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From apparel to clinical trials: Lululemon Founder Commits $100 Million to Find Cure for FSHD

Chip Wilson suffers from a rare form of muscular dystrophy and seeks scientific innovators to find a cure to help him and others.

VANCOUVER, B.C. – The world's most successful entrepreneurs are often willing to share how lessons learned and resilience have shaped their business sense, but few transcend their successes to optimistically forge a path to overcome one's biggest challenge – their health.

Going public with his own story, Wilson, who was diagnosed with Facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy type 2 (FSHD2) at age 32, announced he has **committed $100 million and created a new venture, Solve FSHD,** with the objective of finding a cure for FSHD by 2027, targeting the underlying genetic cause or improving muscle function and growth.

"Solve FSHD will accelerate the underfunded development of drugs and therapies to stop muscle degeneration, increase muscle strength and improve the quality of life for those living with this," said Wilson, who stopped playing squash 10 years ago because he could no longer lift a racquet over his head.

At 67, the serial entrepreneur and father of five boys says his upper body is "very wasted." His legs have lost significant muscle tissue and Wilson can see a time in the not-so-distant future when he will need the assistance of a wheelchair.

"I can still walk, but I must be very intentional and present, or I will trip and fall. I do see a day when I will be unable to walk on my own," said the Canadian entrepreneur and venture philanthropist.
Currently, there is no cure for FSHD, a genetic disorder that has varying symptoms, severity, and progression. According to the Mayo Clinic, muscle weakness usually starts in the face, hip and shoulders. Onset usually occurs in the teenage years but can begin in childhood.

"It's one of the most prevalent adult muscular dystrophies. The investments of Solve FSHD now to help validate biomarkers and develop new therapies will pay dividends later for any company or researcher pursuing better therapies for FSHD. These investments form the foundation to support future clinical trials and serve as a seed for further funding and investment," adds Dr. Jeffrey Statland, Assistant Professor of Neurology at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Dr. Statland has conducted clinical and research training in neuromuscular diseases, with a primary interest in FSHD.

"Solve FSHD will support projects that normally wouldn't receive funding, including bottlenecks in the pipeline and thereby accelerating the development of clinical trials and novel therapies. We can move quickly and pursue multiple projects simultaneously," Wilson said.

Scientists, biotech and biopharma companies, muscular degeneration specialists and other researchers working in similar muscular dystrophy fields are all encouraged to contact Solve FSHD. Solve FSHD is seeking to fund or invest in potential research partners, companies, and clinicians interested in advancing related research and clinical trials.

Solve FSHD also wants to hear from those with FSHD or who suspect they may have it, who can help by volunteering to join a contact registry for clinical trials.

"FSHD is life-altering and I know my future will be challenging," said Wilson. "I prefer not to sit in the stands but go out on the courts with my time and money to help this important cause so very close to my heart. In this way, there is something to smile about for those touched by FSHD."

-30-

About Solve FSHD
Solve FSHD is funding innovative biotech and biopharma research and development activities that accelerate novel treatments of Facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy (FSHD) treatment. It is fully funded and created by Canadian entrepreneur and philanthropist Chip Wilson. The founder of yoga-inspired athletic apparel company Lululemon Athletica inc. has been living with FSHD for the last three decades of his life. He has committed $100 million of his own money to create Solve FSHD and kick-start funding into projects that fit the organization's mission: accelerate research into new therapies and find a cure for the disorder by 2027.

Future announcements for grant funding will be issued on Solve FSHD's website - https://solvefshd.com/

For early-stage companies, contact Solve FSHD at info@solvefshd.com.

If you have FSHD and want to find out about clinical trials or be included in the FSHD registry, please see Solve FSHD's website - https://solvefshd.com/

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