VIPC Awards CCF Grant to VCU to Advance a Novel, Non-Invasive Treatment for Brain Cancer in Humans

CCF funding supports Dr. Swadesh Das' efforts to refine and test an innovative delivery strategy and therapeutic virus for glioblastoma patients

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES, January 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC) today announced that Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) has been awarded a Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) grant for $100,000 in support of research conducted by Dr. Swadesh Das. 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.

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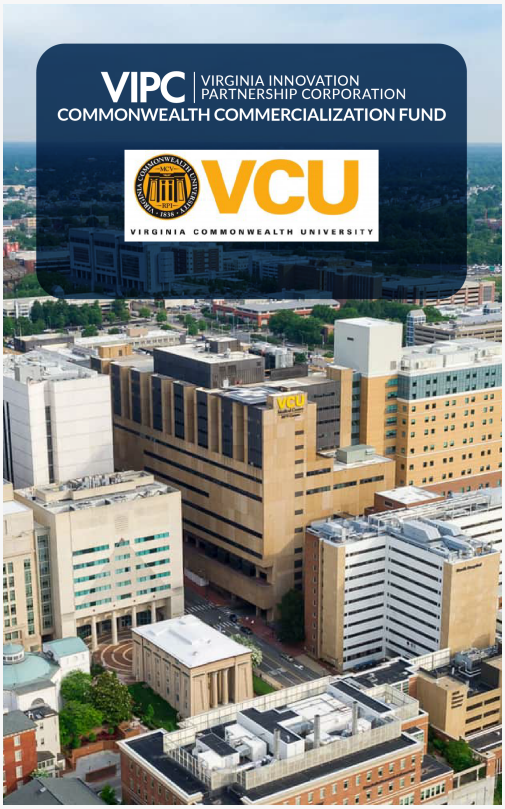
>
> *Dr. Swadesh Das, Associate Professor at VCU and member of the VIMM*

Glioblastoma (GBM), a fast-growing and highly aggressive form of brain cancer, has only a 5% survival rate and no effective treatment options. In his lab in the VCU Institute of Molecular Medicine (VIMM), Dr. Das and his team have engineered a patent-pending therapeutic adenovirus that, in authentic preclinical models, has demonstrated significant reduction of GBM growth and progression. The drug is injected directly into the tumor or administered using a proprietary systemic delivery technique that doesn't compromise hematological or neurological safety. Effective in destroying tumor cells efficiently and without impacting normal, healthy tissue, the therapeutic also has the potential to boost immunity against cancer recurrence.

"There are no standards of care that significantly extend survival for patients diagnosed with glioblastoma. Our revolutionary molecular medicine and delivery strategy could provide a paradigm shift in the treatment of GBM, along with secondary metastatic brain cancer, especially

for patients who are not eligible for surgery or more conventional therapies," said Dr. Swadesh Das, Associate Professor at VCU and member of the VIMM. "The work that we've done thus far to advance this technology has been promising and this grant from CCF will allow us to further advance the science in preparation for clinical trials and FDA approval."



CCF funding will be used to collect preclinical effectiveness data across an array of genetically distinct primary GBM and secondary non-brain-derived micro-metastasis patients. Dr. Das and his team will also assess preclinical safety in humanized mice to mirror the complexity of the human immune system and provide more relevance for potential patient outcomes. Virginia startup InterLeukin Combinatorial Therapies, Inc. (ILCT) is prepared to commercialize the technology resulting from Dr. Das' work. ILCT was co-founded by Dr. Paul B. Fisher, Director of the VIMM, professor of Human and Molecular Genetics and Thelma Newmeyer Corman Chair of Cancer Research in the VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center and Dr. Webster K. Cavenee, Director of Strategic Alliances in Central Nervous System Cancers at the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research and Distinguished Professor at the University of California, San Diego.

"Dr. Das has formulated a novel therapeutic and discovered a way to deliver it directly into the brain, selectively killing GBM and eliminating the need for surgery. This could be a game-changer for the treatment of brain cancers and other cancers in the future as well," said Hina Mehta, VIPC's Director for University Programs. "CCF is delighted to support these critical studies and be part of an effort that, once fully tested and approved, will improve life expectancy and quality of life for individuals diagnosed with brain cancer."

Virginia Commonwealth University is a public research university based in Richmond, 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.VirginiaIPC.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.VirginiaIPC.org.

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