With a transformational gift, the Epstein Family Foundation has challenged the community to join them in partnering with two leading universities to speed the way toward better treatments and a cure for one of the gravest threats to human health worldwide.

“It is just a matter of time before most people will have someone in their families develop dementia or Alzheimer’s, yet there are no viable treatments beyond temporary measures to delay the onset. If, together, we can double our initial investment, just imagine the impact that we can have in creating real solutions for this condition.”

– DAN EPSTEIN

Alzheimer’s disease is a progressive neurological disorder that affects more than six million Americans. That number is expected to more than double to 13 million by 2060, barring any breakthroughs in treatment. Despite decades of research into its causes and potential therapies, there are still no effective ways to modify or cure the disease.

The Epstein family has touched many lives through their generous support for higher education and the arts, but the inspiration for this gift is especially personal. Dan and Phyllis Epstein are keenly aware of the feeling of helplessness families experience when a loved one is diagnosed with this disease. Dan’s twin brother David suffered from the debilitating effects of Alzheimer’s for 15 years and passed away in 2021 as a result of the disease.

The gulf between the widespread impact of Alzheimer’s disease and the lack of treatment options inspired the Epsteins to launch a new initiative to speed the way toward meaningful therapies: the Epstein Family Alzheimer’s Research Collaboration. Their transformational gift has sparked the formation of a research powerhouse that unites UC San Diego Alzheimer’s experts with their esteemed peers at USC, breathing new life into our decades-long hunt for better options. Now, they challenge the community to match their financial commitment in an effort to break down any barriers to discovering effective treatments.
ACCELERATING HOPE FOR THOSE SUFFERING

The Epsteins intend to bring about real change for current Alzheimer’s patients within the next five to 10 years. They have formed an incredibly capable partnership of experts who are equally committed to that goal. Leveraging the strengths of both universities in the field of Alzheimer’s research, the gift will help compress the time between study design, patient recruitment and clinical trials in hopes of expediting the discovery of effective treatments and, ultimately, a cure.

At UC San Diego, this collaboration will support high-potential research through the Alzheimer’s Disease Cooperative Study (ADCS). Established at UC San Diego in 1991 with federal backing, the ADCS is the nation’s largest and longest-running clinical trial effort focused on addressing Alzheimer’s disease. It is led by experts in the field and powered by a sophisticated infrastructure for bringing discoveries made in the lab into the clinical setting. When a promising therapeutic option is identified, the ADCS has the personnel in place to expedite the regulatory approval processes and get it to the patients who need it most as quickly and safely as possible.

With the extraordinary infusion of funding made possible by the Epstein Family Alzheimer’s Research Collaboration, the ADCS has identified two research initiatives with exceptional potential for achieving significant advancements in Alzheimer’s treatment in the near future:

» **Gene therapy**, a transformational approach which has found success in definitively treating several neurological diseases, but has not yet been fully explored in treating Alzheimer’s disease. In other words, a potential cure.

» **“Powder for Pennies,”** a rapid evaluation of existing drugs that show potential for relieving the debilitating symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease. This project aims to take advantage of already approved compounds to accelerate the timeline for getting new therapies to patients.

Both research areas benefit from the ADCS’s expertise in sequential multiple assignment randomized trials, or SMART trials. These innovative trial designs adapt to incorporate early response to treatment, supporting the screening of more drugs more quickly.

The Epstein Family Alzheimer’s Research Collaboration will serve as the academic biopharma engine driving these two promising new therapeutic strategies. The Epsteins intend to inspire a matching commitment from others who recognize the incredible impact this work could have on millions of lives in the near future, bringing hope where there is currently despair.