

San Antonio-based biotech claims Houston space, remains committed to Alamo City

[StemBioSys](#) Inc. is expanding its reach to Houston, having struck a deal for space in [Johnson & Johnson Innovation's](#) JLABS complex, a life science innovation center in the Texas Research Park that provides an environment for startup companies pursuing new technologies and research platforms.

The San Antonio-based biotech, however, has no plans to abandon its headquarters here for the Bayou City.

Johnson & Johnson has created a model under which resident companies are free to develop products on their own or through a partnership with it or other companies.

"This is incubator space for startup biotechs," StemBioSys CEO Bob Hutchens said. "It's space for us to use when we are in Houston. From a company standpoint, this lets us get some access to folks with Johnson & Johnson."

That could lead to some tempting opportunities. But Hutchens insists the privately held company, which manufactures and develops innovative and advanced stem cell technologies that support work in regenerative medicine, isn't looking to move its operations to Houston.

"We're not going anywhere," he said. "We are looking at additional investments here."

Earlier this year, StemBioSys cleared a major hurdle on its path to commercialization. The company, which previously struck distribution deals for its stem cell products on multiple continents, secured an exclusive marketing and distribution agreement with VWR Corp. for the U.S. and Canada.

While Houston has built critical mass in the biosciences, Hutchens said there are plenty of advantages for StemBioSys to remain in San Antonio. Among them are the successes the company has had in recruiting and retaining scientific talent here, as well as in forming collaborative allegiances with other Alamo City institutions.

Affordability also works in San Antonio's favor.

"The cost of doing business here is a phenomenal advantage for us," Hutchens said, adding, "We're not leaving San Antonio."

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