

Innovative Health App 'Ooney' Joins National Science Foundation Program to Revolutionize Pre-Surgery Preparation

Ooney is set to transform surgery for elderly patients through improved pre-op health management easing surgical challenges and recovery

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, USA, June 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Ooney](#), with its groundbreaking web-based application, PrehabPal, designed to enhance surgical preparation and recovery, proudly announces its inclusion in the National Science Foundation's prestigious Innovation Corps (I-Corps™). This award marks a pivotal step in addressing a critical issue in the United States—the need for improved pre-surgical care and patient outcomes, particularly among older adults.



Dr. Finlayson is the founding director of the UCSF Center for Surgery in Older Adults

Ooney leverages advanced analytics and personalized educational content to ensure patients are thoroughly prepared for surgery with the aim of reducing hospital readmission rates and improving mortality outcomes. As part of the I-Corps™ initiative, which accelerates the economic and societal benefits of basic research projects that are ready to move toward commercialization, Ooney is poised to transform pre-operative care nationwide.

"We're thrilled to bring our technology to the forefront of healthcare innovation through the [NSF I-Corps™](#) program," said Sean Bumgarner, Co-founder of Ooney. "By integrating rigorous scientific methods with comprehensive patient education, we aim to set new standards for surgical care."

The inclusion of Ooney in the I-Corps™ program underscores a larger national health issue: the essential role of proper preparation in surgical success. Well-prepared patients experience fewer complications, suggesting that a small upfront investment in patient education could save lives and reduce healthcare costs.

This aligns with broader societal challenges as aging populations increase, underscoring the critical need for efficient healthcare systems that can manage elderly care with foresight and precision.

Supporting this vision, Ooney has selected Dr. Natanya Wachtel as their Industry Mentor. Dr. Wachtel, a seasoned behavioral scientist, excels in leveraging psychology and commercialization experience to optimize user engagement and educational outcomes.

"Ooney's mission resonates deeply with my focus on transformative healthcare solutions, making this collaboration an ideal fit," Wachtel noted.

The project grew out of surgical innovations developed at the University of California, San Francisco, a pioneer in merging healthcare with cutting-edge technology.

"UCSF leads in advancing medical care through innovation. The technologies created by Ooney facilitate the dissemination of best practices on surgical readiness and patient care for older



Sean is an award-winning product leader of health and wellness websites and apps



Dr Broering is the Academic Program Manager at UCSF Department of Surgery, an expert in nursing, public health, and quality improvement

adults," said Dr. Emily Finlayson, Professor of Surgery and Ooney co-founder.

The success of this endeavor has also relied on the contributions of Dr. Jeanette Broering, PhD, MPH, RN, an Academic Program Manager at UCSF Department of Surgery with a rich background in nursing, public health, and quality improvement.

Dr. Broering penned a frailty assessment manual and patient materials for interventions and was involved in site coaching as well as an ethnography study to measure implementation barriers and facilitators for pre-treatment programs.

As Ooney embarks on this exciting new phase, the team invites other industry leaders and innovators to join them in

reshaping healthcare for the better. "This is more than just an advancement in technology; it's a movement towards safer, more effective medical practices that could significantly enhance the quality of life for millions," added Broering.

Ooney and its partners at the NSF and UCSF are setting the stage for what promises to be a transformative impact on healthcare practices and patient outcomes across the country.

About the National Science Foundation's I-Corps Program:

The U.S. National Science Foundation's Innovation Corps (I-Corps™) program is an immersive entrepreneurial training program that facilitates the transformation of invention to impact. This immersive seven-week experiential training program prepares scientists and engineers to extend their focus beyond the university laboratory—accelerating the economic and societal benefits of NSF-funded and other basic research projects that are ready to move toward commercialization.

Team Profile: Sean Bumgarner, Entrepreneurial Lead

Sean Bumgarner, co-founder and CEO of Ooney, is an award-winning product leader with 15+



Natanya is a National Science Foundation industry advisor

years of expertise launching health and wellness websites and apps for the mass market. He has consulted for major healthcare service and technology providers, including Philips Healthcare, GE Healthcare, and Exact Sciences. Employing lean methodologies,

Sean has built and led cross-functional teams whose apps consistently ranked in the top ten on the Apple App Store. Sean has a passion for user experience innovation in the healthcare industry and has led the development of PrehabPal from concept to clinical trial.

Team Profile: Dr. Jeanette (Jenny) Broering, PhD, MPH, RN, Technical Lead

Jeanette Broering, the technical lead for Ooney, has 10 years of experience in design, clinical trials, coaching, and implementation of pre-surgical optimization activities for older adults preparing for surgery at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), Department of Surgery.

Her extensive experience includes post-doctoral fellowship education in quality improvement and patient safety. In professional collaboration with Dr. Finlayson, they have laid the groundwork for pre-surgical optimization content in PrehabPal. These activities align with Dr. Broering's professional education as a nurse researcher and epidemiologist.

Natanya Wachtel, Industry Mentor

Natanya Wachtel, the Industry Mentor for Ooney, is a seasoned digitally equipped behavioral psychology scientist with a profound commitment to integrative wellness and chronic disease management, focused on mental wellness in oncology. She has helped launch household brands, medtech and wellness programs. With a passion for the magic of fungi and integrative solutions, Natanya has an award-winning career leveraging behavioral psychology to enhance user adoption and experience, for both health and educational outcomes.

Her extensive experience includes founding the pioneering New Solutions Network and co-founding the empathy AI-powered MedTech startup, evrmore.io. As Board Chair for various nonprofits such as Women Who Create, a mentor and scholarship program for women of color.

She is a strategic advisor for several tech startups such as ViTel Health, Reju, Pfilter, and INFUUSE, she continuously drives solutions for mental health crises, balancing her roles with active participation in media through projects like "The Natanya Experience", "Psych+Hip Hop", #GameMindset, and the upcoming "HEALTHVISION" and A&E's 'Coming of Age" along with being a regular contributor to Fox Sports Radio (re: Mental Health+Sports) and The Ryan Show (AI+healthcare).

Emily Finlayson, MD, MS, Ooney Co-Founder

Emily Finlayson, a practicing surgeon and researcher at University of California, San Francisco, is a thought leader in improving surgical care for older surgical patients. Her team at UCSF developed and tailored innovations in prehabilitation for older adults. She co-founded Ooney with Sean to expand the reach of her in-person program through digital health solutions.

About Ooney:

Ooney has developed a web-based application, PrehabPal, to improve surgery outcomes in older adults (those 65+) through pre-surgery intervention—also known as prehabilitation. PrehabPal evaluates vulnerabilities and creates a personalized home-based plan to help older adults prepare for surgery. In addition to standard prehabilitation domains such as diet and exercise, PrehabPal provides wrap-around support that targets common geriatric vulnerabilities such as home safety, anxiety, and polypharmacy, and can be tailored to surgery types.

Ooney's work has been funded by grants and awards from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, National Philanthropic Trust, UCSF Catalyst, the Society for Vascular Surgery, and the UCSF Pepper Center.

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