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May 18, 2020 11:31 AM | UPDATED 53 MINUTES AGO

UChicago Medicine gets \$10 million for cancer research

The gift from longtime health care executive David Jonas aims to improve emerging treatments that use the body's own immune system to fight the disease.

STEPHANIE GOLDBERG  



UChicago Medicine

David Jonas, CEO of health care private equity firm JVC Investment Partners

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The University of Chicago Medicine has announced a \$10 million donation to accelerate cancer research.

The gift from former Baxter International executive [David Jonas](#), who currently serves as CEO of health care private-equity firm JVC Investment Partners, aims to improve emerging treatments that use the body's own immune system to fight cancer.

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In addition to extending such therapies to more patients—including those with difficult-to-treat pancreatic and ovarian cancers—the funds will enable UChicago Medicine to recruit cellular therapy experts and acquire specialized technology, among other initiatives, the health system said in a statement today.

UChicago's Advanced Cellular Therapeutics Facility that opened last year will be renamed the David and Etta Jonas Center for Cellular Therapy, after Jonas and his wife, who died in 2017.

The gift is the largest donation to UChicago Medicine for cellular therapy research, according to the statement.

"This gift will allow us to translate these groundbreaking discoveries made in the laboratory into novel cancer therapies, which have the potential to treat not just blood cancers, but also solid tumors," Dr. Kenneth Polonsky, dean and executive vice president for medical affairs at the University of Chicago, said in the statement. "If we can accomplish even part of that, it will be a major transformation in cancer therapy that will change the lives of many patients here in the United States and around the world."

Meanwhile, UChicago Medicine is among hospital systems [struggling financially](#) amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Following a \$70 million decline in operating revenue

in both March and April, it announced it was furloughing workers and postponing planned capital projects, among other cost-cutting measures.

At the same time, the University of Chicago expects a **\$220 million budget deficit** this year due to the “negative impact” of the COVID-19 pandemic and will take steps beyond recent salary and hiring freezes in response.

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