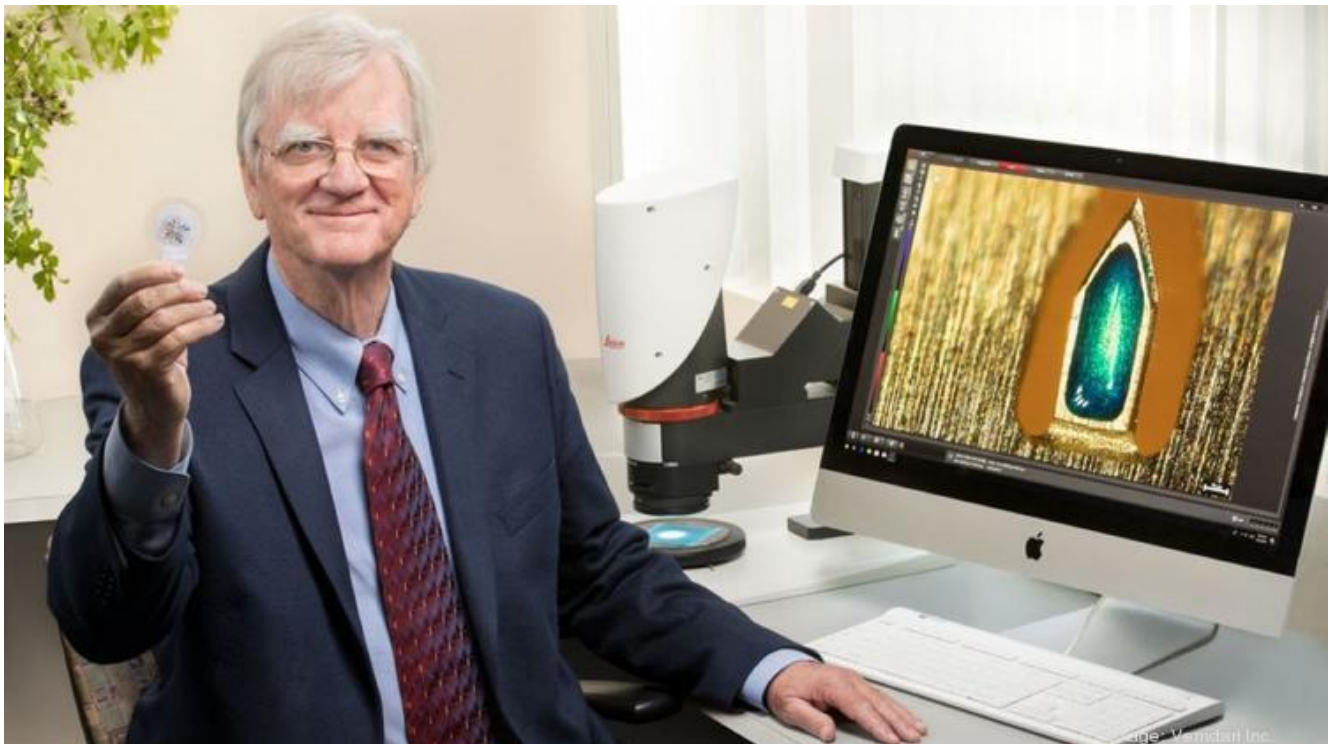


SACRAMENTO BUSINESS JOURNAL

Company testing Covid-19 vaccine,
new delivery method at UC Davis

bizjournals.com/sacramento/news/2020/04/30/company-testing-covid-19-vaccine-new-delivery.html



Dr. Dan Henderson, CEO and chief scientific officer of Verndari Inc., with the company's VaxiPatch vaccine delivery product. Courtesy of Verndari Inc.

By Mark Anderson – Staff Writer, Sacramento Business Journal

Biopharmaceutical company Verndari Inc. announced it will begin preclinical testing in Sacramento and Davis on a potential Covid-19 vaccine that can be sent by mail to people sheltering in place.

The Napa-based company does its research in labs on the campus of University of California Davis and at the UC Davis Medical Center campus in Sacramento, said Dr. Daniel Henderson, CEO and chief science officer of the company.

"When you think of traditional vaccinations, they are administered by professionals in white coats with needles," Henderson said. "We eliminate all that."

Most current vaccines must be refrigerated, but Verndari's technology is temperature stable, so its VaxiPatch can be sent by mail and administered by the patient, he said.

Henderson said the vaccine and the patented VaxiPatch delivery system won't be on the market soon, as they need many months of testing. The company is beginning testing on mice this week on its vaccine that targets a so-called "spike" protein in viruses that allows the coronavirus to infect cells.

Verndari started up in 2015 to reduce threats due to viral outbreaks and to create a more effective way to distribute vaccinations for existing viruses, such as the seasonal flu, Henderson said.

The VaxiPatch uses tiny needles a half millimeter long that transfer vaccine into a layer of skin at the back of the arm within 10 minutes. It doesn't hurt, Henderson said, and it also has a dye package, so a person can take a picture of the grid pattern left by the micro-needles if they need to provide verification that they took the vaccine.

Verndari is funded by angel investors, and is currently looking to raise more money, Henderson said. He declined to say how much the company has raised since it started, but he told the Business Journal in 2018 that the Verndari had raised \$2.7 million at that time.

The company has 10 people working on the development of its technology, but it has only five paid employees, at this point.

In 2016, Verndari joined UC Davis' Venture Catalyst START Program, which offers entrepreneurs resources, contacts and services to form and grow startups.

"We are excited to work with Verndari to move its vaccine candidate through preclinical, and potentially clinical, studies," said Prasant Mohapatra, vice chancellor for research at UC Davis, in a news release. "This collaboration illustrates one of many ways that UC Davis is leveraging our unique expertise and established platform built on previous research for HIV, Zika and human cytomegalovirus in order to advance knowledge and solutions specific to Covid-19."