



Hamilton Health Innovation Check-up: Meeting Minutes

June 2022

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STANDING AGENDA TOPICS:

- **Guest Speaker Discussion:** insights around the experience and expertise of an invited speaker, focusing on a subject that may be of interest to the broader community
- **Communicate:** share recent successes, upcoming events, innovation pipeline and new products, health innovation trends, etc.
- **Collaborate & Accelerate:** welcome new members to community, partnership opportunities, discover programming and resources available to the community, discuss market gaps and challenges, learn about potential funding opportunities, new RFPs issued, etc.

Facilitator & Note Taker
Virtual Location

Alex Muggah, Director, Synapse Consortium
Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/405351918>
Dial in: +1-647-558-0588,,405351918#
Register here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/uZQodOyppzoiQnRwfvVuEJtEMUpKPUZPzg>

Next Monthly Check-up: July 25th 9:00 – 10:00am | McMaster Innovation Park (via Zoom)
Please sign up to our [mailing list](#) to receive meeting minutes and other important updates.

Finding collaborative partners for health companies and researchers can be difficult. Synapse has created the [Hamilton Health Ecosystem Directory](#) and the [Health Innovation Partnership Portal](#) (HIPP) to facilitate finding new partners within Canada's leading health research and educational ecosystem located in in Hamilton, Ontario.

Minutes for our monthly check-up meetings are not published and are for reference purposes only. We do our best to ensure all information is accurately portrayed, and that no privileged/private information is inappropriately disclosed. Past meeting minutes can be access through a public Dropbox, using the following [link](#).

For additional information on any subject, to contact a presenter directly, or should you have an adjustment to make to the notes made here, please contact: Alex.Muggah@SynapseConsortium.com. Updates will be reflected in a revised version of the monthly minutes.


As a result of the COVID-19, all in-person conferences and meetings have been cancelled. We are trying to track down events that will be held virtually and will try to keep our calendar up to date.

If you have an event that you would like listed here, please contact us at: info@synapseconsortium.com

Hamilton Health Innovation: Calendar Highlights

Check out Synapse's [online calendar](#)

July

- Jul 6: [Regulatory & Quality Assurance Principles for Natural Health Products](#) (PSG)
- Jul 19: [US Payer/Provider Commercialization Strategy and the MBS Path to Revenue](#) (OBIO)
- Jul 21: [LSO Webinar Breakfast Series – Summer of Science](#) (LSO)
-  Jul 25: [Hamilton Health Check-up](#) (Synapse Consortium)

Aug & Beyond

-  Aug 29: [Hamilton Health Check-up](#) (Synapse Consortium)
- Aug: [Startup Survivor Pitch Competition](#) (The Forge)
- Sep 19-22: [Creating Communities of Innovation](#) (AURP)
- Sept 22: Annual President's Golf Classic (Mohawk Foundation)
- Sept 28: [LiONS LAIR](#) (Innovation Factory)
- Sept 28-29: [BioNation](#) (BIOTECanada)
- Oct 12: [Canada's Medtech Conference](#) (Medtech Canada)
- Nov 10-11: [Clinical Trials Conference 2022](#) (Clinical Trials Ontario)
- Dec 10: [I'm Every Woman: A Concert of Greatest Hits](#) (Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation)

Looking to engage the Hamilton Health Ecosystem?



In partnership with Innovation Factory and Synapse Consortium partners, leverage up to \$100,000 to work directly with an academic or hospital partner in the Hamilton ecosystem. Funding will support collaborative projects for Ontario-based life science firms requiring clinical/research expertise, evidence, or data to commercialize their innovation. Learn more about SOPHIE [here](#)



Leverage up to \$15,000 in funding to work directly with the Research Administration groups at Hamilton Health Sciences or The Research Institute at St. Joe's Hamilton to create the pre-trial protocols and documents required to undertake a commercialization project or clinical trial in one of Canada's leading research hospitals. Learn more about HEALTHI [here](#)

Time allotted | 30 Minutes

Topic: **Guest Speaker Discussion**

Insights around the experience and expertise of an invited speaker, focusing on a subject that may be of interest to the broader community

Guest Speaker Discussion
<p>Guest Speaker(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rachel Bartholomew Founder & CEO, Hylvy Health [presentation slides used]
<p>Discussion <i>[the following is a synopsis of the discussion, and has been lightly edited for length and clarity]</i></p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>Hi, everyone, my name is Rachel and I am the CEO and founder of Hylvy. I am going to present a little bit about my company today. I live in Aurora, but my company is based in both Waterloo and Hamilton, so I do try to try to split my time. I am also connected in with The Forge, though perhaps am not there as much as I should be. But more importantly, I'm going to talk about the story on how we got here. And hopefully drop little tidbits of knowledge or maybe something that you've been looking at exploring as a founder.</p> <p>Hopefully I can bring some of that forward with this presentation, and I will have an ask that I hope will lead into more of a discussion. As all of you are probably dealing with the downturn right now, with the economy and everything, and going out and fundraising. I'd love to have a follow-on discussion after my presentation on this. Happy to connect your experience going through [funding] programs or certain aspects of starting a business. Or maybe some of you are just getting started looking for something and looking for some inspiration.</p> <p>Hylvy is innovating in a space of women's health where one in three women are dealing with complications related to their pelvic floor health – which can result in many different complications. We focus on hypertonic pelvic floor conditions. So, we are concerned with conditions like stenosis after cancer, menopausal atrophy, any tightness happening in the pelvic floor, all the way to vaginal dryness, post menopause. There is over 50 million women in North America who have these conditions. At the same time, there are limited and ineffective rehab options out there right now.</p> <p><u>Hylvy product</u></p> <p>We are innovating around what can best be described as an 84-year-old technology – I have one here – called a static dilator which is essentially just a plastic stick and handle. I found out through one of the groups that I'm working with at Western University that before these existed, they used glass test tubes. So, innovation has not really been a thing in this space.</p> <p>As standard of care we also have pelvic floor physiotherapy, which is a physiotherapist that's specially trained to do internal manipulation of the pelvic floor. We have found that a majority of these therapists have year-long waiting list. Women's College Hospital, where we just completed a pilot project, has a seven year-long waiting list. Unfortunately, this means there are really ineffective and inaccessible options for women with this condition. When we do the math between the women who need pelvic floor physio and the available options, each therapist would have to see 1,000 patients to treat those with this condition. It's a little insane.</p> <p>What we've created at Hylvy is a pelvic rehab system that allows women to treat themselves from home, collect data on their progress using biosensors, sends this information to an interactive patient mobile app so that they</p>

Guest Speaker Discussion

might track their progress. In addition, and of critical importance, is that patients are enabled to share their data with pelvic floor physios and OBGYN to allow for remote patient monitoring. So think respiratory heart health, but for the pelvic floor.

Product testing

We have seen some very promising findings through our initial testing with patients. Hylvy observed strong patient uptake in the use of inflation (as compared to static) dilators, and a huge decrease in muscle tension. There was interesting data that we're hoping to explore through subsequent clinical trials. We observed in all of our patients with pelvic floor conditions that they have higher intervaginal temperatures. There was a wide range of feedback on different therapies that we were looking to put forward. Our intention is to impact pelvic floor therapists in OBGYN markets, specifically on their health economics, which we're tracking with McMaster University in our first clinical trial. Also important, is our consideration of business impacts as well as the clinical impacts that we can have on these population groups.

Personal Story Leading to Company History

So where did the idea for this product come out of? I was diagnosed in May 2019 with cervical cancer and was treated at the Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton – so I'm a patient of Hamilton as well. After I received my diagnosis, I was put on bedrest, and I began reaching out Facebook groups for support. There were 54,000 women in these Facebook groups of women who were going through some form of gynecological conditions or gynecological cancers. I noticed that a lot of them were talking about the static dilators (current standard of care), and how much they hated using them.

So, I used a difficult situation to go out and learn more about a specific device and care space. One thing that I ran into was huge lack of research in this space. I used my time in treatment as the foundation of what is an ongoing sentiment analysis: "How are women feeling? What are patients experiencing? What are they going through?" This was the beginning of my market research to collect background information on what is it that women don't like about current products and standard of care. I began to reflect on how I could make a change in this area – which I did while on bed rest. I came up with a product concept [see presentation], which in hindsight was a very, very terrible picture of a potential product. I made this conceptual design drawing in PowerPoint. I then began to start pitching the idea to my oncologist as I started radiation therapy.

There is an overall lack of research and lack of focus in general around women's health. There were critical components I needed to understand to create my product that didn't even exist to support a healthy woman, let alone a woman dealing with a pelvic floor-related disease or complication.

When I started to dig it became apparent that these static dilators – which is an 84-year-old technology – were something that women just did not want to use. However, it was important that I dive in to understand why women don't want to use them. This exploration was important as it led into our process for product development. We had to pull up our socks and think about a number of different ways that we could collect this data, and specifically how it would support our product development efforts.

Hylvy's Product Development

Hylvy was lucky enough to have an adjacent market, which is the sex toy market, and so I was able to go out and buy components from local shops and hack together a bunch of components. This allowed for a fair amount of experimentation. For example, I found myself putting inflatable components together with a sleeve pump that is used for blood pressure monitoring.

Guest Speaker Discussion

We gathered research that was needed to understand anatomy, understand shape, what is comfortable for women, and our product could measure and do certain things. This morphed into identifying what the gaps are, and then focusing on filling in those gaps. This resulted in developing a product that went from a straight stick to a slight curve stick, to an even bigger curve, to a larger curve, to now what we affectionally refer to as “the foot”. As you can see, our product has a kind of foot shape, which is something that we can now joke about. We were trying to create something that was ergonomic and really gentle on women’s bodies, and didn’t have a cold, hard, mechanical feel to it. We were getting away from the negative product experience that many patients said that they experienced.

We started to experience the lack of research and lack of focus on women’s health as we started our journey into this world. We started to pitch pelvic floor health and people would say: “oh, Kegel exercisers” or “Oh Kegels” or “you got to do your Kegels, right?” In fact, I can see some women in the audience nodding. Hylvy is the opposite of Kegels. We quickly realized that there was a lot of misinformation, and that an education piece would have to accompany our product to market. More broadly, and unfortunately, many companies operating in the women’s health space have to help their customers go through an education process to get them up to speed on the value that is provided. For example, for those in our target audience with hypertonic pelvic floor complications, doing Kegels would actually make you worse off than better off. A lot of people didn’t understand that – which is why this educational process that I had to go through was so important.

The Value of an FDA Approved Product

When I meet with patients I would talk to them about what they’re using, and they might say: “oh, yeah, I’m using this product, this product, this product, and they claim they’re FDA approved. So, I trust them”. As I started to dig in further, it was clear there are lot of products in this space that blur the line with sex toys, which are not approved or monitored by the FDA. As a result, companies can sell what they refer to as a sexual wellness product, attempting to straddle the line between what is medical and what isn’t.

Of greater concern are products out there that say they’re FDA approved when they aren’t. We have companies claiming their products are created by women, when they aren’t, including some that are very successful. Some companies are even faking their online reviews. This means that there are a lot of terrible products in this space that we’re up against. And there is a lack of understanding of what is the role of Health Canada and the FDA. What does their approval even mean?

Fortunately, Hylvy’s story is one that leads with my personal experience and our commitment to lead with the evidence. We made the choice to develop a medical device. That said, there was a time when I wondered whether it would be better to go directly to consumers, rather than going the medical device route which is a more painful product commercialization journey (i.e., clinical trials, regulatory clearance).

However, when I think about my situation as a patient, and of all the patients with whom I am in direct contact, I think about not having to Google a solution, but instead being able to depend on a product that is a lot more credible and backed by medical evidence and can be prescribed by my doctor.

We have been fortunate to create patient focus groups with more than 900 women, with whom we’ve been able to do one-on-one interviews. These women have my personal phone number, they can give me a call to discuss their situation. The amount of trust that our patients have with Hylvy has been so important and I know it can be broken so easily with a small slip up. So being open and honest about our direction with our company has been a huge part of our journey.

Guest Speaker Discussion

Getting Started Standing up Hylvy

At the start, I had to get out there and learn more about the medical community, as I have a business background, and not a medical background. My team and I had to learn about all of these different considerations and complications. And so, in immersing ourselves into our start-up community was so important. I jumped in the car and headed straight to Hamilton, where my first pitch competitions was the [Synapse Pitch Competition](#) in 2020.

I can remember sitting in a workshop, where we had all the presenters come in and do a crash course on starting a business. One said: “you have to understand your medical impact and you have to have your business model figured out”. I put my hand up and I asked “What if we don’t”. While I forget who the presenter was, I haven’t forgotten that he immediately called me out by saying “You better figure it out!” This put me on the spot, but it lit a fire in me.

It has been critical for me to meet with key players in the ecosystem. At Innovation Factory, I’ve had the pleasure of working with two executives in residence: Ing Goplan and Bruce Inwood. I have also worked with Armen (from Intellijoint) who really kicked my butt. I came to them and asked “I don’t know what I’m doing in this space, teach me, tell me these things, let me learn, let me figure it out”. They let me come back again and again, to present and learn more.

I made it a point to talk to as many people as I could. I would get a list of pros and cons around every large decision I had to make, whether it was going direct to consumer or going medical device route first. I didn’t take those decisions lightly. However, once I made them it meant that anyone who would challenge me on them, I would have an answer for them in terms of those pros and cons. And so, Hylvy started to get going.

Growing Up in a Community

One thing I will recommend is that once you’ve got that decision made, don’t turn back. You’ve figured out your pathway together, you’ve got the required information together, keep going on that pathway. Don’t be afraid to reduce that mentorship stream once you’ve talked to too many people, and I’ve talked to a lot of people! I went all over the world, from Japan to Australia, a lot of work in the US and work here in Canada. I’ve got investors in Italy, and we went out and [raised 1.1 million and a pre-seed round](#).

That community piece was so important for that first investment. Hylvy had to get at least 60 “no’s” before we got our first “yes” investment. Know that cliché is very much a thing. I know the statistic is 100, but I got to at least 60! As a founder, you’ll have to put in the work, and it is a big uphill battle. Part of the reason why Hylvy was able to secure what we did was our story and leveraging that story in our early discussions. Because we were so early, because it was a pre-seed, it was really about investing in us as a team and investing in the story of the company.

Where Hylvy is Today

So where are we now. We are launching our first clinical study with Hamilton Health Sciences – I can see Daniele and the team on the call. I’m really excited for it; it’s coming up really fast. That project will be supported in part through the [SOPHIE program](#) run by Innovation Factory and Synapse.

We’ve also got our patents filed and are in the middle of manufacturing products for those clinical trials and things are starting to come to fruition, which is incredible. We’ve raised of grant money as well. We’re doing all our manufacturing in Canada, so, anyone who’s looking for manufacturing partners, I’m happy to share. I’ve worked with some really, great people. as well.

Guest Speaker Discussion

We will be continuing focus groups, so if there anyone in the audience who may experience or know someone who's experiencing pelvic health challenges, please reach out as I would be happy to chat and continue the conversation.

Looking Forward to Where We're Heading

And this is where we're headed. We're going through with our first clinical study at Hamilton Health Sciences, and we have an additional one starting at Grand River Cancer Center with my own oncologists, which is incredible. As a result, we'll have two indications for us to go out to FDA and Health Canada towards the end of the year / beginning of next year. And then we'll be looking to start our launching process in Canada with pelvic floor physiotherapists, while growing our connections in the US as a larger market.

We're looking to connect with anyone fundraising as we're looking to do our seed round, so please feel free to connect me with anyone who might be interested in connecting and/or having a conversation. As well, if anyone knows any OBGYN, pelvic floor physiotherapists, or clinicians who are doing some work in the colorectal space, I would love some intros.

My final ask, and I'll always finish off with it is [Femtech Canada](#), an community that connects Canadian Femtech companies with the resources and recognition they deserve. This is for those of you who are interested in Femtech, women's health, or in how your product and how you can apply a gender lens. Understanding these themes is so important for healthcare companies, especially in understanding the implications of what you're working on from a women perspective. Women have different bodies than men and unique healthcare challenges. Anything that you are working on and want to know what the implications could be on that that other half of the gender, I'd love to chat. We'd love to help out as you bring your solutions forward. '

At the first Femtech Canada meeting last week we had a great turnout. We're going to continue to host roundtables where you can surface issues, secure feedback and get some clarity on your solution. So that's it for me. Thanks so much.

Questions & Answers

Question: This idea that you already have 900 individuals who are this incredible focus group, how are you leveraging that as a data set to help drive your innovation cycles?

Answer: That's a great question because a lot of those patients can call us. While we have a [sign up on our website](#), essentially it was cold outreach from them to us. Every time I go to events, I get a lot of signups because unfortunately there's always a woman in the room who has a pelvic floor issue.

We've done interviews, one-on-one, which we complement with huge data gathering exercises. This group has helped us with our problem validation, providing feedback and guiding Hylvy in the right direction in terms of our product. We've created a 100-question medical survey, from which we've collected amazing details on their conditions – from how they're feeling to specific details. We discovered that many women don't just have one pelvic floor issue, but instead have overlapping conditions. These are very complex cases and the mental and stress related to it was astronomical. We found these patients were willing to pay any money to fix these problems, not least because some are going through critical life changes because of these issues.

From there, we collected marketing feedback. For example, where do they communicate with others? Where do they gather data about medical solutions? Who are they gathering it from? Do they trust their doctors? All of this information was critical to our decision-making process related to the remote patient monitoring side of our

Guest Speaker Discussion

product. Then we started getting product feedback. We show them the product and get feedback on both the mobile app and the device.

In addition to these 900 women, we also have 85 clinicians who we have allowed to give us feedback on the product. We visit these clinicians in person and show them the product, show them what we're working on, gather their feedback.

So yes, it's been it's been insanely valuable.

Question: Was there any unorthodox approach that you undertook to get feedback or ideas? Most notably, your contacts in Japan really stood out to me. How did you kind of network your way to get connections all the way across the world?

A: To be honest with you, sometimes I don't even know how I have ended up connecting with people around the world. It's one of those things where I always make sure that I have an ask or have a follow-on with somebody with whom I'm talking. I leave every conversation with people saying, "Who else should I talk to?" That doesn't matter whether it's talking to doctors, patients or whether it's talking to investors.

Fermata is who we've connected with over in Japan. They are creating a Femtech platform for women in Japan where there are significant stigma's still in place. I believe it's only 5-10% of the population that is willing to use tampons. As a result, there is a huge problem there when it comes to the basics of women's health. Fermata is also an investor, and they have worked with many people in Silicon Valley. So, through this incubator I'm affiliated with, I've made a connection to a connection, and then you find yourself chatting with someone on the other side of the world. I love those situations. It's just a matter of always making sure you leave any sort of meeting saying, "Who else do you think I should get in front of?"

Time allotted | 15 Minutes

Topic: **Communicate**

Recent successes, upcoming events, innovation pipeline, new products, health innovation trends, etc.

Discussion	Presenter
<p>Innovation Factory is hiring Program Manager (Life Sciences) – Apply today!</p> <p>Innovation Factory is looking for an interesting and dynamic individual to add to our team. Our ideal candidate is someone who believes in the importance of supporting life science entrepreneurs and scaling companies to succeed, and who wants to help build up and enhance the health innovation community in Hamilton, and across Southern Ontario. If you're always thinking about big ideas, like working with interesting and social people, are a self-motivated and independent thinker, but understand that it's grit and hard work that carries the day, then we want to hear from you!</p> <p>We believe in the role life science startups and scaling companies have in making our world a better place, creating products that improve patients lives while strengthening our local economy. To support these companies, we need someone passionate about linking companies with the clinical and research infrastructure needed to help companies bring their innovative products and services to market.</p> <p>As the Program Manager (Life Science) the work you do will create significant impact for our clients and for Innovation Factory. Your primary responsibility will be to manage and execute the Southern Ontario Pharmaceutical and Health Innovation Ecosystem (SOPHIE) and the Hamilton Ecosystem to Accelerate & Leverage Trials of Health Innovation (HEALTHI) programs, as well as other activities that help our customers solve big problems through leveraging the facilities, expertise and capacity of the Hamilton health ecosystem. This is a full-time position. This role will report to the Director of the SOPHIE & HEALTHI program.</p> <p>For more information, reach out to Karen Linseman: karen.linseman@innovationfactory.ca</p>	<p>Alex Muggah (Synapse)</p>
<p>McMaster University Accepting Applications for Seed Fund – Round 2</p> <p>The purpose of the Fund is to invest in new business ventures that involve one or more members of the McMaster community AND is translating research or knowledge created at the university or its affiliated hospitals into socioeconomic benefits. Investments from \$200,000 to \$500,000 are available. Eligibility criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company must be developing an innovative technology or knowledge arising from McMaster research • At least one member must be a member of the McMaster community (i.e., faculty, staff, student, alumni, worked/studied at McMaster) • Incorporated for-profit entity prior to investment • Scalable commercial business with a socio-economic impact <p>Download the application here. To learn more, contact Leigh Wilson: wilsle@mcmaster.ca</p>	<p>Leigh Wilson (MILO @ McMaster)</p>

Discussion	Presenter
<p>Hylvy Founder & Innovation Factory Launch FemTech Canada</p> <p>Femtech Canada exists to inspire entrepreneurs to lead in women’s health innovation. We connect Canadian Femtech companies with the resources and recognition they deserve. Launched in June, 35 Femtech companies have already joined the Network!</p> <p>Femtech Canada organizes bi-monthly roundtables as a community to share our successes, network and hear from leaders within the Femtech Canada network. Our roundtables are open to start ups and individuals/organizations who are passionate about Femtech innovation in Canada. Join us!</p> <p>After reading a Canadian magazine that featured only foreign Femtech startups, Rachel Bartholomew (the founder of Hylvy) was inspired to build Femtech Canada. Femtech founders face barriers in recognition and resourcing and Rachel felt it was overdue for the Canadian market to support Femtech innovators. In 2022, The Innovation Factory partnered with Rachel to build a robust, scalable Femtech ecosystem.</p> <p>Women represent 50% of the population and yet health care research and services have failed women for centuries. Resources, networks, and support are required to commercialize innovations and fill persistent health and wellness gaps in Canada’s diverse population. The Femtech Canada Network stands for women, girls, non-binary folks, trans people, and those assigned female at birth.</p> <p>To learn more, or to join the Femtech Canada Network, please contact Andrea Guest at andrea.guest@innovationfactory.ca</p>	<p>Andrea Guest (Innovation Factory)</p>
<p>The Clinic @ McMaster and the School of Biomedical Innovation & Entrepreneurship Open</p> <p>A flurry of official openings and celebrations of innovation and entrepreneurship are accompanying the visit to McMaster University by Marnix and Mary Heersink, who donated \$32 million in February. The new Marnix E. Heersink School of Biomedical Innovation and Entrepreneurship has been formally approved by the university’s Board of Governors.</p> <p>The school, within the Faculty of Health Sciences, will educate emerging health innovators and involve the Faculty’s schools of medicine, nursing and rehabilitation science. Program offerings are in development for the school’s anticipated opening in September 2023 and will include immersive clinical experiences to identify problems and form solutions, and drive innovation through collaborations.</p> <p>The Heersinks also officially open The Clinic which was built as a result of a previous \$1 million gift but delayed in construction by the pandemic.</p> <p>The 3,000 square-foot-space is within the Health Sciences Library in the Health Sciences Centre, and provides a space where students, staff, faculty and entrepreneurs will find education, resources and support to move their innovations forward.</p>	<p>Katrina Cordovado (The Clinic @ McMaster)</p>

Discussion	Presenter
<p>Fiona Bergin, program manager for The Clinic, said: “We recognize everyone’s journey from innovation to commercialization is different. Each inventor has the opportunity to customize their innovation road map to best support their unique needs and path to commercialization.”</p> <p>Marnix and Mary Heersink are also meeting with McMaster President and Vice-Chancellor David Farrar and FHS Dean and Vice-President Paul O’Byrne, and they are taking part in discussions on the development of the new school, The Clinic and the Mary Heersink Program for Global Health.</p>	
<p>Able Innovations announces \$7.5 million to take the pain out of patient transfer</p> <p>Able Innovations operates in a space that Dr. Gaurav Puri, chief of Newmarket, Ontario-based Southlake Regional Health Centre’s emergency department, describes as “not particularly sexy.”</p> <p>The Toronto-based robotic medical device startup focuses on the problem of patient transfer—a run-of-the-mill, labour-intensive procedure that usually involves some combination of porters, nurses, and orderlies lifting a patient from point a to point b, sometimes using bed sheets or a slider board.</p> <p>Puri described the typical patient transfer process as “pretty crude,” adding that it can cause pain to patients and result in hospital staff experiencing injuries. Amid an already short-staffed healthcare system during COVID-19, the issues associated with this routine task have become magnified.</p> <p>Able Innovations is currently working on a HEALTHI project with Hamilton Health Sciences. HEALTHI is funded by NRC-IRAP, and operated by Innovation Factory out of Hamilton.</p> <p>For the full Betakit article, click here</p>	<p>Alex Muggah (Synapse)</p>
<p>Job Posting: Executive Director, Regional Laboratory Medicine Program (HRLMP)</p> <p>Reporting to the Vice President, Clinical Programs at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton & Regional Director Ontario Renal Network and Vice President, Clinical Support Services & Surgery at Hamilton Health Sciences, the Executive Director, Regional Laboratory Medicine Program will work in collaboration with the Chief/Medical Director to lead the implementation of the strategic plan for the Regional Laboratory Medicine Program (HRLMP). In partnership with the Chief of Laboratory Medicine and Medical Director the Executive Director will be responsible for the administrative and medical services offered at all of the Hamilton hospitals.</p> <p>The RLMP is comprised of over 589 staff, 47 medical staff, and 18 laboratory scientists. Total RLMP budget is \$63 million operating annually.</p> <p>St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton is a teaching affiliate of McMaster University, offering services on three main sites including St. Joseph's Hospital, the Centre for Ambulatory Health Services, and the Centre for Mountain Health Services.</p> <p>Read the full posting here</p>	<p>Bacon MacKensey (HRLMP)</p>
<p>Opportunity to Join the Ontario Export Business Mission to the MedTech Conference and Business Partnering, October 23-26, 2022, Boston Convention Centre, Boston, MA</p>	<p>Patricia Cosgrove (MEJTC)</p>


Discussion	Presenter
<p>Export Growth Branch, Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, is organizing a trade mission to the MedTech Conference, the largest medical technology conference and trade show in North America.</p> <p>The Conference consists of two key components: the educational sessions and the business partnering. The educational sessions will address the key issues impacting the medtech industry in the US such as: reimbursement and the FDA regulatory process, etc. Companies must have a solid understanding of the business environment and competitive landscape if they are to successfully do business in this market. The business partnering will offer participants a unique opportunity to meet potential partners, customers and investors they would not normally have the opportunity to meet.</p> <p>While the formal conference proceedings get underway on Monday, October 24th, AdvaMed is organizing the “US Market Access Seminar”, on Sunday, October 23rd, from 11:00 am – 4:30 pm, followed by the International Reception. This event will focus on what foreign companies must know if they are planning to enter the US market and or expand their current business in the US. I would strongly encourage you to attend this Seminar. More information will be coming.</p> <p>In terms of financial assistance available to exporters, you may be interested in the CanExport program provided by the federal government.</p> <p>Please register no later than August 2, 2022. For more information contact Patricia Cosgrove (Patricia.Cosgrove@ontario.ca)</p>	
<p>Canada's first accelerator for accessibility startups - Applications open</p> <p>Canada's first accelerator for accessibility, mental health and aging tech startups. We just opened applications for our 2022 cohort. Program details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 accessibility, mental health or aging tech startups from anywhere in the world will be accepted into the program • 30+ workshops designed specifically for accessibility startups • Virtual sessions hosted by some of the best accessibility entrepreneurs and disability innovators in the world • The program is entirely virtual with most sessions taking place on weekend mornings. There is no cost to participate <p>To learn more, contact Varun Chandak at varun@accesstosuccess.ca</p>	<p>Varun Chandak (Access to Success Labs)</p>
<p>LSO Nominations are open for the 2023 Awards</p> <p>The LSO Awards recognize excellence in Ontario life sciences on behalf of both individuals and emerging companies. Awards will be presented at LSO's Annual Celebration of Success, in spring 2023.</p> <p>Ontario's life sciences sector is driven by incredible people doing outstanding work. The LSO Awards are an important part of our advocacy for the sector, by celebrating the individuals and companies behind its success.</p>	<p>Andy Donovan (LSO)</p>


Discussion	Presenter
<p>Award Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifetime Achievement Award • LSO Volunteer Award • Community Service Award • Life Science Company of the Year <p>Click here for more details on the award criteria.</p>	
<p>Innovate UK hosting bio-manufacturing event with Ontario Trade and Investment Office</p> <p>For those interested companies, Innovate UK is leading a bio-manufacturing mission to BC and then Ontario. We are hosting them for the afternoon on 12 July for the Ontario Innovation Showcase, details attached.</p> <p>Please RSVP by following this link. OITC has hosted a few Innovate UK missions lately from various industries and the feedback has been excellent from all sides.</p> <p>To learn more contact Linda Cepuch at linda.cepuch@international.gc.ca</p>	<p>Brian Morris (City of Hamilton)</p>

Time allotted | 15 Minutes

Topic: **Collaborate & Accelerate**

Partnership opportunities, programming and resources available to the community, market gaps and challenges, learn about potential funding opportunities, discuss new RFPs issued, etc.

Discussion	Presenter
<p>Want to Connect with your Ecosystem: Check out the Synapse Health Ecosystem Directory</p> <p>Synapse has created a Director of +200 private- and public-sector organizations in the Hamilton (and regional) health innovation ecosystem which work alongside the Synapse Consortium to support of the commercialization of health innovation. Learn more about what others are up to, and identify potential collaborative partners at: www.synapseconsortium.com/directory</p>	<p>Alex Muggah (Synapse)</p> 
<p><u>Engaging Mohawk College's IDEAWORKS</u></p> <p>IDEAWORKS projects in general (of which, MEDIC is one area) which was provided and may help with identifying if Mohawk College can support our companies with projects. This might be a refresher for some or all of us, but highlighting nonetheless:</p> <p>Tips for Innovation Factory Referrals to IDEAWORKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our four innovation centres (MEDIC for Digital Health, AMIC for 3D printing, EPIC for energy efficiency related projects and MTIC for Medical Technologies related challenges) are active during this time- but note that due to existing commitments, are often looking at projects one month to three months in the future. • Other areas of expertise are on a case by case basis, especially this year, with a number of our faculty committed to teaching and revamping courses • The ideal applied research partner is one that is in the scaling stage; they have some revenue and can meet a lot of the funding agencies criteria for funding or want to self-fund a research project. Typically what we look for is 2+2; two years in business with two employees • We recommend working with us on projects that aren't mission critical but can help the company explore an innovative idea. <p>What about start-ups?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they require a few tips or advice, we can normally chat with them (or if there is a critical mass -like five or six companies in a space-, we can do a webinar type discussion). • They can see about the availability of capstone projects, where students generally work on projects for a four month period, for free, in order to get course credit. It may help with MVPs. <p>Contact Andrea Johnson for more information: andrea.johnson4@mohawkcollege.ca</p>	<p>Andrea Johnson (Mohawk College)</p>
<p>The CONNECTION - McMaster University Online Partnerships Portal!</p> <p>The Connection is a new program offered by McMaster's Office of Community Engagement (OCE) designed to facilitate online, mutually beneficial partnerships between campus and local Hamilton community organizations. As communities look for ways to adapt and rebuild in response to COVID-19 The Connection will make the process of addressing Hamilton community and University identified needs easier by providing online tools and resources. It's a way for everyone who sees themselves as part of a collective community-campus effort to connect and respond to COVID-19 locally</p>	<p>Gay Yuyitung (MILO)</p>

Discussion	Presenter
<p>Collaborating with McMaster Institute for Infectious Disease Research (New Intake Form)</p> <p>In addition to our ongoing COVID-19 research initiatives at McMaster, the Michael G. DeGroot Institute for Infectious Disease Research is mobilizing its strong research community to assist Canadian researchers and businesses in their attempts to find solutions to the international crisis. The IIDR teams have the capacity to assist with the testing of anti-viral compounds and products, as well as the testing of products or devices aimed at sterilization. This includes new methods for sterilizing personal protective equipment. They are able to offer services in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSL2 cell culture infection with representative human coronaviruses; • Testing of methods or products that are designed to inactivate the virus; • Biochemical/enzyme studies with anti-viral agents. <p>Cell culture and small animal models of SARS-CoV-2 infection can be performed in McMaster’s secure biosafety level 3 facility. Availability for BSL3 testing is very limited, and projects requiring this type of work will be screened and prioritized by an internal committee.</p> <p>If you have a product or innovation that you are interested in pursuing further and feel that we could be of assistance to you, please reach out to us through the online form. Each project will be evaluated to determine if McMaster has the capabilities and capacity to perform the required testing.</p>	<p>Gay Yuyitung (MILO)</p>
<p>Hamilton-based technologies available for licensing</p> <p>Each year researchers at McMaster, Hamilton Health Sciences, and St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton make new discoveries that lead to new products, services, or process improvements to help companies expand their pipeline or increase their productivity. The business development team at MILO is here to help you tap into and access these discoveries as efficiently as possible. MILO’s objective is to support effective transfer of these technologies to companies for social and economic benefit and enable the continued growth of research excellence at the institutions.</p> <p>Please contact Glen Crossley, Associate Director, Business Development and IP or search the list to see some of the technologies currently available for licensing or further R&D</p>	<p>Glen Crossley (MILO)</p>
<p>Hamilton Innovation Partnership Portal</p> <p>Synapse has created the Hamilton Innovation Partnership Portal (HIPP) to make the process simpler and more streamlined to find new partners within Canada’s leading health research and educational ecosystem. It is a way for companies to interact with the Hamilton community. A streamlined approach, to have Synapse represent everyone. We’ve set up an intake form for companies to direct request to the portal. Portal is online through the Synapse website: http://synapseconsortium.com/partner/</p>	<p>Michael Jones (Synapse)</p> 
<p>Submit Community Events on the Innovation Factory Calendar</p> <p>Our calendar is home to Innovation Factory workshops and networking events as well as events from the community which help support our local entrepreneurs and businesses. If you have an event which may a fit, please submit it and we will review it within five business days.</p>	<p>Annie Horton (Innovation Factory)</p>

Discussion	Presenter
<p><u>Government Call for Innovative Solutions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for Suppliers (Federal): In support of the Government of Canada’s whole-of-government response to Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), they are asking suppliers about their ability to provide a variety of products and services. • Call for Suppliers (Ontario): request for information from companies able to supply emergency products to help fight Coronavirus • Federal Government Call to Action for Canadian Manufacturers to support businesses to rapidly scale up production or re-tool their manufacturing lines to develop products made in Canada that will help in the fight against COVID-19. Please refer to the product specifications and requirements for Canada’s medical supply needs. • Health Canada will facilitate earlier access to a vaccine, or therapeutic product for COVID-19 to expedite the review of COVID-19 related health product submissions and applications. • Government of Canada is speeding up the importation and sale of medical devices used to diagnose, treat or prevent COVID-19. Here is information about expediting access and authorization for diagnostic devices for use against coronavirus (COVID-19). • Government of Canada will launch specific challenges through the Innovative Solutions Canada (ISC) program and will rapidly select the best projects to accelerate development and testing of promising innovations that can have a direct impact on our health care response. Also use the ISC Testing Stream to become the first customer of these innovative products. • The National Research Council of Canada (NRC) will organize an NRC COVID-19 Challenge Program, composed of teams of government, academic and private sector partners to address a range of medium term PHAC and HC needs, including personal protective equipment, sanitization, diagnostic and testing, therapeutics, and disease tracking technology. The most promising solutions will be selected for procurement, working with Innovative Solutions Canada. • DISRUPT COVID-19, a Government of Canada virtual forum that will include representatives from the National Research Council (NRC), the Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP), Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Innovation and Science, Economic Development (ISED), is being organised as a pilot initiative with the goal of getting technologies on the ground helping patients and health care professionals as fast as possible. • Next Generation Manufacturing (NGen) will invest \$50 million in Supercluster funding to support companies as they rapidly respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by building a Canadian supply of essential equipment, products, and therapeutics. For more information on NGen’s COVID-19 Response Program, see the full bulletin, review the project guide, and share your capabilities in the form below. • Ontario Website for PPE Suppliers to Post Products for Sale: Review a list of companies that sell personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies to keep your employees and customers safe from COVID-19. Apply to be added to the workplace PPE supplier directory <p>The Digital Technology Supercluster has launched the COVID-19 Program is focused on unlocking solutions to protect the health and safety of all Canadians and our economy through the development, deployment, and scaling of digital technologies.</p>	<p>Innovation Factory & Synapse Consortium</p>

Our Synapse Consortium partners are at the forefront of addressing COVID-19 in the City of Hamilton, and across Ontario: doctors and nurses caring for patients, public health officials coordinating city-wide responses, conducting epidemiological research at Canada's leading research hospitals, and innovative companies developing products to provide needed supplies and services.

Throughout all of this, Synapse remains committed to our core goal of facilitating connections across the Hamilton health ecosystem, bringing public- and private-sector actors together to enable innovation and resolve pressing health challenges. While Synapse staff are not in the office, we're still providing support virtually – so please continue to reach out and find out how we can help!

If you want to get in touch, please contact [Alex Muggah](#), Director of the Synapse Consortium. Separately, we've assembled links to information that has been compiled by organizations across Ontario (and Canada) to assist you with navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn More About COVID-19: Online Resources

Synapse Consortium partners have put together a significant amount of information and updates on the status and activities related to containing and addressing COVID-19 for both businesses and citizens in the region:

Hospitals and Research Centres

- Hamilton Health Sciences: [COVID-19 Updates](#)
- St. Joseph's Healthcare: [Research Institute](#) and [Hospital](#) Update
- McMaster Institute for Infectious Disease Research: [News and Updates](#)
- McMaster University: [COVID-19 Update](#)
- Mohawk College: [COVID-19 Update](#)

Hamilton Community Partners

- Mohawk College [Collaboration Landing Page](#)
- McMaster University [Collaboration Landing Page](#)
- City of Hamilton: [City Response and Resources](#)
- Hamilton Public Health: [Learn more about COVID-19](#)
- Innovation Factory: [COVID-19 Info Centre](#)
- Hamilton Chamber of Commerce: [Resources for businesses](#)
- Hamilton Spectator: [What you Need to Know in Hamilton](#)
- Buy-Local (Hamilton): [Hometown Hub](#)

Government and Agencies

- Health Canada: [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#)
- OCE: [Collaboration Platform](#)
- Government of Ontario: [COVID-19 Information for Ontarians](#)
- Government of Canada: [Business Support](#)

For Companies Making COVID-19 Related Medical Products

- [Call for Suppliers](#) (Ontario)
- [Call for Suppliers](#) (Canada)
- Health Canada: [Expedited Review of Health Product Submissions and Applications for COVID-19](#)
- Health Canada: [Applications for medical devices under the Interim Order for COVID-19 use](#)
- Health Canada: [Expedited Access and Authorization to make COVID-19 personal protective equipment](#)
- Health Canada: [Diagnostic devices for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)