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## Xhale board ceremoniously breaks ground

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A company founded around a University of Florida medical invention is gearing up to take on the health-care world with the start of construction of a 20,000-square-foot headquarters.

With the actual site preparation work already under way behind them, the board of Xhale Inc. ceremoniously broke ground Tuesday at SW 47th Avenue off SW 34th Street behind the main post office.

Xhale is developing hand-held devices that can immediately diagnose compounds or pharmaceutical levels in patients' breath, an alternative to blood or urine samples.

CEO Richard Allen said Xhale's building will be ready next spring or summer, about the time he is expecting approval from the Food and Drug Administration to start producing and distributing some products for market.

Over the next 5 years to 10 years, Xhale will probably have several businesses producing several product lines each, he said. Product areas include diagnostics for compounds such as blood-sugar levels, tests for patients and caregivers to check levels of specific medicines, tests for medicine levels for the clinical trial market and anesthesia monitors.

Board member David Dizney, president and CEO of United Medical Corporation, said the technology comes at a time when health care is moving toward home care and will benefit millions of people while lowering costs of diagnostic testing.

"It means better monitoring for the elderly who are on a complicated medication regimen. It means children will have less invasive diagnostic tools to monitor life-threatening illnesses. It means clinicians will have better information to monitor the amount of anesthesia patients are getting in surgical suites."

Xhale is becoming part of what has become a medical-device cluster behind the post office, with the new office being built next to Angiotech Medical Devices Technologies Inc. and across from Invivo Diagnostics Imaging. Allen said he chose the location for that reason, with the life sciences startups in Alachua being more for biology-based UF inventions.

"For our community, what it symbolizes is our further ascent as a premier location for life sciences and medical-device industries," said Brent Christensen, president of the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce.

He said he sees the genesis of Gainesville and Alachua County turning into one of the premier biotechnology hubs as successful businesses spin off serial entrepreneurs such as Allen that form new successful companies.

Allen was one of the founders of Regeneration Technologies Inc., now RTI Biologics Inc.

That growing opportunity is what drew international law firm Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP to Gainesville, according to partner John Igoe, who was on hand for Tuesday's ceremony.

The firm, with 600 lawyers in 11 offices along the East Coast and London, specializes in life sciences patents, licensing and venture capital deals, and it opened an office in the Sun Center in downtown Gainesville last week after having done work for UF technology licensing efforts.

"There are great opportunities to work with startup companies and licensees with the University of Florida," Igoe said. "It's a great environment for entrepreneurs." Dr. Richard Melker, professor of Anesthesiology, Pediatrics and Biomedical Engineering at UF, was lead inventor on most of the UF patents licensed to Xhale.

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