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Speed by which is spreading is amazing. It is now coming it WSJ and few others.

And it was not even coordinated - it was actually worked to stop it.

[Bill Gates Invests In Cancer DNA Sequencing Firm](#)

Matthew Herper – **Forbes**

"Advances in understanding the human genome are having a dramatic impact on almost every area of medicine. Foundation Medicine's approach in harnessing the power of genomic data to improve care for cancer patients could represent an extremely important step forward in improving routine cancer care. I'm happy to be supporting this quite promising approach."

With those words in a press release this morning, Bill Gates, the world's second-richest man, announced that he was investing in Foundation Medicine, a Cambridge, Mass.-based company that sells a \$5,800 diagnostic test that uses DNA sequencing to help doctors guess which cancer drugs would be helpful in fighting a particular patient's tumor.

Foundation, which previously listed Kleiner Perkins Caulfield & Byers and Google Ventures, raised \$13.5 million in the series B round in which Gates participated, bringing its total take to \$56 million. The other investors were Facebook billionaire Yuri Milner, who also recently invested in the personal genomics company 23andMe, and Evan Jones, the diagnostics industry legend who founded DiGene, which was sold to Qiagen for \$1.6 billion in 2007. Jones will also join Foundation's board.

Founded in April 2010 by Third Rock Ventures, Foundation is one of the first companies to aim to take advantage of the explosion in DNA sequencing technology, which has been cheaper and more powerful at a rate that exceeds the famous Moore's Law that drives the constant increases in microchips and computer power. It now costs as little as \$1,000 to get a fairly accurate readout of the 6 billion letters of DNA code for any single person.

In cancer, the approach right now is usually not to sequence all a patient's DNA or that of his tumor, but instead to focus on particular genetic mutations in the tumor that might provide clues as to what medicines to try. Major cancer centers are using this approach with patients for whom it's not obvious which medicine represents the best bet. Foundation's approach has been to provide that kind of testing to a larger audience. To do so, it uses the DNA sequencing machines made by Illumina and other companies.

"What we want to do is take this testing to the community practices to treat patients where they live," Michael Pellini, Foundation's chief executive, told me in 2011.

There is some evidence backing up that test. In a study conducted with the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and published in *Nature Medicine*, found that more than half of patients with lung and colon cancer might benefit from the test.

It is difficult to analyze DNA data, Foundation's test is anything but a full genome, as I've quipped previously, it's a \$6,000 .02% of the genome, showing how much of the problem of using genetic information will need to coming from solving computational and analytical problems — exactly the kind of thing that Bill Gates has always been interested in both at Microsoft and in his work getting lifesaving vaccines to children all around the world.

Gates has a longstanding interest in biotechnology. In 2001, *BusinessWeek* called biotech Gates' "other passion," noting his large stake and board seat in ICOS, since sold to Eli Lilly, and his investment in a Seattle cancer drug company called Corixa. But lately Gates' interest has seemed more focused on the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and when he is mentioned in drug industry circles it is usually for his vaccine work. Could this be a change? It's a small investment, especially for Gates; we'll just have to wait and see.