Soroka Ben-Gurion Research Institute
A joint venture of Soroka Medical Center and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
The Vision

The new Soroka Medical Center - Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Joint Research Institute will achieve significant diagnostic and therapeutic breakthroughs by combining excellent scientific research with bedside experience and insights that will have substantial positive impact on local and international health and wellbeing. The Institute will attract top physicians and medical researchers to the Negev, ensuring Soroka and Ben-Gurion University’s places among the leading medical research institutions in the world.

The Mission

- To create an extensive, cutting-edge research platform based on the proven scientific capabilities of Ben-Gurion University (BGU) researchers and Soroka Medical Center (Soroka) clinicians
- To enable research during residency in various medical professions and thereby encourage outstanding MD graduates of BGU’s Goldman Medical School to remain in the Negev
- To serve as a magnet for physician-researchers from outside the Negev
- To encourage excellent clinicians, physician-researchers, and other leading researchers to remain in the Negev
What Has Already Been Achieved

In 2009, Soroka established the Clinical Research Center to create an infrastructure for clinicians performing clinical research and to foster collaboration with academia and industry. Since its opening, the Clinical Research Center has been involved in over 300 research projects with the participation of more than 120 clinicians and BGU staff, resulting in more than 250 scientific publications. The Center works in three main areas:

• Actively supporting clinical and translational research, allowing access to state-of-the-art trial planning and management

• Conducting educational activities specifically tailored to enabling practicing physicians to achieve a level of knowledge necessary for conducting clinical research

• Establishing an infrastructure for the transfer of clinical and scientific findings into day-to-day medical practice

The Clinical Research Center has been successful in obtaining competitive research grants, further advancing its ability to perform meaningful clinical research. It has developed scientific cooperation with research groups from Harvard University in the fields of intensive care, environmental medicine, and cardiology. These significant achievements, attained in a short time, demonstrate the tremendous potential of providing the required resources to clinicians eager to participate in research.

Physicians who travel abroad for postdoctoral training consistently state that the inability to perform significant research is a major barrier to their return to Israel in general and to Soroka and BGU in particular. We believe that recruiting leading physicians to Soroka and researchers in biomedical sciences to BGU is of great strategic importance to both institutions, to the region’s development, and to the health of its population.
Looking Toward the Future

In designing the future Joint Research Institute, we have emphasized the creation of an infrastructure that will support the major types of research in which our clinicians and researchers can collaborate at Soroka and BGU in a way not currently possible. The availability of a world-class research institute will radically change the decision-making process of potential recruits to Soroka and BGU for combined clinical and research leadership positions and thus has the potential to transform healthcare in the region.

The Partners

The Gav-Yam Negev Advanced Technologies Park (ATP) was recently inaugurated and is rapidly expanding in the immediate vicinity of Soroka and BGU. It is currently being populated with leading hi-tech and biotechnology companies from Israel and abroad. This unique project creates additional venues for innovative research involving Soroka and BGU researchers as well as biotechnology and biopharmaceutical companies, from start-ups that stem from translational research performed at Soroka and BGU to existing companies that will bring additional expertise and capabilities to the area.

The collaboration of a leading tertiary hospital, a major research university, and the newly founded technology park will create a unique opportunity for the Soroka-BGU Joint Research Institute. The new Institute will be built on the success of the Clinical Research Center at Soroka and leading biomedical research groups at BGU, providing an outstanding platform for translational biomedical research. Research projects with applicative potential will be able to literally cross the street to BGU for additional research and refinement, to Soroka for bedside trials, and finally to the industrial biotech park for development.
**Project Components**

We plan to build the Soroka-BGU Joint Research Institute on the Soroka campus, facing BGU’s Faculties of Health Sciences and Natural Sciences and within walking distance of the ATP. The new Research Institute will become the central location for translational biomedical research in Israel’s entire south. In order to achieve these goals, the Institute will focus on facilities not currently available to clinician-researchers at Soroka, BGU, or elsewhere in the Negev. The Soroka-BGU Joint Research Institute will include facilities for four major areas of research:

- **Translational research:** Laboratory space and facilities will be made available to clinicians initiating or cooperating on advanced basic research with applicative possibilities. We see especially great potential in areas such as the brain and neurology, cancer, surgery, and infectious diseases.

- **Clinical research:** Expanding the current activity of the Clinical Research Center we will continue to focus on creating state-of-the-art infrastructure and employing highly skilled professionals in clinical research programs.

- **Population-based studies aimed at promoting the health of the Negev population:** These efforts will require data management facilities and the ability to store and analyze serums and tissues on a large scale.

- **Building a biobank of the region’s population:** The biobank, overseen by the Ethics Committee, will facilitate genomic and other correlations for clinical studies and the provision of personalized medicine tools for the region’s population.
Soroka Medical Center

Soroka Medical Center offers exceptional opportunities for investigating the effect of incorporating new scientific findings into routine medical practice. It is one of the largest hospitals in Israel, and the only tertiary hospital serving the Negev, where over one million people live in an area that comprises 60% of the country. The Negev’s ethnically diverse population has unique health characteristics and a lower socioeconomic status than the national average.

Soroka is developing with great momentum. The Legacy Heritage Oncology Center and Dr. Larry Norton Institute recently opened its doors and a new Rehabilitation Center will soon open in an effort to bridge the healthcare gaps between the Negev and the center of the country.

In March 2015, the hospital administration decided to open a temporary rehabilitation department. Since then hundreds of patients have been successfully treated here at Soroka, close to home in diverse areas of rehabilitation medicine. These include patients in need of orthopedic rehabilitation, patients with amputations or head and spinal cord injuries, patients who have suffered strokes, oncology patients, patients who have undergone heart or lung surgery, intestinal surgery, and more.
The temporary department currently has 20 beds. When construction is completed, the new rehabilitation center will offer 36 beds. We are currently working on this plan thanks to generous contributions from our donor family around the world.

The Legacy Heritage Comprehensive Oncology Center and Dr. Larry Norton Institute, the first of its kind in the Negev, was opened in February 2019, setting a new standard for medical services and research in the field of oncology in Israel.

The center includes all the required treatment units under one roof and provides patients and their families with a suitable environment and conditions that contributes to their health and well-being. The new 6-story building includes departments, oncology and hematology ambulatory units, a bone marrow transplant unit, an oncology pharmacy, an inpatient ward, healing gardens, and spacious waiting and treatment areas.

The center, which was established at the initiative of the management of Clalit and Soroka and thanks to the generosity of the Legacy Heritage Fund, Dr. Larry Norton, and other donors from around the world, will revolutionize the treatment of cancer in the Negev and be a leading center of its kind in Israel and abroad. Residents of the south will no longer have to travel to the center of the country to receive treatment. All their oncology needs will be answered close to home at Soroka’s new cancer center.

In addition, the planned expansion and upgrading of the Emergency Medicine Department will allow us to be prepared in the best possible way for emergencies of all kinds, to provide our ever-increasing number of patients – civilians and soldiers – with the emergency medical services they need, and to save lives in times of peace and war alike.

One of the central motifs of Soroka’s strategic plan is leadership, in which research plays an important part. Soroka has taken upon itself two national goals:

- To take the lead in resolving the issue of health gaps between the center of the country and its periphery.
- To play a central role in preparing the Negev for the great opportunity represented by the recent transfer of IDF bases to the region and the population growth that will ensue.

Soroka is affiliated with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and is the primary teaching hospital for all programs in BGU’s Faculty of Health Sciences. The physical and organizational connections between Soroka and BGU foster fruitful scientific cooperation among researchers at both institutions, and there are myriad collaborations in fields ranging from biology and medical sciences to behavioral sciences and engineering. These close connections facilitate the seamless development of research programs that cover the bench-to-bedside continuum, increasing our understanding of important disease processes and translating basic scientific findings into innovative therapeutic interventions.
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev is one of Israel’s leading research universities, with nearly 20,000 students and 4,000 faculty members in the Faculties of Engineering Sciences, Health Sciences, Natural Sciences, the Pinchas Sapir Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management, the Joyce and Irving Goldman School of Medicine, the Kreitman School of Advanced Graduate Studies, and the Albert Katz International School for Desert Studies. The University has three main campuses: the Marcus Family Campus in Beer-Sheva, the research campus at Sede Boqer, and the Eilat Campus.

BGU is home to national and multi-disciplinary research institutes: the National Institute for Biotechnology in the Negev, the National Solar Energy Center, the Ilse Katz Institute for Nanoscale Science and Technology, the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism, and The Heksherim Research Institute for Jewish and Israeli Literature and Culture.

BGU is known for its research and academic excellence as well as its pluralistic and interdisciplinary approach and emphasis on community action. In the health sciences, BGU is home to a strong and growing community of renowned scientists with expertise in areas such as brain, diabetes, cancer, and infectious disease research as well as cutting-edge research projects, state-of-the-art research laboratories, and a world-renowned medical school that has become a center for community-oriented medicine and global health.
Soroka-BGU Clinical Research Institute Building

Total space: approximately 4,000 square meters (approximately 43,000 square feet)

Projected cost: US $18 million

Main facilities to include:
1. Site for clinical and epidemiological research
2. Biological sample bank (Negev Biobank)
3. Clinical Research Center
4. Cannabis Clinical Research Institute
5. Health Innovation Institute
6. Negev Environmental Health Research Institute
7. Inpatient Research Clinic
8. Six research laboratories
9. Computational and Digital Health Center
10. Auditorium
Donations and Donor recognition

Research laboratories
The Institute will include six state-of-the-art basic science research laboratories. Each laboratory will host a Soroka-BGU research group for a period of three years. Donor recognition will be provided via naming of the laboratory, prominently displayed at the facility and on all official publications. Research projects emanating from the laboratory will be presented at national and international conferences and published in the scientific literature, and will also feature the donor’s name.

Naming Opportunity: $100,000 for each laboratory
A plaque recognizing the donors’ generosity will be prominently displayed at the Institute. Your donation will also be acknowledged on the Donors’ Wall of Honor at Soroka Medical Center.

Clinical Research Center
The new Clinical Research Center facility, to be located within the Soroka-BGU Clinical Research Institute, will comprise several research units (environmental health, population research, computational medicine, and so on). Donor recognition will be provided via naming of the units of the Clinical Research Center and prominently displayed at the facility and on all official publications. Research projects emanating from the Clinical Research Center will be presented at national and international conferences and published in the scientific literature with the name of the donor of the relevant unit of the Center.

Naming Opportunity: $2,000,000 for Clinical Research Center
A plaque recognizing the donors’ generosity will be prominently displayed at the Institute. Your donation will also be acknowledged on the Donors’ Wall of Honor at Soroka Medical Center. In addition, you will be our guest of honor at a dignified public dedication ceremony.
Negev Biobank

The use of human biological specimens in medicine is the focus of current public and professional interest worldwide. Yet the diagnosis of most medical disorders is severely hampered by the absence of reliable biomarkers that can be measured prior to the development of diseases. Furthermore, a gap exists between the advanced scientific methodology that allows for precise genetic mapping and our ability to apply the knowledge it provides in practice in a large population. The development of advanced genetics and biomarkers is limited by the lack of population-based analysis.

We propose to establish the Negev Biobank (NBB), a state-of-the-art repository for bio- specimens that will operate as the first large-scale, population-based biological archive in Israel. The NBB will take advantage of the unique organizational structure of the Negev’s health care system, with Soroka serving as the only tertiary care referral hospital for a population of over 1,000,000. The NBB will collect, process, and store tissues, blood samples, and other biological specimens from all patients admitted to Soroka.

The NBB will provide a unique platform for translational research that stems from collaborations between clinical investigators from Soroka and basic science researchers from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. This clinical-translational cooperation will yield new scientific paradigms tailored to the unique genetic profile and environmental exposures of the Negev population, and will foster the discovery of disease biomarkers and novel therapeutic modalities.

The NBB will enhance Soroka Medical Center’s status as a leading center for personalized medicine that provides high-quality, timely medical services to all residents of the Negev.
Donor recognition will take place via the naming of the Negev Biobank, and will be prominently displayed on site and on all official Negev Biobank publications. Research projects that emanate from the Negev Biobank will be presented at national and international conferences and published in the scientific literature and include the donor’s name.

**Naming Opportunity: $2,000,000**

A plaque recognizing the donors’ generosity will be prominently displayed at the Institute. Your donation will also be acknowledged on the Donors’ Wall of Honor at Soroka Medical Center. In addition, you will be our guest of honor at a dignified public dedication ceremony.

**Auditorium**

The Soroka-BGU Research Center will include two auditoriums that will be used for national and international conferences.

**Naming Opportunity: $180,000**

A plaque recognizing the donors’ generosity will be prominently displayed at the Institute. Your donation will also be acknowledged on the Donors’ Wall of Honor at Soroka Medical Center.
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