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# R.I. researchers share \$1 million in grants

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By Peter B. Lord

Journal Environment Writer

The state awarded more than \$1 million in grants Wednesday to six teams of Rhode Island researchers working on projects ranging from the possible use of the spice turmeric in cancer treatment to improved lithium batteries for automobiles.

This is the fourth year the grants were made by the Rhode Island Science and Technology Advisory Council to foster innovative research projects.

Christine Smith, program manager, said in the last four years, the council has received 178 proposals and funded 30 with about \$5 million.

One of the early projects funded by the council has already attracted more than \$4 million in venture capital and others have generated more than \$3 million in new grants, Smith said. The following grants were awarded:

- \$200,000 to James N. Jacob of Organomed and Wayne Bowen of Brown University to develop cancer-prevention and chemotherapy drugs from compounds found in turmeric, a member of the ginger family, which has had many uses in folk medicine. The goal is to move into pre-clinical trials.
- \$111,769 to Fatemeh Aklaghi at the University of Rhode Island and Dr. Reginald Gohh at Rhode Island Hospital to help transplant patients monitor levels of anti-rejection medications in their bodies by testing saliva rather than repeatedly drawing blood.
- \$200,000 to Pradeep Guduru and Christopher Bull of Brown University and Brett Lucht of the University of Rhode Island, who are working to develop more durable lithium batteries that will be used in the next phase of low-cost, extended-range electric cars. The work is expected to make Rhode Island more competitive for federal grants supporting battery improvements.
- \$199,895 to Gabriel Taubin at Brown, Dr. George E. Heleblian and Dr. Gyan Pareek at Rhode Island Hospital and Jason D. Harry at Lucidux Corp. to develop technology to identify early-stage bladder cancer, and to provide a better view that will allow doctors to remove only cancerous tissues while leaving healthy tissues undamaged.
- \$199,953 to Dr. Barbara Stonestreet and Dr. James Padbury of Women & Infants Hospital, Jow-Pin Lim of ProThera Biologics and R. Choudary Hanumara of URI to identify a protein that may help prevent brain damage in premature infants.

•\$200,000 to Walter G. Besio of URI, Dr. John Gaitanis at Brown and Michael Sullivan of Astro-Med Inc. to develop a commercially viable system to improve the diagnosis of epilepsy and other neurological disorders. The team has developed a research prototype and will now accelerate moving to commercial efforts.

[plord@projo.com](mailto:plord@projo.com)