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11 Startups Selected for New Life Sciences Accelerator Program

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The University at Buffalo in collaboration with Launch NY, Invest Buffalo Niagara and the Western New York Incubator Network, has selected 11 companies to participate in Critical Path, a new life sciences program that provides world-class mentoring, networking and venture capital to startups.

The five-month program, sponsored by National Grid and the U.S. Small Business Administration, is part of the Buffalo VilCap Communities Accelerator Program. VilCap stands for Village Capital, a Washington, D.C.-based organization that supports entrepreneurship.

Critical Path companies will receive mentorship in finance issues, intellectual property, U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations, commercialization strategies, fundraising, investor relations, and sales and marketing. Companies will use a peer-selection process to provide each other with feedback on their businesses and to choose two companies that each will receive a \$50,000 investment from the Launch NY Seed Fund at the program's conclusion.

Critical Path organizers will host a daylong kickoff event on Sept. 22 at UB's New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences. Three-day workshops featuring facilitator Holly Hillberg, president of Hillberg Consulting and a former executive at Johnson & Johnson and OrthoClinical Diagnostics, will follow on Oct. 20-22, Nov. 17-19 and Jan. 11-13.

Critical Path comes after Buffalo's selection as one of 16 communities nationwide for the VilCap Communities program, which itself is a follow up initiative to AOL founder Steve Case's Rise of the Rest tour. Case invested \$100,000 in a new local biotech company during last fall's Rise of the Rest stop in Buffalo. Now, the Steve Case-supported VilCap accelerator program — sponsored by Rise of the Rest, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and the Sorenson Impact Center — will help additional biomedical companies in Western New York.

The 11 Critical Path companies are:

Abcombi Biosciences, Inc., Buffalo, aims to provide universally-protective vaccines for complex diseases such as pneumonia and strep throat.

AccuTheranostics, Inc., Buffalo, developed ChemoFit, a specialized chemo sensitive/chemo resistance assay using a patient's own tumor cells in a laboratory to identify which drugs have the most, and the least, potential for treating patient's unique cancer.

Coqui3D, Inc., Buffalo, is building a virtual reality surgical simulator platform connected to big data.

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Disease Diagnostic Group, Inc., Buffalo, focuses on screening, tracking, and diagnosing highly infectious diseases in the developing world through portable and reusable devices.

Efferent Labs, Inc., Buffalo, is a medical technology company developing biosensor systems.

Garwood Medical Devices, LLC, Buffalo, is a medical device company developing a new class of programmable electrical stimulation devices with integrated sensor and communications technologies, enabling monitoring and treatment for wound healing, bone growth and per-prosthetic (implant) infections, enhancing quality-of-life by improving patient mobility and decreasing clinician intervention.

Infonaut, Inc., Buffalo, is a health care information technology and analytics company that solves the global challenge of deadly hospital infections with its IBM Watson-enabled solution.

Ionica Sciences, Inc., Ithaca, is focused on the commercialization of in vitro diagnostics platform for difficult to diagnose infectious disease by exploiting the sensitivity of Raman spectroscopy and the selectivity of DNA aptamers.

Motion Intelligence, Inc., Syracuse, works with top academic institutions, medical researchers and engineers to translate breakthrough findings into thoughtfully developed and scientifically sound assessment applications.

Nidus Biosciences, LLC, Rochester, is an early-stage University of Rochester biotechnology spinout formed to commercialize its patented microbubble array platform technology of arrays of nanoliter-capacity microbubble cavities for advanced methods of cell-growth and screening, particularly growth and screening of single and few cells for development and validation of new biologics.

POP Biotechnologies, LLC, Buffalo, is a life sciences company committed to improving the health of individuals with next-generation nanomedicine solutions.

Critical Path also announced today the members of its inaugural advisory committee, which will provide guidance, mentorship and expertise during the five-month program. The advisory group includes:

- Ashish Shah, Greatbatch
- Brian McIlroy, UB; Buffalo Institute for Genomics & Data Analytics
- Cynthia Green, Pfizer
- George Grobe, Valeant Pharmaceuticals
- Grant Carr, Albany Molecular Research Inc.
- Hugh Davies, Praxair
- Rory Curtis, Albany Molecular Research Inc.
- Steve Hossenlopp, Mentholatum

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The program will tap additional expertise from industry and investment communities through Launch NY's Entrepreneurs-in-Residence and National Mentor Network, as well as UB's alumni network and other connections among Critical Path organizers.

About Launch New York

Launch NY is a 501© (3) venture development organization whose mission is to identify, support and invest in high-growth, high-impact companies and catalyze the entrepreneurial culture to drive job and wealth creation in the 27 westernmost counties of Upstate New York.

About Invest Buffalo Niagara

Invest Buffalo Niagara is the region's nonprofit, privately funded economic development organization focused on job creation, with a mission to attract new employers through outreach to growing companies around the world.

About Western New York Incubator Network

The Western New York Incubator Network (WIN) is a NYSTAR Innovation Hot Spot program that is a collaborative effort of business incubators that expands entrepreneurial services, helps startups, and grows wealth in our region. Win works together to help incubator ventures grow quickly, achieve greater profitability, and become more attractive to investors.

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