

Siamab Therapeutics: New funding, new name, new direction in cancer immunotherapy

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Cambridge startup [Siamab Therapeutics](#) has changed up its direction, now developing monoclonal antibodies to hinder the progressive growth of tumors.

The company just received another \$2 million in funding, largely from angel investors, rounding out a \$6 million Series B that began last year. On top of that, it just changed its name from Sialix to Siamab Therapeutics, representing the company's migration from developing non-human sialic acids for inflammation, cancers and other disorders to a more fine-tuned focus on the [wildly popular field of cancer immunotherapy](#).

"With the latest funding we're developing in vivo data for our first program on its immunotherapeutic potential, and building an IND-enabling data package," CEO Jeff Behrens said. "We'd like to be in the clinic in the next couple of years."

Siamab has identified highly specific antibodies that have the potential to not only kill tumor cells, but also inhibit cancer progression, Behrens said.

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Siamab targets abnormal carbohydrates, or glycans, that are only found on the outer surface of cancer cells. These tumor-associated carbohydrate antigens, or TACAs, are common in the majority of solid tumors, Siamab said. The TACAs are "exploited" by tumor cells to "hijack" certain cellular processes to their advantage, allowing for tumor growth and dissemination.

"The space of targeting carbohydrates in cancer is an area that has been for some degree known for a long time, it's technically hard to do," Behrens said. "We're able to rapidly and very efficiently make a large number of really high quality antibodies against these carbohydrates."

A number of angel investors participated in this most recent financing round, including Boston Harbor Angels, Mass Medic Angels, Launchpad Angels, Maine Angels, Beacon Angels and Desert Angels, as well as a number of undisclosed individual investors.

The company's technology was licensed from glycobiology researcher Ajit Varki of University of California, San Diego. Siamab's corporate headquarters are in Cambridge, and it does its lab work in San Diego.