

Meet, treat, grow: UCSF 'Sandler model' pushes neurosciences expansion

Mar 25, 2016, 6:57am PDT

Dr. [Stephen Hauser](#) and other neurosciences researchers at the **University of California, San Francisco**, had an idea a few years back: bring lab scientists, clinicians who treat people with brain disorders and patients together in one building.



UCSF's Dr. Stephen Hauser: *"We are at a moment where we really have to capture the possibilities, capture the opportunities."*

It was a brainy thought but not a simple task. UCSF neurosciences researchers — those folks probing the brain for clues for treatments, cures and new tools to treat everything from migraines to multiple sclerosis — were spread around campuses, some even grabbing space in closets.

But with a unique public-private partnership, Hauser and others, including Nobel laureate [Stan Prusiner](#), helped raise the money to build what ultimately became the 237,000-square-foot Sandler Neurosciences Center on UCSF's Mission Bay campus. The program got a boost from [a \\$20 million challenge gift](#) from the foundation of retired savings-and-loan operators Herbert and [Marion Sandler](#).

And now the idea of bringing bench researchers, clinicians and patients together in one spot is called "the Sandler model." It is helping to vault the Bay Area into a leading spot in the world of neurosciences research.

The model and its successes have accelerated growth — the Sandler Neurosciences Center is full, Hauser says — and attracted more deep-pocketed philanthropists. At least \$50 million is pledged for a planned second building about 100 yards away on UCSF's Mission Bay campus.

"In a broad sense, we are at a moment where we really have to capture the possibilities, capture the opportunities," says Hauser, a well-known researcher in the field of neurology.

The pace of discovery in the neurosciences and cash raked in by UCSF have helped the institution attract researchers such as Dr. Matt State, now head of UCSF's psychiatry department. Lured in 2013 from Yale University, where he co-founded and co-directed the Yale Program on Neurogenetics, State is at the crossroads of child psychiatry and human genetics, bringing new understanding and potential new treatments to autism.

Other researchers are making headways in their fields as well, in part because all the neurosciences stakeholders are in one spot. For example, Dr. [Adam Gazzaley](#) is using virtual reality to train older nervous systems to function like younger systems, Hauser says, and [Jonah Chan](#) and Dr. [Ari Green](#) are peering into the circuitry of multiple sclerosis patients' brains,

"Passing patients, it makes all the difference in the world," Hauser says. "It is transformational."

Ron Leuty, Reporter

San Francisco Business Times

<http://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/blog/biotech/2016/03/ucsf-stanford-neurosciences-sandler-model-autism.html>