



From:

Rachel Dreilinger, Co-Founder & CEO
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March 18, 2019

To:

Representative John Lively, Chair
House Committee on Economic Development
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for the Oregon Innovation Council (Oregon InC), experience with ONAMI

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Bonham, Vice-Chair Fahey, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of the Oregon Innovation Council (Oregon InC) programs administered by the Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E) division of the Oregon Business Development Department. Oregon InC provides critical guidance into how best to invest limited dollars to support innovation in Oregon. In addition, Oregon InC provides critical funding for early-stage companies trying to commercialize technology and create the next generation of Oregon businesses. Funding for businesses at this stage is very difficult to find, and Oregon InC's programs help fill these gaps. I am specifically writing about my experience with ONAMI's commercialization GAP fund, graduate student internship program, and other support programs that have been beneficial to my company.

NeuraMedica Inc. is a neurosurgery device company that was founded in 2014 to commercialize a bioabsorbable polymer surgical clip for durotomy repair in spinal surgery (closing openings in the membrane that covers the brain and spinal cord). We are located in Oregon City, Oregon and were founded based on a technology developed out of Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in Portland, Oregon. I am a biomedical engineer as well as Co-Founder and CEO of the company, and a member of the Diné (Navajo) Nation; our company is woman-owned. Obtaining funding for this company has been extremely challenging and one of the biggest reasons for delays in our commercialization process. There are always technical challenges in engineering projects but it can be impossible to move forward at times without adequate funding. Additionally, working with various funding groups from investors to grant organizations can be time-consuming and arduous which again, impacts important commercialization milestones.

NeuraMedica has raised \$2.4 million to-date in a combination of grant and investment funding. We have obtained grants from OHSU, the National Science Foundation (NSF SBIR Phase I), the National Institute of Health (NIH SBIR Phase II), as well as Oregon InC. We have also received a variety of funding and support from ONAMI including GAP funding, a grant to support a full-time post-doc graduate student



intern for a full year, as well as a dramatically reduced fee for a professional, high-quality market research program. The ONAMI GAP funding we received was instrumental in allowing us to continue development of our product during the many long lulls in alternative financing and grants.

Additionally, I cannot say enough good things about the wonderful ONAMI graduate student internship program! This was offered at a critical moment when we needed PhD-level engineering/research support but did not have the funding to hire anyone. Because of ONAMI we were able to hire a full-time PhD Biomedical Engineer who had recently graduated from OHSU. She helped me apply for an NSF SBIR Phase I grant which we received. That grant enabled NeuraMedica to hire her full-time and she became our first employee. She is now Director of Research and an absolutely integral part of our young startup!

ONAMI also helped my company early-on with a fantastic market research program facilitated by an expert consultant. With the help of ONAMI, their consultant, and a group of graduate student volunteers at the University of Oregon we conducted ten interviews with neurosurgeons and orthopedic spine surgeons throughout the United States (primary market research) as well as secondary market research to support our commercialization process. This research was instrumental in helping us craft our commercialization plan and obtain follow-on funding. It also taught us valuable skills in interviewing surgeons and customers which we went on to utilize during our NSF Boot Camp program which required 30 customer interviews.

ONAMI has been a big part of the success of NeuraMedica and we have benefited greatly from their programs. Additionally, subsequent to our funding, my main ONAMI contact, Skip Rung has always been available and willing to help, providing both advice, counsel, and critical letters of support for the various federal grants that we have submitted. I know that they are trying to help our company succeed and we are very grateful for their past and on-going support.

Based on my experience working with Oregon InC and ONAMI specifically, I strongly encourage the Legislature to continue to fund these extremely beneficial programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel", is positioned above the typed name.

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