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## **BioSTL Awards \$20,000 in Inclusion Prizes to Bioscience Startups**

*Grants culminate successful first year of bioscience inclusion initiative*

ST. LOUIS – March 26, 2015 – BioSTL, the St. Louis organization advancing regional prosperity by cultivating the bioscience and innovation ecosystem, through its Bioscience & Entrepreneurial Inclusion Initiative announced it awarded grants of \$10,000 each to local bioscience startups HIPAAtrek and Zymplr as the culmination of its inaugural programming year.

“2014 was our first year of programming for our inclusion initiative and both HIPAAtrek and Zymplr are great examples of what we hope to achieve through the program,” said Cheryl Watkins-Moore, director of bioscience & entrepreneurial inclusion for BioSTL. “By engaging and supporting the high-potential and talented women and minorities in the bioscience ecosystem, we will help create high-growth ventures and strengthen the region’s economy.”

HIPAAtrek, founded by Sarah Badahman, is developing a software solution for medical professionals that helps to ensure HIPAA compliance. Zymplr, founded by Abu Abraham and Gabriel Santa Cruz, has invented an advanced material for use in helmets for high-impact sports to reduce concussions. The inclusion grants are designed to help advance the companies and allow them to reach important milestones in company development.

“We are honored that BioSTL selected HIPAAtrek to receive an Inclusion award. HIPAAtrek is already in 69 organizations and this award will help us to reach even more organizations,” said Badahman, CEO and founder of HIPAAtrek. “HIPAAtrek is proud to be a woman-owned and managed company, with four women on our team. The Inclusion Initiative is helping companies like ours further their professional aspirations and it is refreshing to see so many women entering the entrepreneurial world here in St. Louis. HIPAAtrek is proud to be one of those companies dedicated to hiring women in key organizational positions. We thank BioSTL for their support of all women and minority owned businesses.”

Awardees were selected from a pool of bioscience companies with women or minority owners that were also winners and/or finalists from BioGenerator, StartUp Connection, Arch Grants and Capital Innovators.

At the end of 2014, BioSTL’s Bioscience Inclusion Initiative also awarded \$2,500 to two companies, Square Fruit Labs and RXplain, through Cortex’s Square One Program, a business boot camp for first-time entrepreneurs. Square Fruit Labs is working on an advanced biotissue and bioplastics 3D printing for industrial and biomedical applications. RXplain is developing a mobile app designed to assist patients with medical adherence.

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The awards close out a year of programming centered on increasing awareness and engagement between underrepresented women and minorities and the St. Louis bioscience ecosystem. During the summer of 2014, BioSTL hosted two events to raise awareness and introduce participants to entrepreneurs and regional support organizations. More than 230 minority and women professionals connected with over 30 support organizations during these two events. BioSTL then hosted a seminar where 55 attendees learned more in-depth about the rigors of bioscience entrepreneurship including intellectual property issues, regulatory hurdles and the challenges of raising capital. Many participants of the inclusion programming applied for the Square One Program, with one-third of the boot camp participants having attended at least one inclusion event.

In 2015, BioSTL looks forward to the expansion of its Inclusion Initiative programming efforts, bringing greater collaboration with ITEN and St. Louis Makes to raise additional awareness about opportunities at the intersection of bioscience and other emerging industries like IT and advanced Manufacturing.

### ***About BioSTL***

BioSTL advances St. Louis' prosperity by cultivating a thriving bioscience sector. BioSTL builds regional capacity, nurtures a collaborative environment, and focuses community leadership and resources to capitalize on the unique convergence of St. Louis' corporate, university, and entrepreneurial strengths in medical and plant bioscience. Please visit [www.biostl.org](http://www.biostl.org) for additional information. Follow BioSTL on twitter [@BioSTL](https://twitter.com/BioSTL).

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