



## Manufacturing

### Rubius Therapeutics to invest \$155M, hire 160 workers for cell therapy plant

by [Eric Palmer](#) | Jul 10, 2018 11:45am

Enthusiasm in the immuno-oncology therapies being developed by Rubius Therapeutics has allowed the biotech to quickly raise \$220 million, a large chunk of which it will invest in a cell therapy manufacturing facility.

The Cambridge, Massachusetts-based company this week **announced** it would invest \$155 million to renovate a 135,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Smithfield, Rhode Island, where it will produce its cell-based therapies. The facility is expected to have 160 employees when it is completed in five years or so. In exchange, the company is getting some financial incentives from the state.

Rubius has built its pipeline around a technology to create and weaponize red blood cells in large quantities in bioreactors, a manufacturing method it thinks gives it an edge over CAR-T drugs. The process generates enucleated red cells that express one or more proteins either inside or on the surface of the cell, depending on whether the goal is to treat a cancer or enzyme-related disease.

If two or more proteins are expressed on the surface, the cell becomes a standalone immuno-oncology cocktail designed to deliver one-two punches such as the lowering of tumor defenses and orchestration of immune attacks, similar to what some companies are trying to achieve with two-drug combos.

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"We have been able to express both costimulatory molecules as well as other relevant proteins that are being used in immuno-oncology today on red cells. We don't need to combine those types of therapies because we can express them on red cells," Rubius President Torben Straight Nissen, Ph.D., said in March when it raised another \$100 million. "We almost have a pipeline within one product."

**RELATED: [Rubius raises \\$100M in crossover round as cell therapies near human testing](#)**

The crossover round brought the fundraising for Rubius, a Flagship Pioneering startup, to \$220 million in nine months. It had already said the money would be invested in clinical development and establishing its own manufacturing facility.

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