

# St. Jude confirms \$7 billion expansion

Nov 6, 2015, Memphis Business Journal

In what could eventually be a **\$7 billion investment, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital has unveiled an expansion plan** that will not only increase the hospital's ammunition in its war against childhood cancer, but also expand its research into sickle cell anemia.

According to a statement from St. Jude, **the project will unfold over the next six years and is expected to add more than 1,000 new positions for faculty and staff.**

Plans for the expansion began more than a year ago when James Downing, CEO of St. Jude, put together a team of 180 people from the organization to develop a plan to enhance success in the clinic, in the laboratory and around the world.

According to the St. Jude statement, Downing's goal for the expanding hospital is to push cure rates for childhood cancer even higher. Other goals include the following:

- Increase the number of patients treated on St. Jude-led clinical trials
- Set the standard for pediatric cancer care delivery
- Advance clinical care programs for children with non-malignant blood diseases
- Strengthen basic lab and clinical research programs
- Continue to create and run high-complexity clinical trials
- Establish the benchmark for precision medicine
- Determine the optimal use of proton therapy for brain tumors, solid tumors and Hodgkin lymphoma
- Develop a world-class program to harness the immune system to treat childhood cancers
- Expand the International Outreach Program
- Develop a St. Jude-funded global Clinical Research Consortium
- Organize global teams of scientists to collaboratively address high-priority scientific questions

For sickle cell patients, Downing said he wants to improve on current treatments to help patients manage the disease. He anticipates bringing more sickle-cell patients to the campus.

"Most programs in sickle cell anemia have focused on decreasing symptoms," Downing said. "Well, why not try to cure it? Can we use gene therapy to do that? Can we use gene editing to cure it? Can we find better drugs that would essentially reverse the disease? We're expanding our research efforts in those areas."

While the expansion plans are still in the development stage, the goal, according to Downing, is to "accelerate progress."

"How do we use our resources and our position and our knowledge to do that?" Downing said. "We're at a point in our hospital's history where it's clear we can do more. Because of our success, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to establish an agenda that will accelerate progress toward advancing cures for pediatric catastrophic diseases. We must do what others cannot do."