

**DIVE BRIEF**

Epigenic joins wave of startups raising cash to edit the epigenome

The China-based company is one of at least four young biotechs in a competitive race to use CRISPR tools to alter gene expression without changing DNA.

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Dive Brief:

- A Chinese biotechnology startup promising “breakthrough” medicine with the use of a hot new gene modulation technology has raised \$32 million in a Series A financing.
- Epigenic Therapeutics attracted investments from Qiming Venture Partners, OrbiMed and existing investor Morningside Venture Capital in its latest funding round. The company, founded in 2021, said the money will be used for research, corporate expansion and initial clinical validation of two experimental programs.
- The Shanghai-based biotech is focused on epigenetic editing, an approach built on CRISPR technology. Its pipeline includes potential treatments for cardiovascular, metabolic, ocular and rare diseases as well as viral hepatitis.

Dive Insight:

Nobel-prizing winning work on CRISPR gene editing has opened the doors to a raft of new companies that promise ever-greater precision.

Initially, CRISPR was often described as “molecular scissors” that could cut through DNA and make changes to alter the course of a disease. Companies are now increasingly attracting investors and partners by attempting more targeted adjustments in DNA, using technologies such as base editing, prime editing and RNA editing.

The draw of epigenetic editing is the possibility of tweaking gene expression without fundamentally changing DNA. The idea is to turn a particular gene on or off to target a disease, but avoid irreversible genetic changes that could end up harming a patient. Proponents say such therapies may even be able to tackle conditions that can’t be helped by existing technologies.

It’s an enticing prospect. In the last two years, a number of startups have emerged hoping to harness the technology. Chroma Medicine is among the most well-funded of the group, raising \$135 million in a Series B round earlier this year and just recently striking a development deal with Sangamo Therapeutics. The emerging group also includes Tune Therapeutics and Epic Bio.