

## What's New



NEW HEALTHCARE-RELATED  
PRODUCTS, SERVICES,  
AND COMPANIES

# Johns Hopkins and MedImmune Announce Joint Program to train PH.D. Students FOR CAREERS IN BIOPHARMA

► **Trending now:** First-of-its-kind industry-academic Ph.D. program in the U.S. aims to broaden graduate students' experience in and out of the classroom setting.

**T**HE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY and MedImmune, the global biologics research and development arm of AstraZeneca, have launched a first-of-its-kind Ph.D. training program between a major university and a biopharmaceutical company in the United States. Known as the Johns Hopkins-MedImmune Scholars Program, this new initiative builds on an ongoing collaboration between MedImmune and Johns Hopkins and reinforces both partners' commitment to grow the Maryland biotech region.

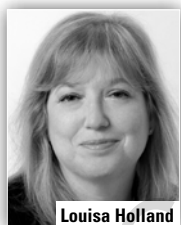
Students from the Ph.D. programs in the school of medicine and Whiting School of Engineering may apply to become Johns Hopkins-MedImmune Scholars in the spring of 2017. Students will gain research experience in an industry environment through thesis projects conducted jointly in Johns Hopkins and MedImmune labs. In addition to the standard Johns Hopkins curriculum, students will be introduced to the process and challenges of drug discovery and development through coursework co-taught with scientists from the company, as well as a yearlong internship at MedImmune.

"One of the major challenges for the future of biomedical workforce is how to prepare the next generation of scientists for diverse careers inside and outside of academia," says Ronald Daniels, president of The Johns Hopkins University.



Ronald Daniels

## Sudler & Hennessey Group Acquires Viscira



Louisa Holland

Sudler & Hennessey Group, a global healthcare communications network, has acquired Viscira, a leader in digital marketing and cutting-edge media in the healthcare space. Viscira develops interactive solutions that provide unique, differentiated, and compelling communication delivery for the life-sciences industry. These solutions help deliver healthcare information in very personal and immersive ways, and have a meaningful impact on the future of healthcare communication, education, and actual medical practice.

Through this transaction, Viscira brings deep technology expertise and transformative digital solutions to Sudler. When integrated with Sudler's full-service promotional and educational capabil-

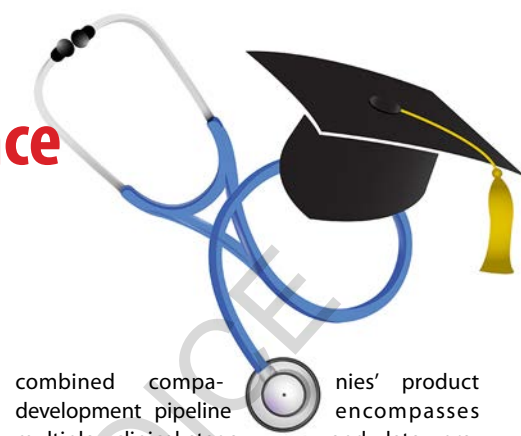
ities, strategic depth, and global reach, the combination provides clients with a uniquely creative and powerful healthcare communication offering. Viscira also gives the Sudler Group a strong geographic presence on the west coast of the United States from its San Francisco headquarters.

"The addition of Viscira's cutting-edge expertise takes communications to a new level by adding virtual reality, 3-D animation technology, gaming, and interactive digital applications," says Louisa Holland, co-CEO the Americas, Sudler.

"Viscira provides the platform to visually combine science and creative beautifully, and to deliver content to all of our customers in extremely engaging ways."

## Omnis Pharma and Magnis Therapeutics Merge to Form Vyriad

Omnis Pharma and Magnis Therapeutics have merged to form Vyriad, a clinical-stage oncolytic immunovirotherapy development company. The



combined company's product development pipeline encompasses multiple clinical-stage and late pre-clinical-stage products targeting a broad range of human cancer indications, including a Phase I development program partnered with a large pharmaceutical company.

"Given our broad clinical and advanced pre-clinical portfolio, product development engine, and scientific capabilities, I firmly believe that Vyriad is on course to become the leading oncolytic virotherapy company creating powerful new immunotherapies for patients with cancer," says Stephen Russell, M.D., Ph.D., president and CEO of Vyriad.

Vyriad's pipeline encompasses eight oncolytic virotherapies in clinical development and seven in late-stage preclinical development: Vyriad's lead programs include Phase II product candidates in ovarian cancer and multiple myeloma, and Phase I programs in glioblastoma, mesothelioma, head and neck cancer, blood cancers, endometrial cancer, hematologic malignancies, and gastrointestinal cancer. The company's seven pre-IND programs include initiatives that pair oncolytic vaccines with other cancer immunotherapy approaches such as checkpoint inhibitors.

## Allied-Bristol Life Sciences Launches iβeCa Therapeutics

Allied-Bristol Life Sciences (ABLS), a biopharmaceutical enterprise jointly owned between Allied Minds and Bristol-Myers Squibb has launched a new subsidiary, iβeCa Therapeutics, to license proprietary compounds from NYU School of Medicine that target the Wnt signalling pathway. The Wnt pathway plays a key role in the development and progression of a number of cancers affecting large numbers of patients. iβeCa Therapeutics are focusing on identifying candidates for clinical testing.

Developed by Dr. Ramanuj Dasgupta, research associate professor at NYU School of Medicine, and NYU's drug discovery accelerator, the Office of Therapeutics Alliances (OTA), these Inhibitors of -Catenin Responsive Transcription (iCRTs), are able to reduce tumor growth by inhibiting the Wnt signalling pathway that is functioning abnormally in tumor cells. The iCRTs were optimized to inhibit the function of oncogenic, nuclear Beta-catenin while sparing its other, non-oncogenic activities. **PV**

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