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Bioscience authority awards \$4M for medical composite research

Wichita Business Journal - by [Josh Heck](#)

The **Kansas Bioscience Authority** on Tuesday awarded a group of local researchers \$4 million to develop a medical composites industry.

It's part of \$21.7 million The Via Christi Orthopedic Research Institute will receive over five years to develop the Center of Innovation for Biomaterials in Orthopedic Research.

The center could create 2,600 jobs and have a \$200 million annual economic impact by its 10th year, according to a study by **Wichita State University's** Center for Economic Development and Business Research.

The total award is less than the \$31 million in start-up funds the research institute sought.

Researchers will expand on aviation composite research to develop medical instruments and composite implants that some say could improve the practice of orthopedics.

Building the \$10 million Center of Innovation for Biomaterials in Orthopedic Research is part of an effort to combine aviation and medicine, two of Wichita's largest economic drivers. Composites are made by blending two different metals into a lighter, stronger part.

"It's an obvious way of diversifying composites and a way to counter the cyclical nature of the aircraft industry," said Paul Wooley, research director at Orthopedic Research, in an April interview with the Wichita Business Journal. He wasn't immediately available for comment Tuesday.

The research institute hopes to build a 37,000- to 47,000- square-foot facility near the National Center for Aviation Training at Col. James Jabara Airport. The KBA money would not include construction costs, which likely would be funded through bonds.

Orthopedic Research is working with **Schaefer Johnson Cox Frey Architecture** on the project.

Partners in the project include Via Christi, WSU and its **National Institute for Aviation Research, Kansas State University** and **Pittsburg State University**.

The KBA also approved three other investments on Tuesday. They are:

- \$4 million for the **Center of Innovation for Biomaterials in Orthopaedic Research** to create medical instruments, medical devices and composite implants. The center is expected to increase employment in Kansas by 2,000 during 10 years.
- \$1.9 million for the development of cancer drugs, including \$195,000 for Lenexa-based **CyDex Pharmaceuticals Inc.** to commercialize reformulated drugs that address limitations of existing therapies. A focus will be on improving a cancer drug for patients with multiple myeloma, cancer of the plasma B cells formed in the bone marrow.
- \$1.2 million for bioenergy research at the **University of Kansas Center for Environmentally Beneficial Catalysis** as a match to \$1.2 million invested by **Archer Daniels Midland Co.** Research will focus on converting multiple feedstocks, including biomass, into fuels and chemicals to replace or improve on petroleum-based products. The university will provide in-kind support valued at more than \$334,000.