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Drug research institute adds liaison from UA

By David Wichner

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The retired head of research at the University of Arizona has joined the Tucson-based Critical Path Institute, a UA- and FDA-affiliated drug research institute, as head of its affiliations with research universities.

Richard C. Powell, who retired as UA vice president of research and graduate programs in July, started Wednesday as C-Path's director of academic partnerships.

C-Path, a nonprofit partnership of the University of Arizona, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the technology development firm SRI International Inc., was formed to study ways to speed the approval of promising new medicines while improving drug safety.

In his new post, Powell says he'll be working with administrators and faculty at the UA and, in the future, other schools, to get them working with C-Path on specific projects.

"My job will be trying to identify the needs we have for various research projects and find faculty to work on them," said Powell, 66, who recently returned to teaching part time at the UA as a professor emeritus of optical sciences.

While the initial focus is the UA, including its highly ranked College of Pharmacy, C-Path is in discussions with other universities to forge collaboration agreements to govern future research partnerships, Powell said.

For example, C-Path already is working with the University of Utah under a \$750,000 FDA grant to study heart failure using a database of Utah patients including genetic profiles and genealogical records.

Powell's appointment "hopefully gives C-Path a kick-start at the university," said C-Path Chief Operating Officer Larry Aldrich, a local venture capitalist who joined the institute in January.

With Powell on board, C-Path has assembled most of its senior management team, Aldrich said.

Dr. Raymond Woosley, former UA vice president for health sciences, is C-Path's co-founder, president and CEO.

Jeffrey Jacob, a principal in Tucson Pharma Ventures LLC, a biopharmaceutical development and investment firm, was recently named C-Path's chief program officer.

Joseph "Bob" Assenzo, a former executive director of the Drug Information Association, was named executive director of C-Path's educational programs.

"Talk to an Angel"

Local biotech companies with stories to tell and a need for capital can make their pitches at "Talk to an Angel — A Biotech Evening" Feb. 23 at Hacienda del Sol Guest Ranch Resort.

The event is a chance to present a pitch before members of the Desert Angels, a local group of "angel" investors.

The deadline for companies to submit applications to present at the event recently was extended to Friday.

The evening will feature networking with the Desert Angels; opening remarks by Vicki Chandler, director of the UA's Bio5 Institute; a keynote speech by local venture capitalist Harry George of Solstice Capital; and presentations by 10 to 15 local companies.

To apply as a presenting company or register to attend, go to the Web site of the BioIndustry Organization of Southern Arizona at www.bio-sa.org.

TECH FILE

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