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Breast Cancer Startup Challenge announces ten winning teams of entrepreneurs; *Promising technologies identified to speed cancer research*

Ten winners of a world-wide competition to bring emerging breast cancer research technologies to market faster were announced today by the Avon Foundation for Women, in partnership with the National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Center for Advancing Innovation (CAI). Avon is providing \$250,000 in funding for this Challenge.

The Breast Cancer Startup Challenge is comprised of 10 research technologies that were judged to show great promise to advance breast cancer research. These 10 inventions were developed at NCI or at an Avon Foundation-funded university lab and include therapeutics, diagnostics, prognostics, one device, one vaccine, one delivery system and one health IT invention. Teams of business, legal, medical/scientific, engineering, computer science students and seasoned entrepreneurs have evaluated these technologies to create business plans and start new companies to develop and commercialize them.

“Today, progress in breast cancer research depends on step-change advances in technology and on paradigm-shifting strategies to rapidly bring these advances to market so they can be used by scientists and physician,” said Rosemarie Truman, founder and CEO, CAI. “Thanks to the Avon Foundation and the National Cancer Institute, CAI has been able to identify potentially

breakthrough technologies that harness the intelligence, experience and creativity of the innovative thinkers in the challenge. The challenge has exceeded expectations and we are thrilled with the results. We believe that this is a novel, sustainable model that can be institutionalized to commercialize federally-owned inventions and philanthropically-funded inventions that will accelerate and increase the volume of progress in research and ultimately save the lives of many women stricken by breast cancer. We are grateful for the support we've received from the Biotechnology Industry Organization, the White House, the Association of University Technology Managers and the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers that have helped us jump-start the program launch and continue to assist us in gaining adoption for this program.”

Two hundred teams expressed an interest in joining the challenge and 46 teams were accepted to compete on a range of business plan possibilities. In total, 478 people participated in the competition. Given the number of teams and people on each team, this challenge is one of the largest global university business plan challenges to date. The 10 business plan winners and finalists include:

- **Challenge #1 - Diagnostic from Biopsies with Software Analysis**
Winner - University of Cambridge; Lead Inventor - [Tom Misteli, Ph.D.](#), NCI
- **Challenge #2 - Immunotherapy Using Modified Self Tumor Cells**
Winner- Washington University in Saint Louis; Lead Inventor - [Dennis Klinman, M.D., Ph.D.](#), NCI
- **Challenge #3 - Combination of Tissue Reconstruction and Recurrence Prevention**
Winner - Tulane University; Lead Inventor - Karen Burg, Ph.D., Clemson University
Finalist – Clemson University
- **Challenge #4 - Human Monoclonal Antibody Based Cancer Therapies**
Winner - Stanford University; Lead Inventor - [Mitchell Ho, Ph.D.](#), NCI
- **Challenge #5 -Immunotherapy Using Granulysin Activated Monocytes**
Winner - Northwestern University; Lead Inventor - [Alan Krensky, M.D.](#), Northwestern University (formerly NCI)
- **Challenge #6 - Anti-cancer Toxin**
Winner – Rutgers University; Lead Inventor - [Nadya Tarasova, Ph.D.](#), NCI
- **Challenge #7 - Versatile Delivery Method for Cancer Therapeutics**
Winner - University of Cambridge; Lead Inventors - Stanislaw J. Kaczmarczyk, Ph.D. & Deb Chatterjee, Ph.D., NCI
Finalist – Wake Forest University
- **Challenge #8 –Genomic-based Diagnostic Assay**
Winner - University of California, Berkeley; Lead Inventor: [Steven Libutti, M.D., FACS](#), Albert Einstein College of Medicine (formerly NCI)

- **Challenge #9 -Tissue-based Diagnostic Assay**
Winner - McGill University; Lead Inventor - [Stephen M. Hewitt, M.D., Ph.D.](#), NCI
- **Challenge #10 - Diagnostic Kit for Therapy Benefit Prediction**
Winner - Tulane University; Lead Inventor - Sherry Yang, MD., Ph.D., NCI

“NCI has always had a strong interest in fostering young investigators and the fact that this challenge pairs each student team with entrepreneur-mentors to assist in the development of the business plans is another example of how we can bring new ideas and energy to cancer research,” said Douglas Lowy, M.D., NCI deputy director.

Winners and finalists in the Breast Cancer Startup Challenge will not only be recognized for creating a business plan and pitch, as other competitions require, but they will also be invited to launch a start-up, negotiate licensing agreements and raise seed funding to further develop these NCI and Avon Foundation grantee inventions.

“We are looking forward to start-ups launching around these inventions to accelerate breast cancer research and break the mold of how research is funded,” said Marc Hurlbert, Ph.D. executive director, Avon Foundation for Women. “This new approach, through our partnership with NCI and CAI, will help translate promising inventions from the academic laboratory to development and commercialization, and ultimately benefit breast cancer patients.”

For more information on the Challenge, please go to

<http://www.breastcancerstartupchallenge.com>

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The [Avon Foundation for Women](#), the world’s largest corporate-affiliated philanthropy focused on issues that matter most to women, was founded in 1955 to improve the lives of women. Through 2013, Avon global philanthropy, led by the Avon Foundation, has donated more than \$957 million in more than 50 countries for causes most important to women. Today, Avon philanthropy focuses on funding breast cancer research and access to care through the [Avon Breast Cancer Crusade](#), and efforts to reduce domestic and gender violence through its [Speak Out Against Domestic Violence](#) program. Visit www.avonfoundation.org for more information.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) leads the National Cancer Program and the NIH effort to dramatically reduce the prevalence of cancer and improve the lives of cancer patients and their families, through research into prevention and cancer biology, the development of new interventions, and the training and mentoring of new researchers. For more information about

cancer, please visit the NCI website at <http://www.cancer.gov> or call NCI's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237).

The Center for Advancing Innovation (CAI) is a global public-private partnership non-profit focused on creating a virtuous circle of innovation and driving growth breakthroughs through novel, creative paradigms and models. CAI's mission is to accelerate and increase the volume of technology transfer, translational research, commercialization and entrepreneurship in various fields of research, including biomedical research, to make more research available to the world for educational and innovation purposes, improve the economy and positively impact world health. For more information about CAI, please visit <http://www.thecenterforadvancinginnovation.org>.