

## Flash Report: Partnering for Cures Conference

We attended the Partnering for Cures 2014 Conference held in New York City on November 18th and 19th. The conference is about speeding up the availability of cures for all diseases, and is sponsored by Faster Cures (part of the Milken Foundation).

We were interested in learning about aspects of the conference that could relate to speeding a Practical Cure for T1D.

While we attended many different sessions, there were three main takeaways from a majority of panels:

1. **The importance of utilizing big data to help speed a cure.** Many people spoke on the value of utilizing data from patients and human trials to help aid future cure development. Today only 50% of all past clinical trial data is openly available; the rest is protected, according to a Yale University Study. Without access to this information we cannot easily see what has failed and why, making it more difficult to predict what will work in the future.

2. **The necessity of creating ways to speed research through human trials, and especially, getting the funding to do so.** Investigators use various approaches in conjunction with the FDA to move through human trials faster to reach commercialization. Commentary focused on these approaches, particularly obtaining funding for the beginning of research, as well as the capital needed to pursue really out of the box ideas. The way funding works now, many scientists and projects are actively dissuaded from high-risk/high-reward projects because few people are willing to give money for possibly transformational (if highly unpredictable) science.

3. **The need to determine what criteria are actually helpful for deciding the value of a project.** Measuring value is a problem. No matter what criteria you use--be it how much the research could benefit society, or how quickly it could get off the bench, or whether or not it could spark an important breakthrough in a *different* field of medicine--each measure has the potential to drive research into narrower and less fruitful directions. Additionally, when looking at how past scientific milestones have changed society, it's often impossible, even with 20/20 hindsight, to have predicted how a minor discovery in one field could have led to a great discovery afterwards, which makes forecasting a significant issue.