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Contact: John Howser 615-322-4747
john.howser@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University Medical Center Launches Nashville Biosciences
New Subsidiary Will Harness Power of Extensive Genomic and Bioinformatics Resources

Officials with Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) announce today the creation of a wholly owned subsidiary, [Nashville Biosciences](#), to harness the power of its extensive genomic and bioinformatics resources to advance drug and diagnostics discovery and development.

Through Nashville Biosciences, pharmaceutical and other life science companies can leverage the wealth of data contained within the Medical Center's genomics and health information technology resources to accelerate their discovery and development of new treatments for patients, while helping to support institutional research efforts.

"Partnering with the pharmaceutical and broader life sciences industry through Nashville Biosciences will enable VUMC to expand and support its mission of advancing translational and precision medicine," said Leeland Ekstrom, PhD, Chief Operating Officer of Nashville Biosciences.

Nashville Biosciences will serve as a commercial interface between outside companies and the formidable research resources housed in VUMC, including its comprehensive databank BioVU® which contains more than 250,000 DNA samples collected over the last decade, coupled with 2.8 million de-identified patient records.

"The creation of Nashville Biosciences will dramatically accelerate our ability to work with pharmaceutical and other partners to advance human health by accelerating rational drug and diagnostics development and use," added [Dan Roden](#), MD, VUMC's Senior Vice President for Personalized Medicine.

Among the capabilities that will distinguish the company are analytical methods developed for “mining” DNA datasets. For example, researchers led by Josh Denny, MD, MS, Vice President of Personalized Medicine, have pioneered techniques such as PheWAS™ that can link specific genetic mutations to their key clinical characteristics (known as disease phenotypes).

Among academic medical centers, VUMC is widely recognized as a leader in the application of genomics and bioinformatics to drug development, an effort that is transforming the pharmaceutical industry, Ekstrom said.

Prior to the official launch of Nashville Biosciences, VUMC has been working with a number of leading pharmaceutical and diagnostics companies to leverage these resources, including:

- [Celgene Corporation](#), a biopharmaceutical company based in Summit, New Jersey
- [Pfizer Inc.](#), a biopharmaceutical company based in New York, New York
- [Goldfinch Bio Inc.](#), a biotechnology company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts focused on precision medicines for patients with kidney diseases
- [Population Bio, Inc.](#), a biotechnology company based in Melville, New York

These projects, each of which aims to discover new treatments for patients in disease areas of interest for each partner, as well as multiple other ongoing efforts, will transition to the new company in the coming weeks.

“We’ve only just started to scratch the surface of what is possible with genomics and informatics resources that can be coalesced for research in a comprehensive academic medical center,” said Gordon Bernard, MD, Executive Vice President for Research for VUMC.

“Partnering with Nashville Biosciences will greatly expand the national and global reach of these resources,” Bernard said.

[Interview of Leeland Ekstrom, Founder and COO, and lab b-roll here](#)

[Photo of Leeland Ekstrom, Founder and COO, and lab stills here](#)

About Nashville Biosciences

[Nashville Biosciences](#), a wholly owned subsidiary of Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC), was created to harness the Medical Center’s extensive genomic and bioinformatics resources for drug and diagnostics discovery and development. Leveraging Vanderbilt University Innovation™, Nashville Biosciences serves as a commercial interface between outside companies and the formidable research capabilities housed within VUMC, including BioVU®, one of the world’s most comprehensive genetic databases linked to de-identified medical records with years of longitudinal clinical data. This unique asset is one of the largest and highest quality of its

kind, providing an unprecedented opportunity to guide R&D activity in biotech, pharma, diagnostics, medical devices and other life sciences applications.

About Vanderbilt University Medical Center

[Vanderbilt University Medical Center](#) (VUMC) is one of the nation's leading academic medical centers and is the largest comprehensive research, teaching and patient care health system in the state of Tennessee. VUMC's clinics receive over 2 million patient visits per year. For the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2017, VUMC had approximately 65,000 inpatient discharges and performed more than 67,000 surgical operations (inpatient and outpatient), making it the largest healthcare facility in the Middle Tennessee region. VUMC is also the largest employer of non-governmental employees in Middle Tennessee, with more than 22,000 staff, over 2,700 of which are physicians, advanced practice nurses and scientists appointed to the Vanderbilt University faculty.

VUMC leads the nation in DNA-based electronic medical records research and serves as the National Institute of Health's (NIH) eMERGE (Electronic Medical Records and Genetics) coordinating center. The Medical Center's DNA resource, BioVU®, is one of the world's largest genomic repositories linked to electronic health information. In 2016, [VUMC was selected by the NIH to lead](#) the to be the Data and Research Support Center for the Precision Medicine Initiative Cohort Program (now referred to as "All of Us"), to establish a national cohort of over 1 million volunteers for the study of genetic, environmental and lifestyle factors affecting the nation's health.