



BioMed SA Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Ten years ago, a group of leaders in San Antonio, led by former Mayor Henry Cisneros and the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, created an advocacy organization for the city's biomedical industry.

They founded [BioMed SA](#) with the core mission to raise the visibility of San Antonio's sizable biomedical industry locally, statewide, nationally and internationally.

"We've gained considerable traction in the last few years," said Ann Stevens, BioMed SA's president. During the last decade, the organization's mission has evolved to include economic development, Stevens said.

In 2009, Medtronic selected San Antonio for its new Diabetes Therapy Management & Education Center with plans to create 1,400 jobs. San Antonio beat out more than 900 other cities for the project and BioMed SA played an important role in convincing the company to locate here, Stevens said.

"EDF (The San Antonio Economic Development Foundation) had been working on it for more than a year," Stevens said. "In the final stages, they asked BioMed SA to come into the project and help them land it."

Since then, BioMed SA has worked closely with the EDF to bring new businesses here and to retain the ones that are here as well as foster new startups.

"We believe we are bringing real value by not only our promotional activities, but we're beginning to attract outside investments to the city," Stevens said.

In addition, the local startup scene in the life sciences industry is growing, Stevens said. The entrepreneurial side of the life sciences industry fosters new companies, attracts venture capital, brings seasoned executives to the city and helps the overall ecosystem to grow, she said.

Just recently, [Targeted Technology](#), a locally based venture capital fund, brought Cytocentrics Bioscience, a Rostock, Germany-based biotech company, to San Antonio. The company agreed to relocate its corporate headquarters to San Antonio and create 15 jobs by the end of the year. In June, the City of San Antonio granted Cytocentrics \$1 million in economic development funds to attract the company, which has pledged to create 285 additional jobs in the next eight years and invest \$15 million. The company will be based initially at 18618 Tuscany Stone. Cytocentrics makes a medical device called a CytoPatch Machine. The company's patch clamping technology evaluates drug interactions with human cells and analyzes data.

In addition to biomedical startups relocating here, one of the trends locally is to focus on technology transfer by taking academic research out of local institutions like the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and the University of Texas at San Antonio and spinning that technology out into startups, Stevens said.

On the startup front, [Invictus Medical](#), which makes a cranial support device for the heads of newborn babies, is a prime example of a spin off coming out of the University of Texas at San Antonio, Stevens said. Other startups spinning out of the Health Science Center include [Astrocyte Pharmaceuticals](#), which is developing drugs for brain injuries, and [Rapamycin Holdings](#), a drug development company focused on disease prevention and treatment in pets and humans.

Randy Goldsmith, who heads up Rapamycin, also runs [The Texas Technology Development Center](#), known as T3DC, and hosts a quarterly luncheon to keep everyone informed on what's going on in the biomedical industry in San Antonio. About 200 people attend the luncheon, which features company presentations.

"By working together and raising visibility we have attracted more economic activity including a lot of activity in entrepreneurial startups and retained our hometown business," Stevens said.

To continue to move the life sciences industry forward, BioMed SA plans to pursue new revenue sources from foundations, corporate grants and donations from individuals, said BioMed SA Chairman Ken Trevett.

A few of BioMed SA's key accomplishments in its first 10 years include the creation of the annual Julio Palmaz Award for Innovation in Healthcare and Biosciences. The next award, now in its 10th year, will go to W.E. Moerner, PhD, a San Antonio native and winner of the 2014 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. He will receive the award at BioMed SA's annual award dinner in San Antonio on September 10th.

BioMed SA also recently completed a two-year Asset Initiative to identify "five key disease areas in which San Antonio has biomedical assets and expertise of national or world-class caliber." That information is being used to promote San Antonio to researchers and companies in those areas and helped attract the World Stem Cell Summit to San Antonio last December.

San Antonio's healthcare and bioscience industry employs nearly one of every six members of the city's workforce and has an annual economic impact exceeding \$30 billion, according to BioMed SA.

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