UC San Diego Plans to Open Stem Cell Center

The Associated Press

Officials at the University of California, San Diego announced Monday that philanthropist T. Denny Sanford has committed $100 million to the creation of the Sanford Stem Cell Clinical Center.

The center is intended to accelerate development of drugs and therapies derived from human stem cell research through clinical trials and patient therapies.

It will integrate the operations of four locations: the UC San Diego Jacobs Medical Center and a nearby proposed clinical space, both scheduled to open in 2016; the UC San Diego Center for Advanced Laboratory Medicine; and the Sanford Consortium for Regenerative Medicine.

Pradeep K. Khosla, chancellor of UC San Diego, said the center will advance the region's reputation as an international, collaborative hub for stem cell research.

The center's clinical trials with patients will help leverage stem cell research being conducted by scientists from UC San Diego, Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, Salk Institute for Biological Studies and The Scripps Research Institute, among others.

"Every day, scientists learn more about the regenerative powers of stem cells, which tantalize with their potential to treat, cure, even prevent, myriad afflictions, including cancer, Lou Gehrig's disease and spinal cord injury," Sanford said in a statement. "I believe we're on the cusp of turning years of hard-earned knowledge into actual treatments for real people in need. I want this gift to push that reality faster and farther."

The grant for the stem cell center is the second-largest donation received by the university in its 53-year history.

Sanford has donated more than $1 billion to causes, primarily health related. Many of his projects are in his native state of South Dakota, where the 77-year-old philanthropist lives.

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