

NanoVir, Inc.



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NanoVir Inc. Receives Prestigious Research Grant from the National Institute of Health

KALAMAZOO, Mich. and ST. LOUIS, Mo: NanoVir, Inc. has received an “Advanced Technology” small business grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the company announced today. The award for approximately \$600,000 over two years will support efforts to create drugs to treat human papillomavirus (HPV). Typical NIH small business grants are for less than \$100,000.

Dr. James Bashkin and Dr. Christopher Fisher, both renowned research scientists and both former employees of Pfizer Inc and its legacy companies, founded NanoVir in 2003. Fisher works from laboratory space at the Southwest Michigan Innovation Center at Western Michigan University’s Business Technology and Research Park on the University’s Parkview campus. Dr. Bashkin works in a laboratory at the University of Missouri in St. Louis, where he is a member of the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry.

“It’s great to know that we are competitive with companies from biotech centers like San Diego and Boston,” said Fisher. “Recognition from such an august organization as the NIH makes this award all the more sweet. It will give us the time and resources we need to effectively fight this cunning virus.”

The technology grant will fund the development of molecular strategies for fighting the sole cause of cervical cancer: human papillomavirus. HPV is the most prevalent sexually transmitted virus. Although best known for its role as the cause of cervical cancer, HPV is also the infectious agent that causes genital and other warts. Cervical cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among women worldwide. Genital warts exceed genital herpes as a major contributor to doctor’s visits.

Current treatments are primitive and include burning or treatment with toxic agents, Fisher said. “That results in a high rate of recurrence. Our goal is to identify and develop treatments to eradicate the virus completely as well as to find simple and painless methods for diagnosis.”

Fisher also serves as interim head of the WMU’s Biosciences Research and Commercialization Center. The center functions as a contract research organization, delivering pharmaceutical development services to both public and private sector clients.

Through assistance from Southwest Michigan First, the Southwest Michigan Innovation Center, the University of Missouri (St. Louis), and Western Michigan University, NanoVir has received support and services that includes:

- Company founders were provided businesses support services
- Use of scientific equipment donated by Pfizer to Western Michigan University and the University of Missouri.
- Access to laboratory space and departmental facilities at the University of Missouri, St. Louis
- Access to funding by the Biosciences Research and Commercialization Center of WMU, which is currently under negotiation

The Southwest Michigan Innovation Center is a 58,000-square-foot incubator/accelerator designed to provide wet-lab space, access to venture funding and business services to emerging companies in biosciences and high technology. Construction for the new facility, located at the Western Michigan University Business Technology Research Park in Kalamazoo, a state-designated SmartZone, was completed in Spring ‘03. For more information, visit www.kazoosmic.com.

Southwest Michigan First is an economic development organization providing business development, retention and attraction programs throughout Kalamazoo County. A privately funded, 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation, SMF was formed by leaders in business and higher education to promote economic development. SMF provides entrepreneurs and established companies with a wide range of corporate business development services and support.

About NanoVir Founders

Prior to moving to Upjohn in 1989, Dr. Chris Fisher served on the faculty of the University of Washington School of Medicine where he was funded by the NIH for studies of embryonic development and cell biology. Among other works, Dr. Fisher is

recognized as co- author of the “Hen’s tooth” paper, a classic work in evolutionary biology that served as inspiration for Stephen J. Gould’s book “Hen’s Teeth and Horses Toes” and for influential work in mouse developmental genetics. Within Pharmacia Dr. Fisher has played a leading role in key drug discovery projects charged with investigating and targeting the molecular machinery regulating cell division. Dr. Fisher co-founded NanoVir with Dr. Bashkin in 2003.

Dr. James Bashkin received his chemistry doctorate from Oxford University in 1982, just after his twenty-third birthday. He is a internationally recognized scholar who has distinguished himself with inventions in an astonishing range of scientific fields. He shared the Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Award from President Clinton for his work in the area of “Green Chemisty” which was credited for setting the standard for pollution prevention in the automobile tire industry. Dr. Bashkin held positions at Washington University, Monsanto, and Pfizer prior to founding NanoVir with Dr. Fisher in 2003.