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## La Jolla Institute joins Sanford Consortium for stem cell therapy

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Bradley J. Fikes | Posted: Thursday, October 27, 2011 10:15 am | No Comments Posted

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The new headquarters for the Sanford Consortium for Regenerative Medicine. Courtesy Sanford Consortium.

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San Diego's four-member consortium for stem cell research, the Sanford Consortium for Regenerative Medicine, has grown to five with the addition of the La Jolla Institute for Allergy & Immunology.

The institute adds immunological expertise to its consortium peers; the Salk Institute, The Scripps Research Institute, UC San Diego and the Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute. By expanding the institute's members, scientists will be able to collaborate more closely with their peers. With more lab space and equipment at their disposal, the scientists also expect to become more competitive at attracting the multi-million dollar grants that help fund their research.

"There's a proximity effect, and I think that's going to stimulate very interesting new types of collaboration," said Mitchell Kronenberg, the La Jolla Institute's president and chief scientific officer. Equipment at the consortium headquarters allowing imaging inside living animals will be especially useful, he said.

The consortium was formed in 2006 by UC San Diego, the Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, the Salk Institute and the Scripps

Research Institute to help speed up research into stem cells, and apply that research to disease therapies.

Part of this effort involves teaming up to get research grants from sources such as California's multi-billion dollar stem cell research program, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine.

The program has already contributed \$43 million for construction of a consortium headquarters in La Jolla, scheduled to open next month. Construction of the headquarters was also funded with grants from private donors, including \$30 million from businessman-turned-philanthropist T. Denny Sanford.

Scientists in the consortium are deciding for themselves how much of their work to transfer to the Consortium headquarters. Located at 2880 Torrey Pines Scenic Dr. off of North Torrey Pines Rd, the headquarters is close to all four members; adjacent to the Salk and across North Torrey Pines Rd. from UCSD.

La Jolla Institute faculty member Anjana Rao, a prominent genetics and cell biology researcher, will move part of her lab into the new headquarters.

Kronenberg becomes a member of the Consortium's 10-member board of directors. The board is co-chaired by San Diego philanthropists Irwin M. Jacobs., Malin Burnham, John Moores, and Sanford, who provided the \$30 million naming gift to the Consortium headquarters.

Kronenberg said the four original consortium members deserve credit for doing the hard work of getting the partnership off the ground.

"By the time we came on, it had already been stress-tested, if you will, so we had no problems signing on to what was already there," he said.

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Bradley J. Fikes covers news of local, national and international significance in business, science and technology. He's especially fond of wireless communications and has covered biotechnology in San Diego since 1990. Covering business in San Diego and Southwest Riverside counties.

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