San Francisco, Calif. — Facebook Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg and his wife want to get rid of all disease by the end of this century.

The CEO and Priscilla Chan are committing $3 billion to science over the next 10 years. They hope to advance basic scientific research and create new research tools.

The goal, which they are unlikely to live to see accomplished, is to "cure, prevent or manage all disease" in the next 80 or so years. They acknowledge that this might sound crazy. However, they also point to how far medicine and science have come in the last century with vaccines to treat diseases like polio, chemotherapy to treat cancer, and so on. This came after thousands of years with little progress.

Zuckerberg said in an interview that if we keep up at the same pace, then by the end of the century many health issues can be solved. He and Chan have spent the past two years speaking to scientists and other experts to plan the project. He emphasized, "This isn't something where we just read a book and decided we're going to do."
Research Center In San Francisco

Through their philanthropic organization, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, they will commit $600 million to fund a new research center in San Francisco. There, scientific and medical researchers will work alongside engineers. They will spend many years on long-term projects. The goal is not to focus narrowly on specific problems, such as bone cancer or Parkinson’s disease, but rather to do basic research. For example, one project is a cell atlas that maps out all the different types of cells in the body. This could help researchers create various types of drugs.

Chan’s work as a pediatrician seems to be a big motivation in their couple’s decision to take up this latest cause.

"I've been with families where we've hit the limit of what's possible through medicine and science," Chan said. She added that she has had to tell families that there is nothing more they could do to help their child.

Zuckerberg and Chan hope that their effort will inspire other far-reaching efforts and collaboration in science, medicine and engineering. Their hope is that basic research will no longer just be done as an afterthought.

More Emphasis On Health Prevention

Zuckerberg said that we spend more money treating sick people than getting rid of diseases. He thinks that we should use the money to prevent illness, instead of assuming people will always be sick.

Eric Lander, a professor of biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said he has had some 20 conversations with Zuckerberg and Chan over the past year about the program. He called their goal "the right kind of goal for thinking about that kind of time frame." He is not involved with the project itself but expressed confidence in it.

"Mark has brought new models to industry with Facebook," he said. He added that while organizations like the National Institutes of Health are "fantastic," there is "no point in replicating what existing models do."

"It's very hard with today's science funding to build a team to work on scientific problems that are like what you would find at a world-class technology company," Zuckerberg said. "So that's something I think we can concretely help out with."

An Independent Facility

Their new center, called Biohub, will be run out of the University of California, San Francisco, though it will be independent from the school. The center will also work with UC Berkeley and Stanford University.
The Chan Zuckerberg science initiative will be headed by Cori Bargmann. She is a neuroscientist. Bargmann said the idea of bringing engineers and scientists together presents a "unique opportunity to take science in a new direction."

Zuckerberg said that creating better scientific tools is where they see need based on their conversations with scientists. He added that though there are people out there focusing on tool development, probably not enough is going towards it.

Tools, he added, are long-term projects. It will likely take years for the first tools to be developed through this initiative and even longer before they are used to cure diseases.

**Two Years In Developing The Program**

Zuckerberg and Chan have spent the past two years meeting with scientists and other experts to come up with the program. The two stressed that they believe that their goal can be accomplished. It may not happen in their lifetimes but could in their child's lifetime. It was their daughter's birth last November that inspired the billionaire couple to give away nearly all their money to help solve the world's problems.

At the time, they had more than $45 billion worth of Facebook stock. The couple transferred this to the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. The couple's charitable plan will not affect Zuckerberg's status as controlling shareholder of Facebook.

Zuckerberg and Chan often draw comparisons to Bill and Melinda Gates. The Gateses' philanthropic work also focuses on health and education. In an emailed statement, Bill and Melinda Gates said putting money "in basic science research is at the root of the world's most important innovations and achievements." Zuckerberg and Chan, they added, "are making an incredible commitment to research and development that will lead to the breakthroughs to cure disease and lift millions out of poverty."
Quiz

1 Which two of the following sentences from the article include central ideas of the article?

1. They hope to advance basic scientific research and create new research tools.
2. She added that she has had to tell families that there is nothing more they could do to help their child.
3. He thinks that we should use the money to prevent illness, instead of assuming people will always be sick.
4. The couple's charitable plan will not affect Zuckerberg's status as controlling shareholder of Facebook.

(A) 1 and 2
(B) 1 and 3
(C) 2 and 4
(D) 3 and 4

2 Which statement would be MOST important to include in a summary of the article?

(A) Biohub will create a cell atlas map project.
(B) The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative aims to develop better scientific tools.
(C) Chan and Zuckerberg feel badly for families with sick children.
(D) Millions of people will be lifted out of poverty by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

3 Eric Lander would be MOST likely to agree with which of the following statements?

(A) The Zuckerberg and Chan science initiative should be similar to the National Institutes of Health.
(B) Facebook can help motivate people to donate to the Chan Zuckerberg science initiative.
(C) The focus of the Chan Zuckerberg science initiative should be on disease treatment.
(D) The Chan Zuckerberg science initiative is a good plan and will offer something new.
What is the MOST important reason why Bill and Melinda Gates support the Chan Zuckerberg science initiative?

(A) The initiative was started by a technology company.

(B) Bill and Melinda Gates helped Zuckerberg and Chan build the initiative.

(C) The initiative funds important disease research that will help many people.

(D) The initiative focuses on education that will help millions of children.
Answer Key

1. Which two of the following sentences from the article include central ideas of the article?

   1. They hope to advance basic scientific research and create new research tools.
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