

LIFE SCIENCES



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Foundation Helps Establish Not-For-Profit Generic Drug Co.



Photo courtesy of Gary and Mary West Foundation
Gary and Mary West of their namesake foundation, which funds a number of senior services and initiatives.

San Diego's **Gary and Mary West Foundation** is helping get off the ground **Civica Rx**, a new not-for-profit generic drug company with the goal of tackling shortages and high prices of life-saving medications.

The foundation — which funds a number of senior services and initiatives — contributed an initial \$1 million to Civica, as well as \$9 million in future loans. The **Laura and John Arnold Foundation** and the **Peterson Center on Healthcare** each pledged the same.

Civica Rx said it seeks a stable supply and the affordability of essential generic medicines, many of which are affected by chronic shortages. The initial focus is on 14 hospital-administered generic drugs, but the company didn't name which ones.

The company, headquartered in Utah, expects its first products to be released as early as next year.

In addition to the three foundations, initial governing members will include the U.S. hospital systems **Catholic**

Health Initiatives, HCA Healthcare, Intermountain Healthcare, Mayo Clinic, Providence St. Joseph Health, SSM Health and Trinity Health.

"The formation of CivicaRx is a direct challenge to generic drug companies who have sharply and unfairly raised prices on many off-patent drugs over the last several years," said **Shelley Lyford**, president and CEO of the Gary and Mary West Foundation. "We all pay a price, and lower-income patients shoulder a particularly heavy burden."

Clarity Marks 10 Years in Ovarian Cancer Fight

Laura Shawver — perhaps best known as the CEO of **Synthorx** — launched the **Clarity Foundation** after her own experience with ovarian cancer.

This month marks the 10-year anniversary of the foundation, which has grown in ambition and funding.

Through Clarity, ovarian cancer



Laura Shawver

patients who have recurrent tumors obtain genomic information for deciding on a treatment path, like drugs that may be the most effective. The nonprofit provides tumor blueprints, interpretation, and clinical trial identification free of charge.

This comes after Shawver more than a decade ago learned firsthand that ovarian cancer treatment hadn't changed in a long time.

The nonprofit began as a bootstrapped volunteer effort and transformed into a sophisticated operation under the leadership of

Executive Director **Hillary Theakston**.

Clarity received \$840,000 in cash donations in 2016, \$1.025 million in 2017 and is expected to hit \$1.8 million in 2018. (The nonprofit's fiscal year ends Sept. 30.)

The next decade looks even more promising.

"This data we've gathered over time — tumor mutation data, outcomes data, clinical history — all of that helps us to be more knowledgeable and expert about ovarian cancer treatment," said Theakston.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Gossamer Names Chief Science Officer

San Diego-based startup **Gossamer Bio** recently lured big-name talent: **Luisa Salter-Cid**, previously vice president and head of immunology at pharmaceutical giant **Bristol-Myers Squibb**.

Salter-Cid will be Gossamer's chief scientific officer.

Gossamer is no average biotech. This summer it hauled in a \$230 million Series B round, and it's led by former **Receptos** executives. But it's not exactly common to see a top pharmaceutical executive leave for an upstart.

During 13 years at Bristol-Myers Squibb, where she climbed the ladder, Salter-Cid advanced more than 20 compounds into clinical development.

Gossamer, which emerged in January, has three potential treatments in clinical trials and one in the research stage, with more to follow.

"The team and pipeline of innovative and transformative medicines that Gossamer Bio has assembled are truly exciting," Salter-Cid said in a statement.

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Scooter Riders Find Way to the ER

It's no secret that electric scooters are all the rage. Riders can be found on the streets of downtown San Diego — and in emergency rooms. Dr. **Michael Sise**, a trauma surgeon and chief of staff at **Scripps Mercy Hospital** San Diego, recently gave several interviews about the dangers of the urban transportation trend.

"Injuries are coming in fast and furious," Sise told the **Washington Post** in a Sept 6 piece, adding that his team saw four severe scooter injuries in the week before the article. "It's just a matter of time before someone is killed. I'm absolutely certain of it."