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From the February 21, 2003 print edition

### Health Care

## Biotechnology's tough times

Stacey Snow Staff Writer

Tampa Bay area biotechnology and life sciences groups focused on building those industries in the region continue to work to get the right people together to make it happen.

On Feb. 12 at the Embassy Suites Busch Gardens/USF, more than 30 stakeholders in the medical technology industry gathered to explore possible points of collaboration.

The event paired University of South Florida academics with decision-makers representing local medical technology companies.

Guy Hagen, founder of Innovation Insight, organized the gathering. Innovation Insight offers economic development research, network analysis and consulting.

The USF researchers and scientists in attendance brought expertise in fields such as microelectromechanical systems, medical microbiology and immunology, chemical engineering, biomedical engineering and biotechnology development.

Business representatives included: Stanley Tangelakis, chairman and chief executive officer of Mercury Medical; Jay Sasserath, chief executive officer of Intelligent Micro Patterning LLC; Paul Sanberg, chairman and chief executive officer of Saneron CCEL Therapeutics Inc.; and J. Robert Saron, president of Aaron Medical Industries Inc.

"It's the toughest time for biotech," said Sanberg. He came representing USF, where he serves as associate vice president for biotechnology and the director of the Center for Aging and Brain Repair.

Dwindling funding opportunities have forced biotechnology companies to focus more on seeking relationships with peers rather than viewing each other as lone wolves, Sanberg said.

"That's why it's good to have events like this," he said. Sanberg hoped to learn about other medical technology companies in the Bay area at the event and introduce them to USF's capabilities.

For example, after meeting with academics, two companies with research operations out of state learned they might be able to bring those studies back to Tampa to be done at USF. And Dennis Killinger, a physics professor at USF, gave out the names of three of his colleagues to companies who could benefit from their services.

Stephen E. Sadow, an associate professor of electrical engineering at USF, said he attended to get a feeling for the local industry and



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to learn what opportunities were available to his students after they graduate.

"I'm amazed at how many biotech companies are in the Bay area," Sadow said.

#### Humana lands contracts

Diagnostic Clinic Medical Group PA selected Humana Inc. as its health benefits company.

The clinic's more than 1,100 physicians, medical and office staff and their dependents can choose between two new Humana plans — Humana OpenAccess and Humana OpenAccess Plus. Humana also will provide the clinic dental coverage through its administrative-services-only product, called ASO.

The School District of Hillsborough County also recently selected Humana as the sole health insurer for its 34,000 members.

Humana serves approximately 116,000 members in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco and Polk counties.

#### Care for the underserved

The Avon Breast Care Fund awarded a \$100,000, one-year grant to the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute to increase awareness of the benefits of early detection of the disease. This is the second year that the program has received Avon Foundation funding to support its work on breast cancer.

The overall goal of the Avon program at Moffitt is to reach medically underserved, uninsured Hispanic migrant farm workers and other low-income rural women in southeast Hillsborough County. Services also are extended to other underserved women in the Tampa area.

#### Chart notes

- Dr. Raghavendra Vijayanagar, a cardiac surgeon and the medical director of the Heart Institute at Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point, has been appointed by Gov. Jeb Bush to serve as chairman of the Florida Board of Medicine.
- Roland Metevier is the new president and CEO of Edward White Hospital in St. Petersburg.

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