

New Program Strengthens a Storied Legacy in Biomedical Research

The Boettcher Foundation, the Webb-Waring Foundation and the University of Colorado Build Upon a Rich History of Colorado Contributions to Biomedical Innovation

When the history of Colorado is told, stories are often filled with tales of traders, trappers, miners and settlers who were drawn to the base of the Rocky Mountains in search of fortune during the Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1859. An estimated 100,000 people poured into the Territory of Colorado, seventeen years before Colorado became a state. Though gold was discovered, it was the subsequent unearthing of silver, coal and other minerals that helped form the basis of the region's economy. It was during this period that Charles Boettcher set up shop in Leadville to provide silver miners with their necessary hardware. What is often overlooked in the historical accounts of the time, however, is the critical role that Colorado played as an innovative medical center for the treatment of tuberculosis, a deadly infectious disease. It was, in fact, this biomedical activity that drove Colorado's growth much more so than the mining industry. By 1900, approximately 200,000 people traveled to one of Colorado's sanitariums, with the hope that the state's physicians, researchers, sunshine and high altitude would all contribute to the treatment or eradication of tuberculosis. Colorado quickly established itself as one of the world's foremost research and treatment regions for diseases of the lung. This compelling legacy remains steadfast today, reinforced by the vision of the founders, friends, families, faculty and trustees of the Boettcher Foundation, the Webb-Waring Foundation and the University of Colorado with the establishment of the Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards for Colorado-based early-career investigators.

In 1905, Dr. Gerald B. Webb placed Colorado at the forefront of infectious disease treatment and prevention research as he industriously worked to develop a tuberculosis vaccine at the Colorado Springs-based Cragmor Sanitarium. In 1907, James Waring, then a young medical student at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, contracted tuberculosis and was left with no choice but to suspend his studies and seek treatment at Cragmor where Dr. Webb served as his attending physician. The two intellectuals became fast friends having shared, among other things, a piqued interest in medical history. Once fully recovered, Dr. Waring resumed his medical education and graduated from the University of Colorado School of Medicine in 1913. He then continued on both practicing and teaching medicine at his alma mater, collecting throughout a celebrated career a vast array of prestigious awards. Among his accomplishments, Dr. Waring assumed the first full-time professorship and later became the first Chief of Medicine at the University of Colorado.

In May of 1924, Dr. Webb established the Colorado Foundation for Research in Tuberculosis (CFRT), a nonprofit institution focused on disease prevention and cures. Upon Dr. Webb's death, some 24 years later, Dr. Waring assumed the institution's leadership role as President and Research Director. Dr. Waring relocated the institution in 1952 to the University of Colorado Medical Campus in Denver, where it stood as an independent institution for nearly fifty-five years. When the CFRT building was erected in 1953, it was partially funded by a grant from the Boettcher Foundation. In 1959, the institution was renamed the Webb Institute for Medical Research to reflect a shift in research emphasis to include a broader spectrum of diseases, though a focus on diseases of the lung remained. Following Dr. Waring's death in 1962, the Institute was renamed the Webb-Waring Lung Institute. Over the years that followed, several additional branding efforts were employed to reflect the broadening scientific endeavors of the Institute, evolving in 1989 to the Webb-Waring Institute for Biomedical Research. The work of the Institute was supported by a separate endowment funded by Ruth Porter Waring, Dr. Waring's wife. This endowment led to the establishment of a separate but related entity known as the Webb-Waring Foundation.

In 2008, through an inventive agreement with the University of Colorado, the Webb-Waring Institute officially integrated into the University of Colorado Denver's Anschutz Medical Campus and is now known as the Webb-Waring Center at the University of Colorado. At the same time, the Webb-Waring Foundation entrusted its assets, which included a generous contribution from the University of Colorado, to the Boettcher Foundation. The Boettcher Foundation gratefully accepted stewardship of these funds,

as this presented a new opportunity to expand the Foundation's legacy of investing in the minds of Colorado, as the Foundation has been doing for over 50 years with the Boettcher Scholarship Program. To further its commitment to this new area of giving, the Boettcher Foundation then matched the contribution and through a cooperative agreement between the Webb-Waring Foundation and the Boettcher Foundation, the Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Program was created.

The Boettcher Foundation's Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Program extends a legacy of excellence in the sciences by supporting Colorado-based early-career investigators engaged in biomedical research. The program will function to attract and retain world-class scientific talent, and through proven fiduciary management practices ensure that resources are in place to continue the development and growth of the state's robust scientific and medical acumen.