

Illumina, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos look to make universal cancer test reality

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What if a simple blood test could detect any cancer early, when it was still easy to treat?

It sounds like science fiction. But [Illumina](#), the \$24 billion biotechnology company that has pioneered cheap, efficient sequencing of DNA, says it could be a reality in a few years. It is launching a new startup, GRAIL (because such a test would be a holy grail for cancer doctors), with \$100 million in funding. Illumina will hold a majority share. Other backers include Sutter Hill Ventures, ARCH Ventures, [Jeff Bezos'](#) Bezos Expeditions and [Bill Gates](#). The startup could have vast medical, economic and societal implications—if the technology really works.

“Everything here is directed at being a pan-cancer test, something that is a universal test,” says Jay Flatley, who has been Illumina’s chief executive for sixteen years and has improved the power of DNA sequencing at a rate that exceeds improvements in microchips over the same period of time.

“It’s our largest investment ever,” says Robert Nelsen, a partner at ARCH, says of GRAIL. Nelsen helped found Illumina, and, more recently, some of the the most well-funded startups ever, including cancer company Juno Therapeutics, which raised \$310 million before its IPO, and Denali Therapeutics, focused on brain diseases, which raised \$217 million last year.

Read full, original post: [A Single Blood Test For All Cancers? Illumina, Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos Launch Startup To Make It Happen](#)