

A New Medicine to Heal Eyes

SBDC Technology Commercialization Assistance Program Helping Scientists Bring New Drug to Market.

George Boehm, Government Marketing Specialist Consultant on both the PTAC and DETA Government Procurement programs of the KU SBDC, has worked with Ian Zagon, Ph.D. since late 2003. Ian Zagon became a client as a result of a series of classes the KU SBDC taught for Medical Researchers at the Hershey Medical Center in late 2003 and early 2004 on entrepreneurship, business planning, research funding grants, etc. Similar classes will be repeated this year at the Hershey Medical Center by the KU SBDC in a series of detailed follow-up workshops.

Ian Zagon, Ph.D. was provided with detailed education and guidance by KU SBDC's George Boehm, as well as other research grant programs, solicitation reviews and proposals preparation, commercialization plans, program schedules and costs, etc. George Boehm also reviewed current solicitations to which Dr. Zagon was interested in. Dr. Zagon responded and worked with George to analyze the solicitation for needs and requirements. He also prepared a proposal outline with application contents and strategy. This effort has already returned benefits to Dr. Zagon with a reward of a \$1.5 million research grant.

Ian Zagon, Ph.D. and Pat McLaughlin, PhD are scientists working to develop new drugs. They know their way around laboratories and hospitals, but they knew that they needed help developing management, marketing, and program management skills. So when they found

their business, Zoegenics, LLC, they sought out the assistance of the Kutztown University SBDC to help bring their discoveries to the marketplace.

Working with an ophthalmologist, Dr. Zagon and Dr. McLaughlin discovered that their scientific discoveries might help patients with diabetes. These patients often develop eye problems and have difficulty healing. Surgeries to repair eye problems often run into problems because diabetes patients have trouble healing after surgery. The scientists discovered that a drug they had been studying, naltrexone (NTX) could help diabetic patients heal much more quickly after eye surgery.

Zoegenics, LLC, needed funding to perform additional studies to show the effectiveness of their new medicine.

Dr. Zagon and D. McLaughlin decided they would try to obtain grant funding from the National Institutes of Health to run clinical trials.

George Boehm, a technology Commercialization specialist at the Kutztown SBDC, worked with the researchers to guide them through the proposal process and develop a comprehensive commercialization plan. Dr. Zagon and Dr. McLaughlin also took a number of business courses through the SBDC to assist them in running their new business.

With hard work and assistance from the

SBDC, Zoegenics, LLC, was awarded a grant for \$1.5 million from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease of the NIH. This will allow the scientists to conduct tests and develop commercial products. This new grant also means that they will hire three new full time employees. More importantly, it means that diabetic patients suffering from serious eye

ailments may soon have a new treatment.

Dr. Zagon notes, “We didn’t know anything about a business. The SBDC really helped us out. They made sure we had access to business specialists – lawyers, accountants – when we needed it. I think that the problem is marvelous; it’s great to have people who know business working with people like me.”

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