

The Nicholas Connor Institute for Pediatric Cancer Research



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Mission

The Nicholas Connor Institute for Pediatric Cancer Research's (TNCI) mission is to:

- Accelerate biomedical discoveries into personalized treatment programs for children, adolescents, and young adults with cancer
- Develop cancer-specific predictive tests to guide cancer therapy
- Deliver to the clinic innovative diagnostic tools and therapies for children, adolescents, and young adults with cancer

Strategy/Approach

TNCI works to identify and develop any promising new discoveries and technologies that would greatly impact the treatment of cancer in children. It operates using a business model called The Accelerator of Cancer Treatments in Children (TACTiC™). This model is comprised of partnerships with companies and a portfolio of translational initiatives. Each company partner possesses highly skilled scientific, clinical, and business personnel, infrastructure, facilities, and vital data.

TACTiC™ is funded by "hybrid venture philanthropy" for the purpose of rapidly bringing pediatric cancer diagnostics and cures to the market. Once the institute has established partnerships in the biomedical industry that demonstrate the ability to deliver valuable molecular diagnostics tools for childhood cancer, it will expand TACTiC™ to the areas of therapeutics and prevention.

Research Portfolio

TNCI does not have a traditional grants program but rather a project-based partnership model through TACTiC™. Some initiatives of TACTiC™ include:

- **Molecular Diagnostics** – Develops gene expression diagnostics tools for accurate identification, sub-typing, and prognosis of pediatric cancers. Initially targeted cancers are rhabdomyosarcoma, lymphoma, Ewing's Sarcoma, and neuroblastoma.
- **Evidence-Based Medicine** – Coordinates direct sequencing of genes known to be activated in cancer and have an existing targeted drug. Develops treatment guidance platform for cancers refractory to current "standards of care."
- **Target Identification** – Focuses on whole exome sequencing of samples to identify drug targets for rare childhood, adolescent, and young adult cancers.
- **Pediatric Cancer Commons** – Develop a Web-based open-science community therapy decision support tool, including molecular disease models developed by

TNCI that will inform physicians, patients, and scientists of the most recent scientific developments, availability of diagnostic tools, and ongoing clinical trials.

Partnership Practices

TNCI engages with commercial and academic partners who share personnel, data, facilities, and equipment. It also collaborates with the Children's Rare Disease Network and The Global Genes Project on TACTiC™.

The institute partners with biotech and pharmaceutical companies. As the TACTiC™ portfolio manager, TNCI serves as the catalyst to commercialization in concert with several foundation, corporate, and scientific partners. Examples include:

- **AltheaDx** – Partnered with TNCI to develop a broad array of diagnostic, prognostic, and treatment prediction information to best guide treatment for pediatric cancers.
- **GeneKey** – Partnered with TNCI to apply a personalized research approach to childhood cancer.

Financials

TNCI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit translational medical research and commercialization organization. The most recent financial information available is from 2012.¹

- Total Operating Income: \$3,530,000
- Research & Development Expenses: \$1,616,000
- Total Operating Expense: \$3,396,000

Key Accomplishments

- Using TACTiC™, TNCI can develop licensing and acquisition agreements for commercialization of outbound products.
- TNCI manages an expansive database of scientific results for use in broader collaborations in both the academic and commercial sectors.
- TNCI is able to deliver medical solutions to the clinic where neither venture, corporate, nor government dollars are readily available.
- TNCI provides its discoveries, tumor bank data, and cancer commons to larger cancer patient populations that stand to benefit from these discoveries.

¹ Information obtained from Foundation Center Directory, <http://fconline.foundationcenter.org>, July 2013.

Leadership

TNCI is governed by a **Board of Directors** in addition to its leadership team.

- **CEO and Co-Founder:** Beth Anne Baber, PhD, MBA, beth@tnci.org
- **Chief Scientific Officer and Co-Founder:** Martin Latterich, PhD, mlatterich@prism-sd.org
- **Chief Medical Officer:** Jennifer Willert, MD