the price at which the shares are sold from the assumed offering price (i.e., to \$0.70 per share), assuming all of our common stock in the aggregate amount of \$75,000,000 is sold at that price, would increase the number of shares sold in the offering to 107,142,857 shares, decrease our as adjusted net tangible book value per share after the offering to \$0.35 per share

and would decrease the dilution in net tangible book value per share to new investors to \$0.35 per share, after deducting commissions and estimated aggregate offering expenses payable by us.

The information discussed above is illustrative only and will adjust based on the actual public offering price and other terms of this offering determined at pricing.

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The above table is based on 162,001,652 shares outstanding before the offering as of September 26, 2018, and excludes as of such date:

30,990,640 shares of common stock issuable upon the exercise of stock options outstanding under our stock option plans at a weighted average exercise price of \$1.63 per share and 8,584,908 additional shares of common stock reserved for potential future issuance under our stock option plan; and

an aggregate of 419,251 shares of common stock reserved for potential future issuance under our 2000 Employee Stock Purchase Plan.

To the extent that outstanding options are exercised, you will 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 additional capital is raised through the sale of equity or convertible debt securities, the issuance of these securities could result in further dilution to our stockholders.

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Our common stock has been traded on the NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol **DRRX** since our initial public offering on September 28, 2000. The following table sets forth, for the periods indicated, the high and low sales prices for our common stock as reported by the NASDAQ Global Market.

	Common Stock Price	
	Low	High
Year ended December 31, 2016		
First Quarter	\$ 0.99	\$ 2.29
Second Quarter	1.14	1.52
Third Quarter	1.08	2.00
Fourth Quarter	1.11	1.45
Year ended December 31, 2017		
First Quarter	\$ 0.91	1.37
Second Quarter	0.74	1.59
Third Quarter	1.50	1.90
Fourth Quarter	0.75	2.17
Year ending December 31, 2018		
First Quarter	\$ 0.88	2.34
Second Quarter	1.30	2.55
Third Quarter (through September 26, 2018)	1.02	1.75

The closing sale price of our common stock as reported on the NASDAQ Global Market on September 26, 2018 was \$1.20 per share. As of that date there were approximately 108 holders of record of the common stock. This does not include the number of persons whose stock is in nominee or street name accounts through brokers. The market price of our common stock has been and may continue to be subject to wide fluctuations in response to a number of events and factors, such as progress in our development programs, quarterly variations in our operating results, announcements of technological innovations or new products by us or our competitors, changes in financial estimates and recommendations by securities analysts, the operating and stock performance of other companies that investors may deem comparable to us, and news reports relating to trends in our markets. These fluctuations, as well as general economic and market conditions, may adversely affect the market price for our common stock.

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PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We have previously entered into a Controlled Equity OfferingSM sales agreement, dated November 3, 2015, with Cantor (the sales agreement) under which we may offer and sell shares of our common stock having an aggregate gross sales price of up to \$75,000,000 from time to time through Cantor acting as agent. Sales of the shares of common stock, if any, may be made on the NASDAQ Global Market at market prices and such other sales as agreed upon by us and Cantor. The sales agreement has been filed as an exhibit to our registration statement on Form S-3 of which this prospectus forms a part.

Upon delivery of a placement notice and subject to the terms and conditions of the sales agreement, Cantor may sell our common stock by any method permitted by law deemed to be an at the market offering as defined in Rule 415(a)(4) promulgated under the Securities Act. We may instruct Cantor not to sell common stock if the sales cannot be effected at or above the price designated by us from time to time. We or Cantor may suspend the offering of common stock upon notice and subject to other conditions.

We will pay Cantor commissions, in cash, for its services in acting as agent in the sale of our common stock. Cantor will be entitled to compensation at a fixed commission rate of 3.0% of the aggregate gross proceeds from each sale of our common stock. Because there is no minimum offering amount required as a condition to close this offering, the actual total public offering amount, commissions and proceeds to us, if any, are not determinable at this time. We have also agreed to reimburse Cantor for certain specified expenses, including the fees and disbursements of its legal counsel in an amount not to exceed \$50,000, as provided in the sales agreement. We estimate that the total expenses for the offering, excluding compensation and reimbursements payable to Cantor under the terms of the sales agreement, will be approximately \$50,000.

Settlement for sales of common stock will occur on the second business day following the date on which any sales are made, or on some other date that is agreed upon by us and Cantor in connection with a particular transaction, in return for payment of the net proceeds to us. Sales of our common stock as contemplated in this prospectus will be settled through the facilities of The Depository Trust Company or by such other means as we and Cantor may agree upon. There is no arrangement for funds to be received in an escrow, trust or similar arrangement.

Cantor will use its commercially reasonable efforts, consistent with its normal sales and trading practices and applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations and the rules of the NASDAQ Global Market, to solicit offers to purchase the common stock shares under the terms and subject to the conditions set forth in the sales agreement. In connection with the sale of the common stock on our behalf, Cantor will be deemed to be an underwriter within the meaning of the Securities Act and the compensation of Cantor will be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts. We have agreed to provide indemnification and contribution to Cantor against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act.

The offering of our common stock pursuant to the sales agreement will terminate as permitted therein. We and Cantor may each terminate the sales agreement at any time upon 10 days prior notice.

Cantor and its affiliates may in the future provide various investment banking, commercial banking and other financial services for us and our affiliates, for which services they may in the future receive customary fees. To the extent required by Regulation M, Cantor will not engage in any market making activities involving our common stock while the offering is ongoing under this prospectus.

This prospectus in electronic format may be made available on a website maintained by Cantor and Cantor may distribute this prospectus electronically.

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LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the securities being offered by this prospectus will be passed upon by Morrison & Foerster LLP of Palo Alto, California. Cantor Fitzgerald & Co. is being represented in connection with this offering by Cooley LLP, New York, New York.

EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our financial statements and schedule included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2017, and the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2017, as set forth in their reports, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement. Our financial statements and schedule are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's reports, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We are a reporting company and file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC. You may read and copy these reports, proxy statements and other information at the SEC's public reference rooms at 100 F Street, N.E., Room 1580, Washington, D.C. 20549. You can request copies of these documents by writing to the SEC and paying a fee for the copying cost. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for more information about the operation of the public reference rooms. Our SEC filings are also available at the SEC's website at www.sec.gov and our website at www.durect.com. We have not incorporated by reference into this prospectus the information contained on our website and you should not consider it to be part of this prospectus. In addition, you can read and copy our SEC filings at the office of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. at 1735 K Street, Washington, D.C. 20006.

We have filed a registration statement on Form S-3 with the SEC relating to the securities covered by this prospectus. This prospectus is a part of the registration statement and does not contain all of the information in the registration statement. For further information about us and the securities we are offering under this prospectus, 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 regarding the content 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. You may review a copy of the registration statement at the SEC's public reference room in Washington, D.C., as well as through the SEC's Internet site at www.sec.gov.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference the information we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus. In addition, information we file with the SEC in the future will automatically update and supersede information contained in this prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplement.

This prospectus incorporates by reference the documents set forth below that we have previously filed with the SEC:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2017 filed with the SEC on March 8, 2018;

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our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2018 and June 30, 2018 filed with the SEC on May 9, 2018 and August 2, 2018, respectively;

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on January 30, 2018, February 14, 2018, February 26, 2018, March 5, 2018, March 20, 2018, April 25, 2018, May 9, 2018, June 20, 2018, June 27, 2018, July 30, 2018, August 6, 2018, August 17, 2018, August 30, 2018, September 18, 2018 and September 21, 2018;

our definitive Proxy Statement for our Annual Meeting of Shareholders held on June 19, 2018 filed with the SEC on April 27, 2018 (other than information furnished rather than filed); and

the description of our common stock included in our registration statement on Form 8-A12G/A (File No. 000-31615) filed with the SEC on June 24, 2003, including any amendment or reports filed for the purpose of updating such description.

All filings filed by us pursuant to the Exchange Act after the date of the initial filing of the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and prior to effectiveness of the registration statement shall be deemed to be incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

We also incorporate by reference into this prospectus additional documents that we may file with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, excluding, in each case, information deemed furnished and not filed until we sell all of the securities we are offering. Any statements contained in a previously filed document incorporated by reference into this prospectus is deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent that a statement contained in this prospectus, or in a subsequently filed document also incorporated by reference herein, modifies or supersedes that statement.

We will provide to you at no cost a copy of any and all of the information incorporated by reference into the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. You may make a request for copies of this information in writing or by telephone. Requests should be directed to:

DURECT Corporation

Investor Relations

10260 Bubb Road

Cupertino, CA 95014

Attn: Investor Relations

(408) 777-1417

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PROSPECTUS

\$175,000,000

Common Stock

Preferred Stock

Debt Securities

Warrants

Units

Investing in our securities involves a high degree of risk. You should carefully read and consider the risk factors described in this prospectus supplement, any accompanying prospectus supplement and in the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement. See Risk Factors beginning on page 3.

From time to time, we may offer and sell, in one or more offerings, in amounts, at prices and on terms determined at the time of any such offering, common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, warrants, either individually or in units, with a total value of up to \$175,000,000.

Our common stock trades on the NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol DRRX. On September 26, 2018, the last reported sale price of the common stock on the NASDAQ Global Market was \$1.20 per share.

We will provide specific terms of these securities in supplements to this prospectus. The prospectus supplement will also describe the specific manner in which we will offer the securities and may also supplement, update or amend information contained in this document. You should read this prospectus and any supplement carefully before you purchase any of our securities.

THIS PROSPECTUS MAY NOT BE USED TO OFFER AND SELL SECURITIES UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT.

We may offer the securities in amounts, at prices and on terms determined at the time of offering. We may sell the securities directly to you, through agents we select or through underwriters and dealers we select. If we use agents, underwriters or dealers to sell the securities, we will name them and describe their compensation in a prospectus supplement.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is October 9, 2018

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No person has been authorized to give any information or make any representations in connection with this offering other than those contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplement in connection with the offering described in this prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplement, and, if given or made, such information or representations must not be relied upon as having been authorized by us. Neither this prospectus nor any prospectus supplement shall constitute an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy offered securities in any jurisdiction in which it is unlawful for such person to make such an offering or solicitation. Neither the delivery of this prospectus or any prospectus supplement nor any sale made hereunder shall under any circumstances imply that the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or in any prospectus supplement is correct as of any date subsequent to the date of this prospectus supplement or of any prospectus supplement.

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, using a shelf registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we may, from time to time, issue and sell to the public any part of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings up to a total dollar amount of \$175,000,000.

This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell the securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement containing specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information in this prospectus or in documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus. To the extent that any statement that we make in a prospectus supplement is inconsistent with statements made in this prospectus or in documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus, the statements made or incorporated by reference in this prospectus will be deemed modified or superseded by those made in the prospectus supplement. You should carefully read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with the additional information described under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information** before buying any securities offered in this offering.

THIS PROSPECTUS MAY NOT BE USED TO OFFER AND SELL SECURITIES UNLESS IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY A PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT.

The registration statement containing this prospectus, including exhibits to the registration statement, provides additional information about us and the securities offered under this prospectus. The registration statement can be read at the SEC's website or at the SEC offices mentioned under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information**.

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ABOUT DURECT

We are a biopharmaceutical company with research and development programs broadly falling into two categories: (i) new chemical entities derived from our Epigenetic Regulator Program, in which we attempt to discover and develop molecules which have not previously been approved and marketed as therapeutics, and (ii) Drug Delivery Programs, in which we apply our formulation expertise and technologies largely to active pharmaceutical ingredients whose safety and efficacy have previously been established but which we aim to improve in some manner through a new formulation. We also manufacture and sell osmotic pumps used in laboratory research and design, develop and manufacture a wide range of standard and custom biodegradable polymers and excipients for pharmaceutical and medical device clients for use as raw materials in their products. In addition, we conduct research and development of pharmaceutical products in collaboration with third party pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.

We were incorporated in Delaware in February 1998. We completed our initial public offering on September 28, 2000. Our principal executive offices are located at 10260 Bubb Road, Cupertino, California, 95014. Our telephone number is (408) 777-1417, and our website address is www.durect.com. The information on or accessible through our website does not constitute part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus and should not be relied upon in connection with making any investment in our securities. We make our annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, and amendments to these reports available free of charge on our website as soon as reasonably practicable after we file these reports with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Our Code of Ethics can be found on our website.

Securities We Are Offering

We may offer shares of common stock, shares of preferred stock, debt securities, warrants, either individually or in units, with a total value of up to \$175,000,000 from time to time under this prospectus at prices and on terms to be determined by market conditions at the time of the offering. Our common stock currently is quoted on the NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol **DRRX**. Shares of common stock that may be offered in this offering will, when issued and paid for, be fully paid and non-assessable.

We refer to our common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, warrants and units in this prospectus as **securities**. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we offer a type or series of securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will describe the specific amounts, prices and other important terms of the securities, as described below under **Plan of Distribution**.

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RISK FACTORS

Before you invest in our securities, in addition to the other information, documents or reports incorporated by reference in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement or other offering materials, you should carefully consider the risk factors in this section, the section entitled "Risk Factors" in any prospectus supplement as well as our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K, and in our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q filed subsequent to the Annual Report on Form 10-K, which are incorporated by reference into this prospectus and any prospectus supplement in their entirety, as the same may be amended, supplemented or superseded from time to time by other reports we file with the SEC in the future. Each of the risks described in these sections and documents could materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects, and could result in a partial or complete loss of your investment.

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CAUTIONARY NOTE REGARDING FORWARD LOOKING INFORMATION

This prospectus and the documents we incorporate by reference in this prospectus contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act. All statements, other than statements of historical facts, included or incorporated in this prospectus regarding our strategy, future operations, financial position, future revenues, projected costs, prospects, plans and objectives of management are forward-looking statements. We may, in some cases, use words such as believe, anticipate, should, intend, plan, will, estimate, project, expect and similar expressions. Not all forward-looking statements contain these identifying words. These statements are based on assumptions and assessments made by our management in light of its experience and its perception of historical trends, current conditions, expected future developments and other factors our management believes to be appropriate. These forward-looking statements are subject to a number of risks and uncertainties, including those risks described or incorporated by reference in this prospectus under Risk Factors above.

Forward-looking statements included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus include, for example, statements about:

the clinical trial plans for DUR-928;

potential regulatory filings for or approval of REMOXY ER, DUR-928, POSIMIR, or any of our or any third parties other product candidates;

the progress of our third-party collaborations, including estimated milestones;

our intention to seek, and ability to enter into and maintain strategic alliances and collaborations;

the potential benefits and uses of our products;

responsibilities of our third-party collaborators, including the responsibility to make cost reimbursement, milestone, royalty and other payments to us, and our expectations regarding our collaborators plans with respect to our products and continued development of our products;

our responsibilities to our third-party collaborators, including our responsibilities to conduct research and development, clinical trials and manufacture products;

our ability to protect intellectual property, including intellectual property licensed to our collaborators;

market opportunities for products in our product pipeline;

the progress and results of our research and development programs and our evaluation of additional development programs;

requirements for us to purchase supplies and raw materials from third parties, and the ability of third parties to provide us with required supplies and raw materials;

the results and timing of clinical trials, including for DUR-928, REMOXY ER and POSIMIR, the possible commencement of future clinical trials and announcements of the findings of our clinical trials;

conditions for obtaining regulatory approval of our product candidates;

submission and timing of applications for regulatory approval;

the impact of FDA, DEA, EMEA and other government regulation on our business;

the impact of potential Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS) on our business;

uncertainties associated with obtaining and protecting patents and other intellectual property rights, as well as avoiding the intellectual property rights of others;

products and companies that will compete with the products we license to third-party collaborators;

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the possibility we may commercialize our own products and build up our commercial, sales and marketing capabilities and other required infrastructure;

the possibility that we may develop additional manufacturing capabilities;

our employees, including the number of employees and the continued services of key management, technical and scientific personnel;

our future performance, including our anticipation that we will not derive meaningful revenues from our products in development for at least the next twelve months, potential for future inventory write-offs and our expectations regarding our ability to achieve profitability;

sufficiency of our cash resources, anticipated capital requirements and capital expenditures, our ability to comply with covenants of our term loan, and our need for additional financing, including potential sales under our shelf registration statement;

our expectations regarding marketing expenses, research and development expenses, and selling, general and administrative expenses;

the composition of future revenues; and

accounting policies and estimates, including revenue recognition policies.

Any such forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and actual results, developments and business decisions may differ from those contemplated by such forward-looking statements. We disclaim any duty to update any forward-looking statements. You should also carefully consider other information set forth in reports or other documents that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Table of Contents**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES AND****RATIO OF EARNINGS TO COMBINED FIXED CHARGES AND PREFERRED DIVIDEND REQUIREMENTS**

For purposes of computing the ratio of earnings to fixed charges, earnings consist of net loss plus fixed charges. Fixed charges consist of interest expense, amortization of debt issuance costs and discount or premium related to indebtedness, whether expensed or capitalized, and that portion of rental payments under operating leases we believe to be representative of interest.

Earnings were insufficient to cover fixed charges by \$15.3 million for the six months ended June 30, 2018 and \$3.7 million, \$34.5 million, \$22.7 million, \$22.1 million and \$21.5 million for the years ended December 31, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014 and 2013, respectively.

The following table sets forth the computation of our ratio of earnings to fixed charges and our ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred dividend requirements for the periods indicated (in thousands):

	Year Ended December 31,					
	Six months ended					
	June 30, 2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Earnings:						
Net loss	\$ (15,308)	\$ (3,695)	\$ (34,509)	\$ (22,663)	\$ (22,110)	\$ (21,452)
Fixed charges	1,638	3,167	3,030	2,978	1,858	607
Total Earnings	\$ (13,670)	\$ (528)	\$ (31,479)	\$ (19,685)	\$ (20,252)	\$ (20,845)
Fixed Charges:						
Interest expense	\$ 1,267	\$ 2,425	\$ 2,288	\$ 2,236	\$ 1,151	\$ 6
Portion of rent expense representative of interest	371	742	742	742	707	601
Total Fixed Charges	\$ 1,638	\$ 3,167	\$ 3,030	\$ 2,978	\$ 1,858	\$ 607
Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges (1)						

- (1) For purposes of computing the ratio of earnings to fixed charges, earnings consist of net loss plus fixed charges. Fixed charges consist of interest expense, amortization of debt expense and discount or premium related to indebtedness, whether expensed or capitalized, and that portion of rental payments under operating leases we believe to be representative of interest.

The ratio of earnings to fixed charges is equivalent to the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preference dividends for the periods presented as no preferred stock was outstanding in the periods presented.

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USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless otherwise indicated in a prospectus supplement, the net proceeds from the sale of securities offered by this prospectus will be used for general corporate purposes, which may include clinical trials, research and development activities, capital expenditures, selling, general and administrative costs, facilities expansion, and to meet working capital needs. We expect from time to time to evaluate the acquisition of businesses, products and technologies for which a portion of the net proceeds may be used, although we currently are not planning or negotiating any such transactions. Pending such uses, we may invest the net proceeds in investment grade interest-bearing securities.

The amounts actually expended for each purpose may vary significantly depending upon numerous factors, including the amount and timing of the proceeds from this offering and progress with the commercial development of our products as well as our clinical development programs. Expenditures will also depend upon the establishment of collaborative arrangements with other companies, the availability of additional financing and other factors. Investors will be relying on the judgment of our management regarding the application of the proceeds of any sale of securities.

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DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

This section describes the general terms and provisions of the shares of our common stock, \$0.0001 par value per share, and preferred stock, \$0.0001 par value per share, that we may issue. This description is only a summary. Our certificate of incorporation and our bylaws have been filed as exhibits to our periodic reports filed with the SEC, which are incorporated by reference into this prospectus. You should read our certificate of incorporation and our bylaws for additional information before you buy any of our securities. See [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

Common Stock

General. We are authorized to issue up to 350,000,000 shares of common stock. As of September 26, 2018, there were 162,001,652 shares of common stock issued and outstanding.

Voting Rights. The holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share held of record on all matters submitted to a vote of the stockholders, including the election of directors, and do not have cumulative voting rights. Accordingly, the holders of a majority of the 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.

Dividends. Subject to preferences that may be applicable to any then outstanding preferred stock, holders of common stock are entitled to receive ratably dividends, if any, as may be declared by our board of directors out of funds legally available therefor. We have not declared any dividends and have no current plans to do so.

Other Rights. Upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holders of common stock will be entitled to share ratably in the net assets legally available for distribution to stockholders after the payment of 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 fund provisions applicable to the common stock. All outstanding shares of common stock are, and the common stock offered, when issued, will be, fully paid and nonassessable.

Transfer Agent and Registrar for Common Stock

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is Computershare. Its offices are located at 250 Royall Street, Canton, MA 02021, and its telephone number is (800) 736-3001.

Preferred Stock

General. We are authorized to issue up to 10,000,000 shares of preferred stock. As of September 26, 2018, no shares of preferred stock were issued and outstanding. Our board of directors has the authority, without further action by our stockholders, to issue from time to time the preferred stock in one or more series, and to fix the number of shares, designations, preferences, powers, and other rights and qualifications, limitations or restrictions as our board of directors may authorize, including:

the distinctive designation of each series and the number of shares that will constitute the series;

the purchase price;

the voting rights, if any, of shares of the series and the terms and conditions of the voting rights;

the dividend rate on the shares of the series, the dates on which dividends are payable, any restriction, limitation or condition upon the payment of dividends, whether dividends will be cumulative, and the dates from and after which dividends shall accumulate;

the prices at which, and the terms and conditions on which, the shares of the series may be redeemed, if the shares are redeemable;

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the procedures for any auction or remarketing, if any;

the terms and conditions of a sinking or purchase fund for the purchase or redemption of shares of the series, if such a fund is provided;

any preferential amount payable upon shares of the series in the event of the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of, or upon the distribution of any of our assets; and

any listing of the preferred stock on any securities exchange or market;

preemption rights, if any;

restrictions on transfer, sale or other assignment, if any;

the prices or rates of conversion or exchange at which, and the terms and conditions on which, the shares of the series may be converted or exchanged into other securities, if the shares are convertible or exchangeable; and

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

When we issue shares of preferred stock, the shares will be fully paid and nonassessable and will not have, or be subject to, any preemptive or similar rights.

Delaware General Corporation Law (the "DGCL") provides that the holders of preferred stock will have the right to vote separately as a class on any proposal involving fundamental changes in the rights of holders of that preferred stock. This right is in addition to any voting rights that may be provided for in the applicable certificate of designation.

The issuance of preferred stock could decrease the amount of earnings and assets available for distribution to holders of common stock or adversely affect the rights and powers, including voting rights, of the holders of common stock. In addition, the issuance of preferred stock could have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control of our company, which could depress the market price of our common stock.

Series A Participating Preferred Stock. Of the 10,000,000 shares of preferred stock currently authorized, we have currently designated 150,000 shares as series A participating preferred stock. As of September 26, 2018, no shares of series A participating preferred stock were issued and outstanding.

Voting Rights. The holders of our series A participating preferred stock are entitled to 1,000 votes per share, subject to certain adjustments, for each share held of record on all matters submitted to a vote of the stockholders. Except as otherwise provided, holders of shares of series A participating preferred stock and the holders of shares of common stock shall vote together as one class on all matters submitted to a vote of the stockholders.

Dividends. Subject to preferences that may be applicable to any then outstanding preferred stock, holders of series A participating preferred stock are entitled to receive ratably dividends, if any, as may be declared by our board of directors out of funds legally available therefor, to be paid on a quarterly basis in an amount per share equal to, subject to certain adjustments, 1,000 times the aggregate per share amount of all cash dividends and 1,000 times the aggregate per share amount of all non-cash dividends or other distributions other than a dividend payable in shares of common stock or a subdivision of the outstanding shares of common stock. We will not declare any dividend on, make any distribution on or redeem or purchase or otherwise acquire for consideration any shares of common stock after the first issuance of a share or fraction of a share of series A participating preferred stock unless we concurrently declare a dividend on the series A participating preferred stock. When dividends payable to holders of series A participating preferred stock are in arrears, we will not take certain actions until such time as all accrued and unpaid dividends and distributions on shares of series A participating preferred stock are paid in full. We have not declared any dividends and have no plans to do so.

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Other Rights. Upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, no distribution shall be made to the holders of shares ranking junior to the series A participating preferred stock unless the holders of series A participating preferred stock have received an amount equal to the accrued and unpaid dividends and distributions, whether or not declared, to the date of such payment plus an amount equal to the greater of (i) \$1,000 per share, or an adjusted amount if we do not have sufficient assets, and (ii) 1,000 times the aggregate per share amount to be distributed to the holders of common stock, subject to certain adjustments. Upon a consolidation, merger, combination or other transaction in which shares of our common stock are exchanged for or changed into other stock or securities, cash and/or any other property, each share of series A participating preferred stock shall be exchanged or changed in an amount equal to 1,000 times the aggregate amount of stock, securities, cash and/or any other property into which or for which each share of common stock is changed or exchanged, subject to certain adjustments. Holders of series A participating preferred stock have no redemption rights. All outstanding shares of series A participating preferred stock, when issued, will be fully paid and nonassessable.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONCERNING OUR CAPITAL STOCK

Anti-Takeover Effects of Our Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws

Our certificate of incorporation and by-laws include a number of provisions that may have the effect of encouraging persons considering unsolicited tender offers or other unilateral takeover proposals to negotiate with our board of directors rather than pursue non-negotiated takeover attempts. These provisions:

authorize the issuance of blank check preferred stock without any need for action by stockholders;

provide for a classified board of directors with staggered terms;

require supermajority stockholder voting to effect certain amendments to our certificate of incorporation and by-laws;

eliminate the ability of stockholders to call special meetings of stockholders;

prohibit stockholder action by written consent; and

establish advance notice requirements for nominations for election to the board of directors or for proposing matters that can be acted on by stockholders at stockholder meetings. These provisions could discourage, delay or prevent certain types of transactions involving an actual or potential change in control of us, including transactions in which stockholders might otherwise receive a premium for their shares over current market prices.

Anti-Takeover Effects of Provisions of Delaware Law

We are subject to the provisions of Section 203 of the DGCL. In general, the statute prohibits a publicly held Delaware corporation from engaging in a business combination with an interested stockholder for a period of three years following the date that person became an interested stockholder, unless the business combination was approved in a prescribed manner. A business combination includes a merger, asset sale or other transaction resulting in a financial benefit to an interested stockholder. An interested stockholder is a person who, together with affiliates and associates, owns, or, within the three years prior to the determination of interested stockholder status, owned, 15% or more of our outstanding voting stock.

Section 203 of the DGCL makes it more difficult for an interested stockholder to effect various business combinations with a corporation for a three-year period. This statute could prohibit or delay mergers or other takeover or change in control attempts not approved in advance by our board of directors, and as a result could discourage attempts to acquire us, which could depress the market price of our common stock.

Limitation of Liability and Indemnification

To the fullest extent permitted by the Delaware law, our certificate of incorporation provides that directors shall not be personally liable to us or any of our stockholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director. However, this provision does not eliminate the duty of care, and in appropriate circumstances, equitable remedies such as injunctive or other forms of nonmonetary relief that will remain available under Delaware law. In addition, each director will continue to be subject to liability for (i) breach of the directors duty of loyalty to us or our stockholders, (ii) acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, (iii) violating Section 174 of the DGCL or (iv) any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit. The provision also does not affect a director's responsibilities under any other law, such as the federal securities laws or state or federal environmental laws.

Our bylaws provide that we shall, to the maximum extent and in the manner permitted by the Delaware law, indemnify each of our directors and officers against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines,

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settlements and other amounts actually and reasonably incurred in connection with any proceeding, arising by reason of the fact that such person is or was an agent of our company. Our bylaws also provide that we shall have the power to, to the maximum extent and in the manner permitted by the Delaware law, indemnify each of our employees and agents against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines, settlements and other amounts actually and reasonably incurred in connection with any proceeding, arising by reason of the fact that such person is or was an agent of our company. Our bylaws provide that expenses incurred in defending any such action or proceeding shall be paid in advance of the final disposition of such action or proceeding upon the receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the indemnified party to repay such amount if it shall be ultimately determined that the indemnified party is not entitled to be indemnified as authorized by our bylaws. The indemnification provided by our bylaws shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification may have been entitled under any bylaw, agreement, vote of shareholders or disinterested directors or otherwise, to the extent that such additional rights to indemnification are authorized in our certificate of incorporation.

We also maintain liability insurance for our officers and directors and have entered into indemnification agreements with them.

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DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following description, together with the additional information we include in any applicable prospectus supplements, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the debt securities that we may offer under this prospectus. While the terms we have summarized below will apply generally to any future debt securities we may offer under this prospectus, we will describe the particular terms of any debt securities that we may offer in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. The terms of any debt securities we offer under a prospectus supplement may differ from the terms we describe below.

The following summary description, together with the additional information we may include in any applicable prospectus supplements does not purport to be complete and is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to, the form of indenture filed as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, as it may be supplemented, amended or modified from time to time, as well as the notes and supplemental agreements relating to each series of debt securities that will be incorporated by reference as exhibits to the registration statement that includes this prospectus or as exhibits to a current report on Form 8-K if we offer debt securities.

We will issue senior debt securities under one or more senior indentures that we will enter into with a trustee named in the relevant senior indenture. We will issue subordinated debt securities under one or more subordinated indentures that we will enter into with a trustee named in the relevant subordinated indenture. We have filed a form of indenture as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. We use the terms *indenture* and *indentures* in this prospectus to refer to both the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture.

The indentures will be qualified under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended. We use the term *debenture trustee* to refer to either the trustee under the senior indenture or the trustee under the subordinated indenture, as applicable.

The following summaries of material provisions of the senior debt securities, the subordinated debt securities and the indentures are subject to, and qualified in their entirety by reference to, all the provisions of the indenture applicable to a particular series of debt securities. We urge you to read the applicable prospectus supplements related to the debt securities that we sell under this prospectus, as well as the indenture that would contain the terms of the debt securities. Except as we may otherwise indicate, the terms of the senior indenture and the subordinated indenture would be identical.

General

We will describe in each prospectus supplement the following terms relating to a series of debt securities:

the title;

the principal amount being offered, and if a series, the total amount authorized and the total amount outstanding;

any limit on the amount that may be issued;

whether or not we will issue the series of debt securities in global form, the terms and who the depositary will be;

the maturity date;

whether and under what circumstances, if any, we will pay additional amounts on any debt securities held by a person who is not a U.S. person for tax purposes, and whether we can redeem the debt securities if we have to pay such additional amounts;

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the annual interest rate, which may be fixed or variable, or the method for determining the rate and the date interest will begin to accrue, the dates interest will be payable and the regular record dates for interest payment dates or the method for determining such dates;

whether or not the debt securities will be secured or unsecured, and the terms of any secured debt;

the terms of the subordination of any series of subordinated debt;

the place where payments will be payable;

restrictions on transfer, sale or other assignment, if any;

our right, if any, to defer payment of interest and the maximum length of any such deferral period;

the date, if any, after which, and the price at which, we may, at our option, redeem the series of debt securities pursuant to any optional or provisional redemption provisions and the terms of those redemptions provisions;

the date, if any, on which, and the price at which we are obligated, pursuant to any mandatory sinking fund or analogous fund provisions or otherwise, to redeem, or at the holder's option to purchase, the series of debt securities and the currency or currency unit in which the debt securities are payable;

whether the indenture will restrict our ability and/or the ability of our subsidiaries to:

incur additional indebtedness;

issue additional securities;

create liens;

pay dividends and make distributions in respect of our capital stock and the capital stock of our subsidiaries;

redeem capital stock;

place restrictions on our subsidiaries' ability to pay dividends, make distributions or transfer assets;

make investments or other restricted payments;

sell or otherwise dispose of assets;

enter into sale-leaseback transactions;

engage in transactions with stockholders and affiliates;

issue or sell stock of our subsidiaries; or

effect a consolidation or merger;

whether the indenture will require us to maintain any interest coverage, fixed charge, cash flow-based, asset-based or other financial ratios;

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

information describing any book-entry features;

provisions for a sinking fund purchase or other analogous fund, if any;

whether the debt securities are to be offered at a price such that they will be deemed to be offered at an original issue discount as defined in paragraph (a) of Section 1273 of the Internal Revenue Code;

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

any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of, or restrictions on, the debt securities, including any additional events of default or covenants provided with respect to the debt securities, and any terms that may be required by us or advisable under applicable laws or regulations.

Conversion or Exchange Rights

We will set forth in the prospectus supplement the terms on which a series of debt securities may be convertible into or exchangeable for our common stock or our other securities. We will include provisions as to whether conversion or exchange is mandatory, at the option of the holder or at our option. We may include provisions pursuant to which the number of shares of our common stock or our other securities that the holders of the series of debt securities receive would be subject to adjustment.

Consolidation, Merger or Sale

Any successor to or acquiror of the indentures must assume all of our obligations under the indentures or the debt securities, as appropriate. If the debt securities are convertible for our other securities or securities of other entities, the person with whom we consolidate or merge or to whom we sell all of our property must make provisions for the conversion of the debt securities into securities that the holders of the debt securities would have received if they had converted the debt securities before the consolidation, merger or sale.

Events of Default Under the Indenture

Unless otherwise provided in any applicable prospectus supplement, documents incorporated by reference or free writing prospectus, the following will be events of default under the indenture with respect to each series of debt securities issued thereunder:

if we fail to pay interest when due and payable and our failure continues for 30 days, or within such other time period as may be specified in the applicable indenture, and the time for payment has not been extended or deferred;

if we fail to pay the principal, premium or sinking fund payment, if any, when due and payable and the time for payment has not been extended or delayed;

if specified events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization occur; and

if we fail to observe or perform any other covenant contained in the debt securities or the indentures, other than a covenant specifically relating to another series of debt securities, and our failure continues for 60 days, or within such other time period as may be specified in the applicable indenture, after we receive notice from the debenture trustee or holders of at least a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of an affected series, or such other percentage as may be specified in the

applicable indenture, in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the applicable series.

If an event of default with respect to debt securities of any series occurs and is continuing, other than an event of default specified in the last bullet point above, the debenture trustee or the holders of at least 25%, or such other percentage as may be specified in the applicable indenture, in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series, by notice to us in writing, and to the debenture trustee if notice is given by such holders, may declare the unpaid principal of, premium, if any, and accrued interest, if any, due and payable immediately. If an event of default specified in the last bullet point above occurs with respect to us, the principal amount of and accrued interest, if any, of each issue of debt securities then outstanding shall be due and payable without any notice or other action on the part of the debenture trustee or any holder.

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The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of an affected series may waive any default or event of default with respect to the series and its consequences, except defaults or events of default regarding payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest, unless we have cured the default or event of default in accordance with the indenture. Any waiver shall cure the default or event of default.

Subject to the terms of the indentures, if an event of default under an indenture shall occur and be continuing, the debenture trustee will be under no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under such indenture at the request or direction of any of the holders of the applicable series of debt securities, unless such holders have offered the debenture trustee reasonable indemnity. 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 debenture trustee, or exercising any trust or power conferred on the debenture trustee, with respect to the debt securities of that series, provided that:

the direction so given by the holder is not in conflict with any law or the applicable indenture; and

subject to its duties under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, the debenture trustee need not take any action that might involve it in personal liability or might be unduly prejudicial to the holders not involved in the proceeding.

A holder of the debt securities of any series will only have the right to institute a proceeding under the indentures or to appoint a receiver or trustee, or to seek other remedies if:

the holder has given written notice to the debenture trustee of a continuing event of default with respect to that series;

the holders of at least 25% (or, in the case of a default of the type described under subsection (d), above, a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of an affected series), or such other percentage as may be specified in the applicable indenture, in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have made written request, and such holders have offered reasonable indemnity to the debenture trustee to institute the proceeding as trustee; and

the debenture trustee does not institute the proceeding, and does not receive from the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series other conflicting directions within 60 days, or within such other time period as may be specified in the applicable indenture, after the notice, request and offer of indemnity.

These limitations do not apply to a suit instituted by a holder of debt securities if we default in the payment of the principal, premium, if any, or interest on, the debt securities.

We will periodically file statements with the debenture trustee regarding our compliance with specified covenants in the indentures.

Modification of Indenture; Waiver

We and the debenture trustee may change an indenture without the consent of any holders with respect to specific matters:

to evidence the succession of another corporation to us and the assumption by any such successor of our covenants in such indenture and in the debt securities issued thereunder;

to add to our covenants or to surrender any right or power conferred on us pursuant to the indenture;

to establish the form and terms of debt securities issued thereunder;

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to evidence and provide for a successor trustee under such indenture with respect to one or more series of debt securities issued thereunder or to provide for or facilitate the administration of the trusts under such indenture by more than one trustee;

to cure any ambiguity, to correct or supplement any provision in the indenture that may be defective or inconsistent with any other provision of the indenture or to make any other provisions with respect to matters or questions arising under such indenture; provided that no such action adversely affects the interests of the holders of any series of debt securities issued thereunder in any material respect;

to add to, delete from or revise the conditions, limitations and restrictions on the authorized amount, terms or purposes of issue, authentication and delivery of securities under the indenture;

to add any additional events of default with respect to all or any series of debt securities;

to supplement any of the provisions of the indenture as may be necessary to permit or facilitate the defeasance and discharge of any series of debt securities, provided that such action does not adversely affect the interests of any holder of an outstanding debt security of such series or any other security in any material respect;

to make provisions with respect to the conversion or exchange rights of holders of debt securities of any series;

to pledge to the trustee as security for the debt securities of any series any property or assets;

to add guarantees in respect of the debt securities of one or more series;

to change or eliminate any of the provisions of the indenture, provided that any such change or elimination becomes effective only when there is no security of any series outstanding created prior to the execution of such supplemental indenture which is entitled to the benefit of such provision;

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

to qualify such indenture under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended;

with respect to the debt securities of any series, to conform the text of the indenture or the debt securities of such series to any provision of the description thereof in our offering memorandum or prospectus relating to the initial offering of such debt securities, to the extent that such provision, in

our good faith judgment, was intended to be a verbatim recitation of a provision of the indenture or such securities; or

to make any other change that does not adversely affect the rights of holders of any series of debt securities issued thereunder in any material respect.

In addition, under the indentures, the rights of holders of a series of debt securities may be changed by us and the debenture trustee with the written consent of the holders of at least a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series that is affected. However, we and the debenture trustee may only make the following changes with the consent of each holder of any outstanding debt securities affected:

extending the fixed maturity of the series of debt securities;

reducing the principal amount, reducing the rate of or extending the time of payment of interest, or reducing any premium payable upon the redemption of any debt securities;

reducing the percentage of debt securities, the holders of which are required to consent to any amendment, supplement, modification or waiver; or

make any change that adversely affects the right to convert or exchange any security into or for common stock or other securities, cash or other property in accordance with the terms of the applicable debt security.

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Each indenture provides that we can elect to be discharged from our obligations with respect to one or more series of debt securities, except for specified obligations, including obligations to:

register the transfer or exchange of debt securities of the series;

replace stolen, lost or mutilated debt securities of the series;

maintain paying agencies;

hold monies for payment in trust;

recover excess money held by the debenture trustee;

compensate and indemnify the debenture trustee; and

appoint any successor trustee.

In order to exercise our rights to be discharged, we must deposit with the debenture trustee money or government obligations sufficient to pay all the principal of, any premium, if any, and interest on, the debt securities of the series on the dates payments are due.

Form, Exchange and Transfer

We will issue the debt securities of each series only in fully registered form without coupons and, unless we otherwise specify in the applicable prospectus supplement, in denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof. The indentures provide that we may issue debt securities of a series in temporary or permanent global form and as book-entry securities that will be deposited with, or on behalf of, The Depository Trust Company or another depository named by us and identified in a prospectus supplement with respect to that series. See **Legal Ownership of Securities** for a further description of the terms relating to any book-entry securities.

At the option of the holder, subject to the terms of the indentures and the limitations applicable to global securities described in the applicable prospectus supplement, the holder of the debt securities of any series can exchange the debt securities for other debt securities of the same series, in any authorized denomination and of like tenor and aggregate principal amount.

Subject to the terms of the indentures and the limitations applicable to global securities set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the debt securities may present the debt securities for exchange or for registration of transfer, duly endorsed or with the form of transfer endorsed thereon duly executed if so required by us or the security registrar, at the office of the security registrar or at the office of any transfer agent designated by us for this purpose. Unless otherwise provided in the debt securities that the holder presents for transfer or exchange, we will make no service charge for any registration of transfer or exchange, but we may require payment of any taxes or other

governmental charges.

We will name in the applicable prospectus supplement the security registrar, and any transfer agent in addition to the security registrar, that we initially designate for any debt securities. We may at any time designate additional transfer agents or rescind the designation of any transfer agent or approve a change in the office through which any transfer agent acts, except that we will be required to maintain a transfer agent in each place of payment for the debt securities of each series.

If we elect to redeem the debt securities of any series, we will not be required to:

issue, register the transfer of, or exchange any debt securities of that series during a period beginning at the opening of business 15 days, or within such other time period as may be specified in the applicable indenture, before the day of mailing of a notice of redemption of any debt securities that may be selected for redemption and ending at the close of business on the day of the mailing; or

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register the transfer of or exchange any debt securities so selected for redemption, in whole or in part, except the unredeemed portion of any debt securities we are redeeming in part.

Repurchases on the Open Market

We, or an affiliate of ours, may at any time or from time to time repurchase any debt security in the open market or otherwise. Such debt securities may, at our option (or our affiliate's option), be held, resold or surrendered to the trustee for cancellation.

Information Concerning the Debenture Trustee

The debenture trustee, other than during the occurrence and continuance of an event of default under an indenture, undertakes to perform only those duties as are specifically set forth in the applicable indenture. Upon an event of default under an indenture, the debenture trustee must use the same degree of care as a prudent person would exercise or use in the conduct of his or her own affairs. Subject to this provision, the debenture trustee is under no obligation to exercise any of the powers given him or her by the indentures at the request of any holder of debt securities unless he or she is offered reasonable security and indemnity against the costs, expenses and liabilities that he or she might incur.

Payment and Paying Agents

Unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will make payment of the interest on any debt securities on any interest payment date to the person in whose name the debt securities, or one or more predecessor securities, are registered at the close of business on the regular record date for the interest.

We will pay principal of and any premium and interest on the debt securities of a particular series at the office of the paying agents designated by us, except that unless we otherwise indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will make interest payments by check that we will mail to the holder or by wire transfer to certain holders. Unless we otherwise indicate in a prospectus supplement, we will designate the corporate trust office of the debenture trustee in the City of New York as our sole paying agent for payments with respect to debt securities of each series. We will name in the applicable prospectus supplement any other paying agents that we initially designate for the debt securities of a particular series. We will maintain a paying agent in each place of payment for the debt securities of a particular series.

All money we pay to a paying agent or the debenture trustee for the payment of the principal of or any premium or interest on any debt securities that remains unclaimed at the end of two years after such principal, premium or interest has become due and payable will be repaid to us, and the holder of the debt security thereafter may look only to us for payment thereof.

Governing Law

The indentures and the debt securities will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York, except to the extent that the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 is applicable.

Subordination of Subordinated Debt Securities

The subordinated debt securities will be unsecured and will be subordinate and junior in priority of payment to certain of our other indebtedness to the extent described in a prospectus supplement. The subordinated indenture does not limit the amount of subordinated debt securities that we may issue. It also does not limit us from issuing any other

secured or unsecured debt.

Outstanding Debt Securities

We have no outstanding registered debt securities.

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DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

The following description, together with the additional information we may include in any applicable prospectus supplements, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the warrants that we may offer under this prospectus and the related warrant agreements and warrant certificates. While the terms summarized below will apply generally to any warrants that we may offer, we will describe the particular terms of any series of warrants in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. The terms of any warrants offered under that prospectus supplement may differ from the terms described below.

The following summary description, together with the additional information we may include in any applicable prospectus supplements does not purport to be complete and is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to, the form of warrant agreement and form of warrant certificate relating to each series of warrants that will be incorporated by reference as an exhibit to the registration statement that includes this prospectus or as an exhibit to a current report on Form 8-K if we offer warrants.

General

We will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement the terms of the series of warrants, including:

the offering price and aggregate number of warrants offered;

the currency for which the warrants may be purchased;

if applicable, the designation and terms of the securities with which the warrants are issued and the number of warrants issued with each such security or each principal amount of such security;

if applicable, the date on and after which the warrants and the related securities will be separately transferable;

in the case of warrants to purchase common stock, the number of shares of common stock purchasable upon the exercise of one warrant and the price at which these shares may be purchased upon such exercise;

the effect of any merger, consolidation, sale or other disposition of our business on the warrant agreements and the warrants;

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

any provisions for changes to or adjustments in the exercise price or number of securities issuable upon exercise of the warrants;

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

the manner in which the warrant agreements and warrants may be modified;

federal income tax consequences of holding or exercising the warrants;

the terms of the securities issuable upon exercise of the warrants; and

any other specific terms, preferences, rights or limitations of or restrictions on the warrants.

Before exercising their warrants, holders of warrants will not have any of the rights of holders of the securities purchasable upon such exercise, including the right to receive dividends, if any, or payments upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up or to exercise voting rights, if any.

Exercise of Warrants

Each warrant will entitle the holder to purchase the securities that we specify in the applicable prospectus supplement at the exercise price that we describe in the applicable prospectus supplement. Unless we otherwise

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specify in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the warrants may exercise the warrants at any time up to 5:00 P.M. Eastern 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.

Holders of the warrants may exercise the warrants by delivering the warrant certificate representing the warrants to be exercised together with specified information, and paying the required amount to the warrant agent in immediately available funds, as provided in the applicable prospectus supplement. We will set forth on the reverse side of the warrant certificate and in the applicable prospectus supplement the information that the holder of the warrant will be required to deliver to the warrant agent.

Upon receipt of the required payment and the warrant certificate properly completed and duly executed at the corporate trust office of the warrant agent or any other office indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will issue and deliver the securities purchasable upon such exercise. If fewer than all of the warrants represented by the warrant certificate are exercised, then we will issue a new warrant certificate for the remaining amount of warrants. If we so indicate in the applicable prospectus supplement, holders of the warrants may surrender securities as all or part of the exercise price for warrants.

Enforceability of Rights by Holders of Warrants

Any warrant agent will act solely as our agent under the applicable warrant agreement and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust with any holder of any warrant. A single bank or trust company may act as warrant agent for more than one issue of warrants. A warrant agent will have no duty or responsibility in case of any default by us under the applicable warrant agreement or warrant, including any duty or responsibility to initiate any proceedings at law or otherwise, or to make any demand upon us. Any holder of a warrant may, without the consent of the related warrant agent or the holder of any other warrant, enforce by appropriate legal action its right to exercise, and receive the securities purchasable upon exercise of, its warrants.

Outstanding Warrants

We have no outstanding warrants.

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DESCRIPTION OF UNITS

The following description, together with the additional information we may include in any applicable prospectus supplements, summarizes the material terms and provisions of the units that we may offer under this prospectus. While the terms we have summarized below will apply generally to any units that we may offer under this prospectus, we will describe the particular terms of any series of units in more detail in the applicable prospectus supplement. The terms of any units offered under a prospectus supplement may differ from the terms described below.

The following summary description, together with the additional information we may include in any applicable prospectus supplements does not purport to be complete and is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to, the form of unit agreement and form of unit certificate relating to each series of units that will be incorporated by reference as an exhibit to the registration statement that includes this prospectus or as an exhibit to a current report on Form 8-K if we offer units.

General

We may issue units comprised of common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, debt obligations of third parties, including U.S. treasury securities, warrants or any combination thereof. Each unit will be issued so that the holder of the unit is also the holder of each security included in the unit. Thus, the holder of a unit will have the rights and obligations of a holder of each included security. The unit agreement under which a unit is issued may provide that the securities included in the unit may not be held or transferred separately, at any time or at any time before a specified date.

We will describe in the applicable prospectus supplement the terms of the series of units, including:

the designation and terms of the units and of the securities comprising the units, including whether and under what circumstances those securities may be held or transferred separately;

any provisions of the governing unit agreement that differ from those described below; and

any provisions for the issuance, payment, settlement, transfer or exchange of the units or of the securities comprising the units.

The provisions described in this section, as well as those described under **Description of Capital Stock**, **Description of Debt Securities** and **Description of Warrants** will apply to each unit and to any common stock, preferred stock, debt security or warrants included in each unit, respectively.

Issuance in Series

We may issue units in such amounts and in such numerous distinct series as we determine.

Enforceability of Rights by Holders of Units

Any unit agent will act solely as our agent under the applicable unit agreement and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency or trust with any holder of any unit. A single bank or trust company may act as unit agent for

more than one series of units. A unit agent will have no duty or responsibility in case of any default by us under the applicable unit agreement or unit, including any duty or responsibility to initiate any proceedings at law or otherwise, or to make any demand upon us. Any holder of a unit may, without the consent of the related unit agent or the holder of any other unit, enforce by appropriate legal action its rights as holder under any security included in the unit.

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Title

We, any unit agents and any of their agents may treat the registered holder of any unit certificate as an absolute owner of the units evidenced by that certificate for any purpose and as the person entitled to exercise the rights attaching to the units so requested, despite any notice to the contrary. See Legal Ownership of Securities below.

Outstanding Units

We have no outstanding units.

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LEGAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

We can issue securities in registered form or in the form of one or more global securities. We describe global securities in greater detail below. We refer to those persons who have securities registered in their own names on the books that we or any applicable trustee, depositary or warrant agent maintain for this purpose as the holders of those securities. These persons are the legal holders of the securities. We refer to those persons who, indirectly through others, own beneficial interests in securities that are not registered in their own names, as indirect holders of those securities. As we discuss below, indirect holders are not legal holders, and investors in securities issued in book-entry form or in street name will be indirect holders.

Book-Entry Holders

We may issue securities in book-entry form only, as we will specify in the applicable prospectus supplement. This means securities may be represented by one or more global securities registered in the name of a financial institution that holds them as depositary on behalf of other financial institutions that participate in the depositary's book-entry system. These participating institutions, which are referred to as participants, in turn, hold beneficial interests in the securities on behalf of themselves or their customers.

Only the person in whose name a security is registered is recognized as the holder of that security. Securities issued in global form will be registered in the name of the depositary or its participants. Consequently, for securities issued in global form, we will recognize only the depositary as the holder of the securities, and we will make all payments on the securities to the depositary. The depositary passes along the payments it receives to its participants, which in turn pass the payments along to their customers who are the beneficial owners. The depositary and its participants do so under agreements they have made with one another or with their customers; they are not obligated to do so under the terms of the securities.

As a result, investors in a book-entry security will not own securities directly. Instead, they will own beneficial interests in a global security, through a bank, broker or other financial institution that participates in the depositary's book-entry system or holds an interest through a participant. As long as the securities are issued in global form, investors will be indirect holders, and not holders, of the securities.

Street Name Holders

We may terminate a global security or issue securities in non-global form. In these cases, investors may choose to hold their securities in their own names or in street name. Securities held by an investor in street name would be registered in the name of a bank, broker or other financial institution that the investor chooses, and the investor would hold only a beneficial interest in those securities through an account he or she maintains at that institution.

For securities held in street name, we will recognize only the intermediary banks, brokers and other financial institutions in whose names the securities are registered as the holders of those securities, and we will make all payments on those securities to them. These institutions pass along the payments they receive to their customers who are the beneficial owners, but only because they agree to do so in their customer agreements or because they are legally required to do so. Investors who hold securities in street name will be indirect holders, not holders, of those securities.

Legal Holders

Our obligations, as well as the obligations of any applicable trustee and of any third parties employed by us or a trustee, run only to the legal holders of the securities. We do not have obligations to investors who hold beneficial interests in global securities, in street name or by any other indirect means. This will be the case whether an investor chooses to be an indirect holder of a security or has no choice because we are issuing the securities only in global form.

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For example, once we make a payment or give a notice to the holder, we have no further responsibility for the payment or notice even if that holder is required, under agreements with depositary participants or customers or by law, to pass it along to the indirect holders but does not do so. Similarly, we may want to obtain the approval of the holders to amend an indenture, to relieve us of the consequences of a default or of our obligation to comply with a particular provision of the indenture or for other purposes. In such an event, we would seek approval only from the holders, and not the indirect holders, of the securities. Whether and how the holders contact the indirect holders is up to the holders.

Special Considerations for Indirect Holders

If you hold securities through a bank, broker or other financial institution, either in book-entry form or in street name, you should check with your own institution to find out:

how it handles securities payments and notices;

whether it imposes fees or charges;

how it would handle a request for the holders' consent, if ever required;

whether and how you can instruct it to send you securities registered in your own name so you can be a holder, if that is permitted in the future;

how it would exercise rights under the securities if there were a default or other event triggering the need for holders to act to protect their interests; and

if the securities are in book-entry form, how the depositary's rules and procedures will affect these matters.

Global Securities

A global security is a security that represents one or any other number of individual securities held by a depositary. Generally, all securities represented by the same global securities will have the same terms.

Each security issued in book-entry form will be represented by a global security that we deposit with and register in the name of a financial institution or its nominee that we select. The financial institution that we select for this purpose is called the depositary. Unless we specify otherwise in the applicable prospectus supplement, The Depository Trust Company, New York, New York, known as DTC, will be the depositary for all securities issued in book-entry form.

A global security may not be transferred to or registered in the name of anyone other than the depositary, its nominee or a successor depositary, unless special termination situations arise. We describe those situations below under "Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be Terminated." As a result of these arrangements, the depositary, or its nominee, will be the sole registered owner and holder of all securities represented by a global security, and investors

will be permitted to own only beneficial interests in a global security. Beneficial interests must be held by means of an account with a broker, bank or other financial institution that in turn has an account with the depositary or with another institution that does. Thus, an investor whose security is represented by a global security will not be a holder of the security, but only an indirect holder of a beneficial interest in the global security.

If the prospectus supplement for a particular security indicates that the security will be issued in global form only, then the security will be represented by a global security at all times unless and until the global security is terminated. If termination occurs, we may issue the securities through another book-entry clearing system or decide that the securities may no longer be held through any book-entry clearing system.

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Special Considerations for Global Securities

As an indirect holder, an investor's rights relating to a global security will be governed by the account rules of the investor's financial institution and of the depositary, as well as general laws relating to securities transfers. We do not recognize an indirect holder as a holder of securities and instead deal only with the depositary that holds the global security.

If securities are issued only in the form of a global security, an investor should be aware of the following:

An investor cannot cause the securities to be registered in his or her name, and cannot obtain non-global certificates for his or her interest in the securities, except in the special situations we describe below;

An investor will be an indirect holder and must look to his or her own bank or broker for payments on the securities and protection of his or her legal rights relating to the securities, as we describe above;

An investor may not be able to sell interests in the securities to some insurance companies and to other institutions that are required by law to own their securities in non-book-entry form;

An investor may not be able to pledge his or her interest in a global security in circumstances where certificates representing the securities must be delivered to the lender or other beneficiary of the pledge in order for the pledge to be effective;

The depositary's policies, which may change from time to time, will govern payments, transfers, exchanges and other matters relating to an investor's interest in a global security. We and any applicable trustee have no responsibility for any aspect of the depositary's actions or for its records of ownership interests in a global security. We and the trustee also do not supervise the depositary in any way;

The depositary may, and we understand that DTC will, require that those who purchase and sell interests in a global security within its book-entry system use immediately available funds, and your broker or bank may require you to do so as well;

Financial institutions that participate in the depositary's book-entry system, and through which an investor holds its interest in a global security, may also have their own policies affecting payments, notices and other matters relating to the securities; and

There may be more than one financial intermediary in the chain of ownership for an investor. We do not monitor and are not responsible for the actions of any of those intermediaries.

Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be Terminated

In a few special situations described below, the global security will terminate and interests in it will be exchanged for physical certificates representing those interests. After that exchange, the choice of whether to hold securities directly or in street name will be up to the investor. Investors must consult their own banks or brokers to find out how to have their interests in securities transferred to their own name, so that they will be direct holders. We have described the rights of holders and street name investors above.

The global security will terminate when the following special situations occur:

if the depositary notifies us that it is unwilling, unable or no longer qualified to continue as depositary for that global security and we do not appoint another institution to act as depositary within 90 days;

if we notify any applicable trustee that we wish to terminate that global security; or

if an event of default has occurred with regard to securities represented by that global security and has not been cured or waived.

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The prospectus supplement may also list additional situations for terminating a global security that would apply only to the particular series of securities covered by the prospectus supplement. When a global security terminates, the depositary, and not we or any applicable trustee, is responsible for deciding the names of the institutions that will be the initial direct holders.

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PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities being offered by this prospectus separately or together through any of the following methods:

to or through one or more underwriters or dealers in a public offering and sale by them;

directly to investors;

through agents;

through block trades in which the broker or dealer engaged to handle the block trade will attempt to sell the securities as agent, but may position and resell a portion of the block as principal to facilitate the transaction;

through any combination of these methods of sale; or

in any manner, as provided in the applicable prospectus supplement.

We may distribute securities 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 times of sale;

at prices related to such prevailing market prices; or

at negotiated prices.

We will describe the method of distribution of the securities in the applicable prospectus supplement. We may also determine the price or other terms of the securities offered under this prospectus by use of an electronic auction. We will describe how any auction will determine the price or any other terms, how potential investors may participate in the auction and the nature of the obligations of the underwriter, dealer or agent in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, each class or series of securities will be a new issue with no established trading market, other than our common stock, which is traded on the Nasdaq Global Market. We may elect to list any other class or series of securities on any exchange, but we are not obligated to do so. It is

possible that one or more underwriters may make a market in a class or series of securities, but the underwriters will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. We cannot give any assurance as to the liquidity of the trading market for any of the securities.

Underwriters, dealers or agents may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from us or our purchasers (as their agents in connection with the sale of the securities). In addition, underwriters 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 whom they act as agent. These underwriters, dealers or agents may be considered to be underwriters under the Securities Act. As a result, discounts, commissions, or profits on resale received by the underwriters, dealers or agents may be treated as underwriting discounts and commissions. The prospectus supplement will identify any such underwriter, dealer or agent, and describe any compensation received by them from us. Only underwriters named in the prospectus supplement are underwriters of the securities offered by the prospectus supplement. Any initial public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers may be changed from time to time.

We may sell the securities directly or through agents we designate from time to time. We will name any agent involved in the offering and sale of securities and we will describe any commissions we will pay the agent in the prospectus supplement. Unless the prospectus supplement states otherwise, our agent will act on a best-efforts basis for the period of its appointment.

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We may authorize agents or underwriters to solicit offers by certain types of institutional investors to purchase securities from us at the public offering price set forth in the prospectus supplement pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. We will describe the conditions to these contracts and the commissions we must pay for solicitation of these contracts in the prospectus supplement.

Underwriters, dealers and agents may be entitled to indemnification by us against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribution with respect to payments made by the underwriters, dealers or agents, under agreements between us and the underwriters, dealers and agents.

Any person participating in the distribution of common stock registered under the registration statement that includes this prospectus will be subject to applicable provisions of the Exchange Act, and the applicable SEC rules and regulations, including, among others, Regulation M, which may limit the timing of purchases and sales of any of our common stock by any such person. Furthermore, Regulation M may restrict the ability of any person engaged in the distribution of our common stock to engage in market-making activities with respect to our common stock. These restrictions may affect the marketability of our common stock and the ability of any person or entity to engage in market-making activities with respect to our common stock.

We may grant underwriters who participate in the distribution of the securities an option to purchase additional securities to cover overallotments, if any, in connection with the distribution. Any underwriter may engage in overallotment, stabilizing transactions, short-covering transactions and penalty bids in accordance with Regulation M that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the price of the offered securities. Overallotment involves sales in excess of the offering size, which create a short position. Stabilizing transactions permit bids to purchase the underlying security so long as the stabilizing bids do not exceed a specified maximum. Short covering transactions involve purchases of the common stock in the open market after the distribution is completed to cover short positions. Penalty bids permit the underwriters to reclaim a selling concession from a dealer when the common stock originally sold by the dealer is purchased in a covering transaction to cover short positions. Those activities may cause the price of the common stock to be higher than it would otherwise be. If commenced, the underwriters may discontinue any of the activities at any time. If any such activities will occur, they will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Underwriters or agents and their associates may be customers of, engage in transactions with or perform services for us in the ordinary course of business and any such relationships will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

If more than 10% of the net proceeds of any offering of securities made under this prospectus will be received by FINRA members participating in the offering or affiliates or associated persons of such FINRA members, the offering will be conducted in accordance with FINRA Conduct Rule 5110(h).

To the extent required, this prospectus may be amended or supplemented from time to time to describe a specific plan of distribution.

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LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the securities being offered by this prospectus will be passed upon by Morrison & Foerster LLP, Palo Alto, California. Additional legal matters may be passed upon for us or any underwriters, dealers or agents, by counsel that we will name in an applicable prospectus supplement.

EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our financial statements and schedule included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2017, and the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2017, as set forth in their reports, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement. Our financial statements and schedule are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP's reports, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We are a reporting company and file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC. You may read and copy these reports, proxy statements and other information at the SEC's public reference rooms at 100 F Street, N.E., Room 1580, Washington, D.C. 20549. You can request copies of these documents by writing to the SEC and paying a fee for the copying cost. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for more information about the operation of the public reference rooms. Our SEC filings are also available at the SEC's website at www.sec.gov and our website at www.durect.com. We have not incorporated by reference into this prospectus the information contained on our website and you should not consider it to be part of this prospectus. In addition, you can read and copy our SEC filings at the office of the National Association of Securities Dealers, Inc. at 1735 K Street, Washington, D.C. 20006.

We have filed a registration statement on Form S-3 with the SEC relating to the securities covered by this prospectus. This prospectus is a part of the registration statement and does not contain all of the information in the registration statement. You may review a copy of the registration statement at the SEC's public reference room in Washington, D.C., as well as through the SEC's Internet site at www.sec.gov.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference the information we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus. In addition, information we file with the SEC in the future will automatically update and supersede information contained in this prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplement.

This prospectus incorporates by reference the documents set forth below that we have previously filed with the SEC:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2017 filed with the SEC on March 8, 2018;

our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2018 and June 30, 2018 filed with the SEC on May 9, 2018 and August 2, 2018, respectively;

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our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on January 30, 2018, February 14, 2018, February 26, 2018, March 5, 2018, March 20, 2018, April 25, 2018, May 9, 2018, June 20, 2018, June 27, 2018, July 30, 2018, August 6, 2018, August 17, 2018, August 30, 2018, September 18, 2018 and September 21, 2018;

our definitive Proxy Statement for our Annual Meeting of Shareholders held on June 19, 2018 filed with the SEC on April 27, 2018 (other than information furnished rather than filed); and

the description of our common stock included in our registration statement on Form 8-A12G/A (File No. 000-31615) filed with the SEC on June 24, 2003, including any amendment or reports filed for the purpose of updating such description.

All filings filed by us pursuant to the Exchange Act after the date of the initial filing of the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and prior to effectiveness of the registration statement shall be deemed to be incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

We also incorporate by reference into this prospectus additional documents that we may file with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, excluding, in each case, information deemed furnished and not filed until we sell all of the securities we are offering. Any statements contained in a previously filed document incorporated by reference into this prospectus is deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent that a statement contained in this prospectus, or in a subsequently filed document also incorporated by reference herein, modifies or supersedes that statement.

We will provide to you at no cost a copy of any and all of the information incorporated by reference into the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. You may make a request for copies of this information in writing or by telephone. Requests should be directed to:

DURECT Corporation

10260 Bubb Road

Cupertino, CA 95014

Attn: Investor Relations

(408) 777-1417

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Up to \$75,000,000

Common Stock

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

October 9, 2018