

# Epic Aims to ‘Revolutionize Cancer Care’

## MEDICINE:

Extending Lives, Cutting Waste Are Part of Goals

■ By JARED WHITLOCK

**Epic Sciences’ pitch: greater certainty.**

The company’s portfolio of tests guide cancer doctors deciding on a treatment path, including a test on the market for advanced prostate cancer.

Epic recently hauled in a \$52 million Series E round, making the privately held company well capitalized for the foreseeable future, according to CEO **Murali Prahalad**. Eventually, the San Diego-based company may look at an initial public offering, he said.

“Over the last several years, we’d made a pretty profound evolution from what I think is a breakthrough technology company to now a company that’s building products that we really believe will revolutionize cancer care,” Prahalad said.

As evidence of later-stage ambitions, the company in early September appointed **Katherine Atkinson** as its first chief commercial officer. Previously she was the vice president of business development at **Edico Genome**, which **Illumina** bought for \$100 million.

**EPIC SCIENCES** 

**CEO:** Murali Prahalad  
**FUNDING:** Raised \$40 million in a Series D round in 2017; \$52 million in Series E in 2018  
**NO. OF LOCAL WORKERS:** 78  
**HEADQUARTERS:** La Jolla  
**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2008  
**COMPANY DESCRIPTION:** Epic’s predictive tests and analytics guide clinicians and patients toward cancer drugs. The purpose is twofold: extend life and minimize spending on ineffective therapies.

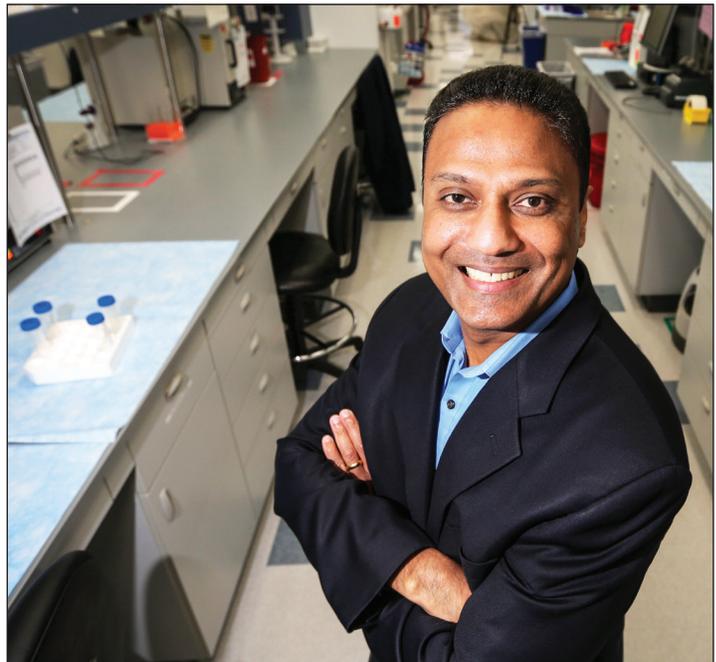
## Machine Learning, Computer Vision

Epic’s mission, put simply, is to find treatments most likely to work for a cancer patient. Its proprietary technology employs machine learning and computer vision to identify rare cancer cells in the blood and the immune system’s response.

Its tests, Prahalad said, are more predictive and give clearer answers than purely DNA-based tests.

“Our products ultimately extend lives for metastatic cancer patients, and I think that’s really differentiating. We’re not just providing the information. That information when used to select drugs appropriately, extends lives,” he said.

Proceeds from the financing will support the company’s portfolio of tests — and go toward integrating its platform with electronic medical records. This would record patterns of cancer cell evolution, drug selection and show outcomes.



File photo by Jamie Scott Lytle

**Murali Prahalad is the CEO of Epic Sciences. The company’s tests guide cancer doctors deciding on a treatment path.**

Along these lines, the company’s other major purpose is to cut down on unnecessary tests.

## Matching Up With Biology

“What Epic can do is reduce waste in the health care system. It’s ensuring only patients whose disease biology will benefit from specific drugs will actually get them. A lot of times patients are given drugs that are completely mismatched to their biology.”

This explains why the company is lining up partnerships with payers. It’s also working with pharmaceuticals and major cancer centers around the world.

The recent round was led by **Blue Ox Healthcare Partners**, with participation by **Deerfield Management** and **Varian**. Existing investors, including **Altos Capital Partners**, **Genomic Health, Inc.**, **Domain Associates**, **VI Ventures**, **Alexandria Venture Investments**, and **Sabby Management**, also participated in the financing.

Last year, Epic raised \$40 million in a Series D round. The company has 78 employees, with undisclosed hiring plans.

The company has its roots in technology developed at **The Scripps Research Institute**.

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