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**Sean Parker Pledges \$24 Million to Launch Allergy Research Center at Stanford**

**Stanford, Calif. — December 17, 2014—** Allergies, whether they are to food, drugs, the environment, or other triggers, have potentially adverse consequences for millions of people worldwide. Recent estimates conclude that between 30 and 40 percent of the global population suffers from one or more allergic conditions.

Silicon Valley entrepreneur and philanthropist Sean Parker is establishing a new research center at Stanford University School of Medicine in the hope of propelling innovation in allergy research. Today, Mr. Parker announced he has pledged \$24 million over the next two years to the medical school to establish the Sean N. Parker Center for Allergy Research at Stanford University. Mr. Parker's gift is one of the largest private donations to allergy research in the United States to date.

The first of its kind in the world, the center aims not only to find better treatments for children and adults with allergies, but to go beyond the traditional approach and also to discover underlying immune mechanisms against the disease and develop a lasting cure. The Center will be led by Kari Nadeau, MD, PhD, an internationally renowned immunology researcher at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford and the School of Medicine, whose research focuses on immunology and allergies.

About one in three Americans suffers from some form of allergy, and doctor-diagnosed food allergies affect one in 12 American children under the age of 21 and one in about 50 adults. Of those individuals with a food allergy, approximately 25 percent will have a near-fatal anaphylactic reaction at some point in their lives. It is also estimated that \$25 billion is spent each year on reactive food allergy care.

"We need to make catalytic changes in the field of allergy research by studying immune mechanisms in order to apply discoveries in real time to new safer and more durable therapies for adults and children," said Mr. Parker, whose firsthand experience with life-threatening allergies led him to found the Center to bring better solutions to more people. "I'm excited to partner with Stanford and believe that under the leadership of Dr. Nadeau, the Center will make a transformational impact on how we understand and treat allergies."

The interdisciplinary center aims to transform the lives of patients and families through innovative science and compassionate care. More specifically, the Center will focus on understanding the mechanisms of the immune system, the dysfunctions of which result in allergic reactions. The center will include Stanford specialists in diverse fields including immunology, gastroenterology, otolaryngology, chemistry, bioengineering, pathology, pulmonology, and genetics. Through laboratory and computational research, clinical trials, community outreach, and other efforts, the team will work toward finding

rationally-based therapies to provide the safest and best treatments for allergies. Research at the center may have implications for a wide array of immune dysfunctions including asthma, eczema, food allergies, eosinophilic disorders, drug allergies, gastroenterological diseases, and more.

“We are excited about the center because there is enormous clinical need for better understanding of and treatment for allergies,” said Lloyd Minor, MD, dean of Stanford University School of Medicine. “For instance, the recent profound increase in the incidence of serious food allergy is fascinating and deeply concerning at the same time. Sean Parker’s generous gift will enable Stanford Medicine experts, under Dr. Nadeau’s leadership, to collaborate and innovate across academic disciplines for the benefit of millions of people with allergies.”

“I am thrilled and honored to direct the Sean N. Parker Center for Allergy Research at Stanford University,” said Dr. Nadeau, associate professor of pediatrics at the medical school and an immunologist at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford and Stanford Health Care. “Sean is well-versed in immunology, and has been a fantastic partner to work with. He’s an entrepreneur and visionary, and we look forward to using this gift and Center as the springboard to improve the lives of those adults and children with allergies through immunotherapy that goes beyond oral therapy.”

A trailblazer in allergy research, Dr. Nadeau’s accomplishments include developing the first combination, multi-food-allergy therapy that has been shown to safely desensitize food-allergic patients to up to five different allergens at the same time. In these immunotherapy trials, conducted at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford and Stanford Health Care, patients ingest small amounts of the allergen to build tolerance over time. While the treatment has had positive outcomes for a number of adult and pediatric patients, it is a lengthy process that can be dangerous and anxiety-provoking for patients and their families. One of the Center’s priorities is to move beyond oral immunotherapy and identify a better and more lasting cure for allergies.

Mr. Parker’s \$24 million gift will provide both expendable and endowed support for innovative clinical research and care, state-of-the-art equipment and top-ranked research scientists. Of the \$24 million total, \$4 million will be used to establish a dollar-for-dollar challenge match for all other new gifts to the center. To learn more about the Sean N. Parker Center for Allergy Research at Stanford University, or to help support allergy research at Stanford, please visit <http://med.stanford.edu/allergies>.

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### **About Stanford University School of Medicine**

The Stanford University School of Medicine consistently ranks among the nation’s top medical schools, integrating research, medical education, patient care and community service. For more news about the school, please visit <http://med.stanford.edu/school.html>. The medical school is part of Stanford Medicine, which includes Stanford Health Care and Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford. For information about all three, please visit <http://med.stanford.edu>.

### **About allergy research at Stanford**

Thanks to the support of philanthropic leaders, Stanford University School of Medicine has established an interdisciplinary and interdependent allergy research center that makes transformative changes for patients and their families through innovative science, collaborative research and compassionate care. The Center will bring together top-ranked scientists, physician-scientists and research teams to focus on discovery-based allergy research. Moreover, the Center aims to move beyond oral immunotherapy to make long-lasting changes in the field of allergy research, developing a cure that leads to rapid induction

of immune tolerance with excellent tolerability and little side effects. With the fully established allergy research center, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford and the School of Medicine will help advance and ensure first-rate and timely progress in the field of allergy research.

**About the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health**

The Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health is a public charity, founded in 1997. Its mission is to elevate the priority of children's health, and to increase the quality and accessibility of children's health care through leadership and direct investment. The Foundation directs all fundraising for Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford and the child health and obstetric programs of Stanford University School of Medicine. To learn more, please visit [www.lpfch.org](http://www.lpfch.org) or [www.supportLPCH.org](http://www.supportLPCH.org).