

Orange County Business Journal

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UCI Gets Another \$9M for Alzheimer's, Other Research

By Vita Reed - 6/6/2005

Orange County Business Journal Staff

University of California, Irvine has received \$9 million in grant funding from the National Institute on Aging.

UC Irvine plans to use the money for research into memory loss and Alzheimer's.

The grant is for five years and is set to fund more than 30 researchers.

The funding is a renewal of an expiring \$6 million grant from the National Institute on Aging, part of the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

"The new funding will allow us to push ahead with our work on the mechanisms of brain aging and Alzheimer's disease," said Carl Cotman, director of the UCI Institute for Brain Aging and Dementia. Cotman is the grant's lead researcher.

The funding is set to back three projects. One looks at brain changes with aging that underlie the decline of memory. The second tests the theory that defects in mitochondria, or a cell's energy source, play a role in causing Alzheimer's.

The third project looks at how the removal of plaques associated with Alzheimer's affects the disease's progression.

UCI, and particularly the School of Medicine, has seen more research money in recent years.

For the 2003-2004 academic year, the latest for which figures are out, the School of Medicine accounted for \$128 million of the school's \$249 million in research contracts and grants.

The year before, the School of Medicine accounted for \$114 million of \$236 million of contracts and grants.

An influx of "high-quality research faculty" was one reason behind the added funding, according to Dr. Thomas Cesario, the medical school's dean.

In an earlier interview, Cesario said the School of Medicine has been able to hire researchers from a range of schools, including Harvard University, the University of Washington, Emory University, Washington University and the University of Southern California.

Device Maker Moving to Tustin

Innovative Surgical Products Inc., a contract medical device maker, is moving from Santa Ana to a newly renovated office and plant in Tustin.

Innovative, whose customers include the Ethicon unit of New Brunswick, N.J.-based Johnson & Johnson, spent about \$4 million renovating the building, including adding clean rooms and offices, said Tom Mazelin, the company's chairman.

"We totally rehabbed the inside of the box," he said.

Innovative expects to move to Tustin from its current Wakeham Avenue offices within about two weeks, Mazelin said. The company had been in Santa Ana since 1987.

Innovative bought the building in late 2003. Fisher Scientific International Inc., a Hampton, N.H.-based provider of products and services for scientists, previously occupied it, Mazelin said.

Privately held Innovative, which has around 100 workers, expects sales this year within a range of "over \$15 million but

under \$50 million," Mazelin said.

Innovative was founded in 1980. It once belonged to Allergan Inc., the Irvine drug maker.

Dick Silva, a broker in Lee & Associates Commercial Real Estate Services Inc.'s Irvine office, handled the sale of the building to Innovative.

"They have massive clean rooms," Silva said. "It's a modern, up-to-date building."

Memorial Execs Honored

The executives at Long Beach-based MemorialCare Medical Centers, which has three Orange County hospitals, recently got an award from HealthLeaders, a magazine targeted toward healthcare senior executives.

MemorialCare was cited for using patient outcome data to negotiate insurance contracts, getting its doctors and other health providers to use "best practices" when treating patients, and creating some 700,000 cards with medical and emergency data that links patients, physicians, insurers and hospitals.

Barry Arbuckle, a former head of Saddleback Memorial Medical Center, Laguna Hills, is MemorialCare's chief executive.

Besides Saddleback, Long Beach-based Memorial's other local hospitals are Anaheim Memorial Medical Center and Fountain Valley's Orange Coast Memorial Medical Center.

Prevage Clarification

Prevage, Allergan's antioxidant face cream, is sold through doctor's offices but doesn't require a prescription. The folks at Allergan contacted us to clarify that after story a couple of weeks ago about Orange County drug makers expanding into cosmetic products.

Bits and Pieces:

Ista Pharmaceuticals Inc., Irvine, gave an update on its commercial and clinical progress at the recent Friedman Billings Ramsey stock conference in New York ... Donald Earhart, chief executive of I-Flow Corp., Lake Forest, talked about the company's growth strategies for its targeted anesthesia business at the Banc of America Securities Health Care Conference in Las Vegas ... Apex Research Institute, Santa Ana, is set to take part in a clinical trial looking at patients with normal to low cholesterol levels but elevated CRP, a protein linked to increased heart disease risk ... UCI University Physicians and Surgeons signed a contract with Medical Present Value, San Antonio, Texas, for payer contract management and payment verification systems ... Dermacia Inc., Newport Beach, said it would use nanosilver produced by QuantumSphere Inc., Costa Mesa, in its line of skin care products and cosmetics for acne sufferers.