

VIPC Awards CCF Grant to the University of Virginia to Improve Outcomes of Pelvic Organ Prolapse

CCF grant supports Drs. Steven Caliari and Monique Vaughan in the development of a novel solution to restore the support structure of pelvic organs.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES, December 7, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation \(VIPC\)](#) today



This research will further develop a novel treatment for pelvic organ prolapse and help us understand and treat women's health disparities with greater knowledge and care."

*Dr. Steven Caliari, PhD and
Dr. Monique Vaughan, MD*

announced that the University of Virginia (UVA) has been awarded a Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) grant for \$75,000 in support of research conducted by Drs. Steven Caliari and Monique Vaughan. VIPC's CCF programs have distributed more than \$54 million to Virginia-based startups, entrepreneurs, and university-based inventors since 2012 in support of critical early technology testing and market validation efforts.

Pelvic organ prolapse (POP) is a common condition affecting approximately 50% of child-bearing women that

results in 300,000 prolapse repair surgeries annually in the U.S. The current surgical standard of care for repair employs "native tissue" techniques that do not utilize graft-augmentation and, according to some studies, have an unacceptably high failure rate. In response, surgeons have been augmenting these repairs using a number of modalities, including polypropylene mesh. Beginning in the 1990s, the use of transvaginal mesh kits surged prior to appropriate safety testing and product validation, and high rates of mesh complications were seen. This prompted the FDA to remove these kits from the U.S. market in April 2019.

An urgent need has emerged for safe and effective medical devices to treat POP in a way that appropriately balances high success with low complication rates. Drs. Caliari and Vaughan at UVA have answered the call with a mesh-free, tissue-engineered hydrogel that has the potential to restore the support structure of the pelvic organs, leading to long-term symptom improvement. The technology is patent-pending. With CCF funding, UVA will execute customer discovery, tune the hydrogel formulation, and perform initial biocompatibility studies with the latest formulation on their path toward FDA approval and commercialization.

“Receiving a CCF grant from VIPC is instrumental in helping to expedite the development of a clinical trial-ready device to treat pelvic organ prolapse. This research will further develop a novel treatment and help us understand and treat women’s health disparities with greater knowledge and care,” said Dr. Steven Caliari, PhD, Associate Professor for the Departments of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering and Dr. Monique Vaughan, MD, Assistant Professor for the Departments of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Urology, in a joint statement.

“We are proud to support the University of Virginia and Drs. Caliari and Vaughan in their efforts to address a critical market need and improve women’s health through translational research and development,” said Hina Mehta, VIPC’s Director for University Programs. “The team demonstrated its potential to scale a university lab-based idea into a successful commercial product, and CCF is looking forward to seeing this innovative solution transform POP healthcare options in the coming years.”

The University of Virginia is a public research university based in Charlottesville, Va.

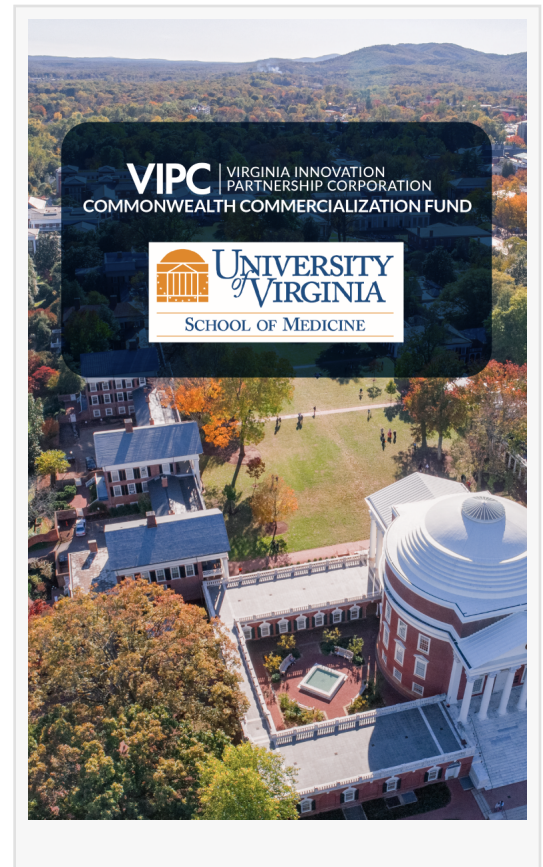
About Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC)

VIPC: Connecting innovators with opportunities. As the nonprofit operations arm of the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority (VIPA), VIPC is the commercialization and seed stage economic development driver in the Commonwealth that leads funding, infrastructure, and policy initiatives to support Virginia's innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, and market development strategies. VIPC collaborates with local, regional, state, and federal partners to support the expansion and diversification of Virginia’s economy.

Programs include: Virginia Venture Partners (VVP) | VVP Fund of Funds (SSBCI) | Virginia Founders Fund (VFF) | Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) | Petersburg Founders Fund (PFF) | Smart Communities | The Virginia Smart Community Testbed | The Virginia Unmanned Systems Center | Virginia Advanced Air Mobility Alliance (VAAMA) | The Public Safety Innovation Center | Entrepreneurial Ecosystems | Regional Innovation Fund (RIF) | Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFAP) for SBIR & STTR | University Partnerships | Startup Company Mentoring & Engagement. For more information, please visit www.VirginialPC.org. Follow VIPC on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and LinkedIn.

About the Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF)

VIPC’s Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) accepts applications and awards funding



on a rolling basis to Virginia's small businesses and university-based innovators. For Virginia's academic and nonprofit research community, the competitive grant program seeks to fund high-potential Virginia-based academic research teams that are developing technologies with strong commercial potential. The grants support early technology and market validation efforts such as customer discovery, market research, business model validation, the development of prototypes or minimum viable products (MVPs), customer pilots, and intellectual property protection, team development, and more. For more information on funding opportunities and eligibility requirements, or to apply, visit the CCF pages from www.VirginialPC.org.

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