University of Colorado Denver's School of Medicine said Friday that its stem-cell research and treatment programs have been placed under a new regional center.

CU's Charles C. Gates Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Biology aims to draw more private and federal research funding for the university's stem-cell programs, as well as to advance stem-cell treatment through a partnership with the Colorado Prevention Center, a nonprofit medical research and disease prevention organization.

"The overall goal is to move stem-cell discoveries into therapies that could revolutionize medicine with new treatments for heart disease, Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, childhood diabetes, cancer and many more," the medical school said in a statement.

Dennis Roop, who has run stem-cell programs at the university's Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora since 2007, heads the new center.

In addition to drawing on the School of Medicine, a unit of UC Denver, the center will include expertise from the University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado State University, University of Colorado Hospital, the Denver Veterans Administration Medical Center, National Jewish Health and The Children's Hospital.

The center is named for the late businessman Gates of Gates Rubber Co., whose family has been active in philanthropy.

The stem-cell program currently employs about 60 full-time people, including faculty, technicians and postdoctoral fellows.

Researchers nationwide say stem cells hold promise as a way to treat a host of medical conditions by replacing or repairing various specialized body tissues.

"Most stem-cell research at the Anschutz Medical Campus uses adult stem cells, not embryonic stem cells," a university statement said. "The embryonic stem cells that are used are from lines approved by the federal government."

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