

Case Study

Medical Device Partnering Program fosters sector-wide collaboration for commercialisation



The Medical Device Partnering Program (MDPP) at Flinders University fosters collaborations between inventors, researchers, industry, manufacturers, end-users and government, to help develop cutting-edge medical devices.

The initiative was designed to foster collaboration between all relevant parties in developing new medical devices, streamlining the complex process of bringing new products to market, and creating new commercial opportunities for traditional local manufacturers.

The MDPP is a unique industry engagement program, developed by the Medical Device Research Institute (MDRI) at Flinders University. It facilitates the development of medical devices by coordinating the efforts of key stakeholders, providing a mechanism for the development of prototypes, proof of concept and/or commercialisation planning for potential Australian medical device products.

The MDPP's Medical Technologies Program (MTP), supported by the Government of South Australia through its Manufacturing Works Medical Technologies Program, provides companies and individuals with subsidised research assistance and commercialisation planning for potential medical devices.

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Inventors from research, industry and clinical settings are invited to submit their product ideas for review to be selected for assistance through the MDPP. If selected, projects receive up to 250 hours of professional expertise, including commercial advice, proof of concept research, prototyping and clinical evaluation.

With access to a diverse set of expertise from across South Australia's three universities and other partners, including the MDRI, other specialist research centres, business advisors, government agencies and local manufacturing companies, the MDPP draws on a particularly wide range of specialist advice.

The MDPP is unique in a number of aspects:

- The program is accessible to all. Anyone can submit a product idea to the MDPP, which means that projects are sourced from companies, clinicians, end-users, inventors, researchers, engineers and more. This opens up the field for identifying and developing new product opportunities with real clinical relevance.
- It brings together a wide network of stakeholders in the medical development process, encouraging growth for the whole industry.
- The MDPP provides practical assistance and development, as well as facilitating targeted partnerships between inventors, end-users, and manufacturers.
- It provides a non-competitive environment for research collaboration across research institutions.

The MDPP has assisted over 180 companies or inventors with their projects, and has assessed over 300 project ideas. Since July 2013, when the MTP program was implemented, there have been 141 projects pitched, and 19 projects funded to date.

"Without a doubt, working with the MDPP has been the best investment I've made in my business. The access to resources and industry the MDPP provides is unique, and is incredibly valuable for start-ups like mine," said registered nurse and Innovo Healthcare Director Allan Perriam, who worked with the MDPP to develop the U-Stand Frame, an innovative product which helps people with decreased mobility transition from sitting to standing.

By supporting the development of new medical devices, the MDPP is assisting the general public, by helping to realise new products which may improve medical outcomes, as well as the South Australian economy, by creating new opportunities for entrepreneurs, businesses and manufacturers.

For example, the MDPP has recently completed projects developing a tamper-proof nasal drug delivery device for use in emergency pain management, a foldable waterproof splint for arm fractures, a real-time hydration monitoring device for use in mining and sports environments, a frame which helps with sit-to-stand transfers in aged care environments, and an orthopaedic device which removes the need for multiple x-rays when fixing bone fractures. These are just a few examples of the projects the MDPP has assisted.

MDPP Director, Professor Karen Reynolds, said: "The MDPP comprises a world-class research team, the equipment and facilities to undertake medical device development and prototyping, and is a driver for medical device projects across South Australia and beyond."

Visit www.flinders.edu.au/mdpp to take part.