

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CREATING A STRONG ECONOMY

CHORI - Preventing children's diseases - by Linda Brown

CHILDREN'S Hospital Oakland Research Institute (CHORI) is home to doctors, scientists and other medical researchers working to find cures for diseases.

Dr. Bertram Lubin, executive director, told the Chamber's Economic Development Committee about the remarkable efforts and achievements to solve medical mysteries such as cancer, sickle cell anemia, and thalassemia, a group of genetic blood disorders that affects 1,000 individuals in the United States annually.

CHORI researchers help prevent children's diseases by discovering new treatments and vaccines and improving nutrition.

A meningitis vaccine developed under the leadership of Dan Granoff, MD, is now in clinical trials, he said. If approved, it can help the 3,000 people diagnosed with bacterial meningitis annually. Although relatively rare in the United States, bacterial meningitis is an extremely dangerous, rapidly progressing infection that can become life-threatening within hours after the first flu-like symptoms appear. Even with proper intravenous antibiotic treatments, 10-14 percent of meningitis cases are fatal. Among those who survive this serious disease, about 20 percent suffer long-term effects such as brain damage, paralysis, hearing loss or limb amputation. This vaccine, funded by the Gates Foundation and the World Health Organization, may also help prevent outbreaks in sub-Saharan Africa.

This one example illustrates the importance of CHORI's scientific research and the equally important con-



At the Chamber's recent Economic Development Forum, Dr. Bertram Lubin of Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute (right) was joined by (left to right) CHORI executives Brad Barber and Suzanne Haendel and Chamber Economic Development Committee Chair Janiele Maffei.

tribution of others - for-profit businesses (laboratories and testing facilities, medical equipment manufacturers), nonprofits and government agencies providing funding, and academic partners at the University of California Berkeley and San Francisco. The educated and skilled workers in these entities along with the diverse patients and supportive families all help advance health care around the world.

Moving the research and discoveries to the community via the commercial marketplace is the job of attorney Suzanne Haendel, CHORI's technology transfer manager. CHORI researchers have licensed or optioned 17 technologies, filed 261 patent applications and have been issued 53 patents. Also, the institute has generated four start-up companies which are developing products in the Bay Area.

Beyond research and product com-

mercialization, CHORI attends to local and global concerns. It provides paid summer internships for youth from the local area and is also establishing the Urban Health Institute to address health disparities. International Hemoglobinopathy Centers capitalize

on CHORI's expertise and accelerate CHORI's Pediatric Global Health Initiative.

The youngest patients at Children's Hospital in Oakland as well as adults and children in villages in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America all benefit from the work at CHORI.

The city of Oakland deserves recognition for attracting and retaining this world-class hospital and research center.

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on 'Remember Them' monument. See page 17.

OAKLAND BUSINESS REVIEW

THE AWARD-WINNING ORIGINAL PUBLICATION OF THE OAKLAND-MERCANTILE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VOL. XXVIII NO. 8 AUGUST 2009

