

Hoping to help heart attack patients, MU signs agreement with Global PET

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Following a heart attack, many patients consult with their doctors about the necessity of heart bypass surgery. However, the active ingredient for a test that helps determine the need for surgery could be in short supply in the near future. Now, an agreement signed by officials from the University of Missouri and Global PET Imaging LLC (GPI) could lead to a solution to that shortage.

In order to determine the condition of the heart and blood flow after a [heart attack](#), doctors usually prescribe two tests or scans of the heart and surrounding area. One of those scans uses a radioisotope known as Rubidium-82, but the supply of the isotope is limited because few facilities have the ability to make it. Today, officials from MU and GPI announced the signing of a "Letter of Intent" to create a processing facility for this isotope near the MU campus, taking advantage of expertise at the nation's largest university research reactor.

"The market for rubidium is growing much faster than the supply, and we must find a way to increase production for this isotope that could save many lives," said Steve Wyatt, MU vice provost for [economic development](#). "We have researchers and experts in nuclear medicine here on this campus that also is home to the nation's most powerful university research reactor. We already have experience in producing many other radioisotopes for medical use, and we're looking forward to the future of this partnership."

The agreement states that GPI will build a 70 MeV (million electron

volts) cyclotron and related facilities at MU's Discovery Ridge. MU scientists would supply the expertise to operate the cyclotron, which would produce the [active ingredient](#) for the heart test. MU also would have access to the machine for other research purposes.

"Hardly anything in health care is more important than good diagnostic imaging," said Rod D. Martin, executive chairman of GPI. "PET provides better data with lower isotope exposure to the patient. That means fewer false diagnoses, better early diagnoses, lower costs and saved lives.

"It's tragic that most Americans have inadequate access to this essential tool, simply because of a shortage of something we can produce so easily. Global PET brings the resources needed to change that, the team at MURR brings more talent and expertise than any similar facility on Earth, and together we will end this needless shortage and provide higher quality health care for all Americans, period."

"We're very excited about working with these two groups," said Mike Brooks, CEO of Regional Economic Development, Inc. of Columbia.

"When you combine this potential resource with the science expertise at MU and the expert [health care](#) that is available in the region, it is evident that Columbia is becoming a hub for the medical industry. The people of mid-Missouri are very fortunate to have these resources available to them in their own backyard."

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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