



Alabama Nonprofit Partners with Huntsville Genetics Company to Cure Blinding Diseases

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – August 2020 – Two Alabama-based organizations are partnering to find cures for common diseases that cause blindness for millions of people worldwide.

In an effort to help medical researchers develop new treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases, Advancing Sight Network and Kailos Genetics created the OcularGeneScreen, a new genetic screening panel, to be used with eye tissue from post-mortem eye donors. The screening will help determine which genes are associated with eye diseases like age-related macular degeneration (AMD), glaucoma, and Fuch's Dystrophy.

"These diseases cause a huge decline in quality of life for so many people," says Dr. Gregory Grossman, Advancing Sight Network's Chief Scientific Officer. "By identifying the genes involved, we're taking a huge step forward in being able to find cures."

Advancing Sight Network is a nonprofit organization that has served Alabama for more than 50 years. In addition to providing eye tissue for corneal transplants, the organization invests in medical research in hopes of restoring eyesight to individuals impacted by eye disease.

"Our goal is to restore eyesight," says Dr. Grossman. "For the grandparent who can no longer see their grandchild's face or the person who's lost their independence due to incurable vision loss, the development of a cure brings hope for a bright future."

Kailos Genetics, a biotechnology company based in Huntsville, provides innovative genetic screenings that help people determine their risk for certain diseases like cancer. IndustryWired recently named Kailos Genetics one of the top 8 precision medicine companies in the USA.

"Our mission is to enable clinical research teams to make advances that impact the health of individuals," says Troy Moore, Chief Scientific Officer for Kailos Genetics. "Kailos' TargetRich™ assay development platform combines flexible design and rapid development with the unparalleled insights gained from deep sequencing."

The research is funded by a generous grant from the Huntsville-based Alpha Foundation, whose goal is to improve the human condition through grants to educational, scientific and charitable organizations.

The bottom line, says Dr. Grossman, is finding cures and making them available as quickly as possible. "We want to help people see again. We want the person who is diagnosed with AMD to have hope. We don't want anyone to lose their livelihood or their independence because of vision loss. Ultimately, that's what this project is about."

Not only will the project potentially help over 150,000 people in Alabama who are affected by irreversible vision loss, these two Alabama organizations could be part of bringing cures to more than 200 million people worldwide affected by these diseases.

