Creating a future of personalized medicine: U-M forms nonprofit joint venture for advanced DNA diagnostics

Paradigm, formed in partnership with International Genomics Consortium, will help doctors tailor treatment

ANN ARBOR, Mich. and PHOENIX, Ariz. – As a key step toward providing patients with treatments based on their own DNA profiles, the University of Michigan and the International Genomics Consortium (IGC) have launched a new joint venture that will help usher in an age of personalized medicine.

Called Paradigm, the new nonprofit company brings together the expertise of the U-M Health System and IGC, two leaders in using genetic information to understand and treat disease.

Beginning with cancer, and then extending into other disease groups, Paradigm will offer doctors and health care organizations anywhere access to whole gene and multi-gene sequencing and molecular diagnostics.

The company will also help support clinical trials at UMHS and other health care systems.

Paradigm complements other DNA services offered by UMHS, including the MLabs reference laboratory, and the research-oriented DNA Sequencing Core. Paradigm is being formed under the Michigan Health Corporation, the part of UMHS that enables outside partnerships.

The company will be based in Ann Arbor, with additional operations at IGC headquarters in Phoenix.

“We’re thrilled to take this important step that allows us to harness the power of genetic information to guide patient therapy and improve outcomes,” says Jay Hess, M.D. Ph.D., M.H.S.A., chair of the Department of Pathology at the U-M Medical School and a co-founder of Paradigm. “IGC has a proven track record of bringing molecular diagnostics to market, yet shares our nonprofit patient-focused vision.”

“Paradigm builds on our ever-increasing understanding of the interplay of multiple disease-causing genes and how this affects sensitivity to specific treatment regimens,” says Robert Penny, M.D., Ph.D., the chief executive officer and co-founder of Paradigm and IGC, which was formed by veteran genetic researchers and played a key role in compiling The Cancer Genome Atlas, a catalog of genes known to be involved in cancer. “We will bring our expertise to bear to create true personalized medicine options for clinicians and their patients.”

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Initially, Paradigm will focus on offering services to oncologists and oncology groups, pathologists, academic medical centers and clinical trial groups studying personalized medicine regimens. Its first products will be especially of use in better tailoring treatments for cancer patients.

“Pursuing new, innovative channels for scientific collaboration is a priority and strength of the University of Michigan,” notes Ora Pescovitz, M.D., CEO of the U-M Health System and U-M executive vice president for medical affairs. “Paradigm is a terrific example of this effort and of how cutting-edge science will have an immediate benefit for patients.”

About the U-M Health System

For more than 160 years, the University of Michigan Health System has been a national leader in advanced patient care, innovative research to improve human health and comprehensive education of physicians and medical scientists. UMHS includes the U-M Hospitals & Health Centers, with its three hospitals and dozens of outpatient health centers and clinics throughout Michigan; the U-M Medical School with its Faculty Group Practice and research laboratories; shared administrative services; and the Michigan Health Corporation. The three U-M hospitals -- University Hospital, C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital, and Von Voigtlander Women's Hospital -- have been recognized numerous times for excellence in patient care, including 18 years on the U.S. News & World Report honor roll of “America's Best Hospitals.” The U-M Medical School is one of the nation’s biomedical research powerhouses, with total research funding of more than $490 million. Together, the 22,000 members of the UMHS community are creating the future of health care through discovery. For more information, visit www.med.umich.edu

About IGC

The International Genomics Consortium (IGC) is a non-profit medical research organization established to expand upon the discoveries of the Human Genome Project and other systematic sequencing efforts by combining world-class genomic research, bioinformatics, and diagnostic technologies in the fight against cancer and other complex genetic diseases. IGC serves numerous common, unmet needs including: the standardization of the collection of properly consented tissues of interest, the molecular characterization of these tissues, and standardization in the representation and analysis of these results. IGC participates in the translation of genomic discoveries to improve patient care and increase the speed in which new diagnostic, prognostic, and predictive testing, and their associated new drug and treatment regimens are developed. For more information, visit www.intgen.org.

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