

cines, vaccines, biologic therapies, and animal health products, which it markets directly and through joint ventures. Operations comprised of four segments: Pharmaceutical, Animal Health, Alliances and Healthcare Services. Top-grossing drugs in 2015:

of common stock; BlackRock, 6.9%; Wellington Mgmt., 6.5%; Vanguard, 6.0% (4/16 proxy). Chairman/President/CEO: Kenneth Frazier. Inc.: NJ. Addr.: 2000 Galloping Hill Road., Kenilworth, NJ 07033. Tel.: 908-740-4000. Internet: www.merck.com

Past ANNUAL RATES Past Est'd '13-'15 5 Yrs. to '19-'21 of change (per sh) 2.5% 3.5% Sales 3.5% 4.5% 'Cash Flow" 6.0% 5.5% Earnings 2.5% 5% 6.0% 1.5% 8.0% 3.0% 2.0% 2.0% 1.0% Dividends Book Value

2625 2704

18766

2533 2585

14085

19203

2514

11760

14918

644

Accts Payable Debt Due

Current Liab.

Cal-	QUARTERLY SALES (\$ mill.)				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2013	10671	11010	11032	11320	44033
2014	10264	10934	10557	10482	42237
2015	9425	9785	10073	10215	39498
2016	9312	9844	10300	10444	39900
2017	9300	9800	10200	10400	39700
Cal-	EARNINGS PER SHARE A				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2013	.85	.84	.92	.88	3.49
2014	.88	.85	.90	.87	3.49
2015	.85	.86	.96	.93	3.59
2016	.89	.93	1.00	.93	3.75
2017	.92	.95	1.05	.98	3.90
Cal-	QUARTERLY DIVIDENDS PAID B=				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2012	.42	.42	.42	.42	1.68
2013	.43	.43	.43	.43	1.72
2014	.44	.44	.44	.44	1.76
2015	.45	.45	.45	.45	1.80
2016	.46	.46	.46	.46	

We have raised our 2016 estimates for **Merck & Co.** The New Jersey-based drugmaker has outperformed earnings expectations in each of the past two quarters, driven by tighter cost control and faster development of new products. As a result, we have added a nickel to our full-year earnings call (now \$3.75 a share). Management recently narrowed its 2016 guidance to \$3.67-\$3.77, from \$3.65-\$3.77

Keytruda and Zepatier highlight the new product cycle. With generic competition mounting on a few of its older franchises (Remicade, Nasonex), Merck will be relying on its newer assets to step up and fill the void. Immuno-oncology standout Keytruda is widely viewed as a future blockbuster, a thesis that was reinforced by the near tripling of sales last quarter. Current projections suggest that the immunotherapy market could rise to \$30 billion by 2020. Another drug to keep an eye on is Zepatier, which was approved in January as a treatment for Hepatitis-C. Zepatier generated sales of \$112 million in the June period, more than doubling its output from the first quarter (\$50 million). Much like immuno-oncology, Hep-C

represents a significant commercial opportunity for drugmakers. Current estimates suggest Zepatier could pull in \$2 billion in annual sales by 2020.

The shares have rebounded strongly off their early-February lows. Merck's stock is up 13% since our July report and 33% since February 4th. While easing macroeconomic pressures have helped to shore up sentiment, back-to-back earnings beats and positive news related Keytruda have also been key catalysts.

The stock's Timeliness rank has been downgraded to 3 (Average). As a result, shares of MRK are now pegged to mirror the broader market averages in the year ahead. Although we are encouraged with the company's prospects over this time, strong equity performance in recent months has discounted some of the longterm upside. We continue to view Merck as a strong core holding for investors seeking large pharma exposure. A solid dividend yield (2.9%) and superior grades for Safety (1) and Financial Strength (A++) should appeal to the conservative, incomeoriented crowd. Michael Ratty October 7, 2016

(A) Diluted earnings (adjusted). Quarters may not sum due to rounding. Excludes nonrecurring gains (losses): '05, (43¢); '06, (13¢); '09, \$2.40; '10, (\$3.16); '11, (\$1.75); '12, (\$1.66);

'13, (\$2.02); '14, .58¢; '15, (\$2.03). Next egs. report due late October. (B) Dividends historically paid in early January, April, July, and October. Dividend reinvest-

ment plan available (C) In millions.

Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability A++ 95 Price Growth Persistence 60 **Earnings Predictability** 95