Nonprofit Target ALS Launches $15M Biomarker Research Initiative

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NEW YORK — Nonprofit research foundation Target ALS said on Tuesday that it has committed $15 million to a newly-launched program focused on the discovery of biomarkers for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

With the funding, the Target ALS Diagnosis Initiative will support new precompetitive and competitive research into ALS biomarker discovery and development.

The initiative will also undertake a five-year natural history study that will integrate the collection of cerebrospinal fluid, blood, and other biofluids with clinical speech, language, and respiratory measures, demographic information, and genomic information from over 200 ALS patients and 80 controls.

Lastly, the Target ALS Diagnosis Initiative will establish a biosample and genomics core that will link specimens and data from Target ALS’ existing postmortem tissue and genomics cores to the longitudinal biofluid sample collection undertaken through the natural history study. The new core will be formed in partnership with the ALS Association, the Tow Foundation, and the New York Genome Center, Target ALS said.

Samples and datasets from the natural history study, as well as from the new core, will be made available to the research community.

Earlier this year, New York City-based Target ALS and the Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration awarded $5 million in grants to six research groups developing ALS biomarkers and treatments.