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Parse Biosciences Expands Single-Cell Product Line, Global Reach

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Premium

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA – Parse Biosciences, a startup offering plate-based single-cell transcriptomics kits, is opening up early-access programs for two new assays: targeted single-cell RNA sequencing and a product to enable single-cell CRISPR perturbation screens.

And in the second half of the year, Parse plans to launch early access for two more new products: a single-cell ATAC-seq (assay for transposase-accessible chromatin by sequencing) kit and an immune-cell receptor profiling kit, Parse Cofounders Alex Rosenberg and Charlie Roco — the firm's CEO and chief technology officer, respectively — told *GenomeWeb* this week at the Built With Biology conference, formerly known as SynbioBeta.

The new products will help Parse compete with 10x Genomics, which already offers solutions for all of the applications Parse is pursuing. They're also an indication of the firm's expanding business.

In the last half year or so, the Seattle-based company has closed a $41.5 million Series B financing round, doubled to approximately 50 employees, begun selling globally, and launched two more kits: a 1 million cell whole-transcriptome kit and a "mini" 10,000-cell kit.

Rosenberg said there has been "significant demand" for the smaller kit. "Most people are not ready to sequence 1 million cells," he said, adding that the mini kit has "catalyzed usage" by giving researchers the ability to run more cells without driving up sequencing costs. The company now has over 300 customers, he said in a presentation Wednesday.

The new products will be sold as add-ons to any of the three whole-transcriptome kits. Parse has already begun an early-access program for the targeted panels and the so-called "focal barcoding" kits, and is looking to expand that to additional customers.

Early access comes with a product discount and "extra support," Roco said, though the company declined to disclose pricing for the kits. He expects the early-access program to be smaller than the one for its whole-transcriptome kits, which had around 40 customers.

The targeted sequencing kit has been validated at sizes ranging from 700 to 1,000 genes and will be customizable, though the firm will have a standard panel for immunology research. Eventually, Parse plans to offer additional standard panels, Rosenberg said. Target enrichment is achieved with hybridization probes and pull-down with magnetic beads.

The focal barcoding kit will enable CRISPR screens but also experiments where specific genes are of interest in addition to the transcriptome. To enable CRISPR screens, "you really need [to sequence] a lot of cells in parallel with doing the guide RNA," he said. Researchers often want to do thousands of perturbations in a screen, but "in order to understand if a perturbation is real, you need 30 to 50 cells to

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understand what genes are being perturbed," he said, which limits the number of perturbations possible with lower-throughput methods.

Rosenberg added that the ATAC-seq assay is a priority for the company and that there's already "a lot of demand" for it.

Parse will also benefit from selling into markets outside of the US. The firm has a European sales rep and has signed distribution deals with Decode Science in Australia and Singapore-based Research Instruments for Southeast Asia.

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