

**FORM 4**

**UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

Washington, D.C. 20549

| OMB APPROVAL                                 |           |
|--|-----------|
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Check this box if no longer subject to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. See Instruction 1(b).

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP**

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Name and Address of Reporting Person*<br><u>Cox Russell J.</u><br><br>(Last) (First) (Middle)<br><u>C/O VITAL THERAPIES, INC.</u><br><u>15010 AVENUE OF SCIENT, SUITE 200</u><br><br>(Street)<br><u>SAN DIEGO CA 92128</u><br><br>(City) (State) (Zip) | 2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol<br><u>VITAL THERAPIES INC [ VTL ]</u> | 5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable)<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director 10% Owner<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Officer (give title below) Other (specify below)<br><u>Chief Executive Officer</u> |
|   | 3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year)<br><u>01/03/2018</u>             |   |
| 4. If Amendment, Date of Original Filed (Month/Day/Year)  |   |   |

**Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned**

| 1. Title of Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) |   |        |            | 4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed Of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) | 5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 3 and 4) | 6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--------|------------|---|---|--|---|
|                                 |                                      |  | Code                           | V | Amount | (A) or (D) |   |   |  |   |

**Table II - Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)**

| 1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security | 3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) |   | 5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) |     | 6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year) |                 | 7. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying Derivative Security (Instr. 3 and 4) | 8. Price of Derivative Security (Instr. 5) | 9. Number of derivative Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 4) | 10. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 11. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|-----|--|-----------------|---|--|--|---|--|
|  |  |                                      |  | Code                           | V | (A)  | (D) | Date Exercisable   | Expiration Date |   |  |  |   |  |
| Non-Qualified Stock Option (right to buy)  | \$6.3  | 01/03/2018                           |  | A                              |   | 1,588,832  |     | (I)  | 01/02/2028      | Common Stock  | \$0  | 1,588,832  | D   |  |

**Explanation of Responses:**

1. Twenty five (25%) of the shares of common stock subject to the option shall vest one year from January 3, 2018, and thereafter, one forty-eighth (1/48th) of the shares of common stock subject to the option shall vest monthly, such that all of the shares of common stock subject to the option are vested by January 3, 2022, subject to the reporting person's continuing to be a Service Provider (as defined in the Amended & Restated 2017 Inducement Equity Incentive Plan (the "Plan")) through each vesting date; provided, that, the unvested portion of the option, if any, that would vest during the 12-month period following his termination date had he remained employed by the Issuer through such date shall vest in the event of a termination without cause following a Change in Control (as defined in the Plan).

**Remarks:**

/s/ Michael V. Swanson, as      01/04/2018  
Attorney-in-Fact

\*\* Signature of Reporting Person      Date

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

\* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see Instruction 4 (b)(v).

\*\* Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations See 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure.

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