

## **KU SBDC and SCORE Partnership Helps Clients**

Over the last four years, KU SBDC has partnered with several SCORE chapters in Chester County, Lancaster, and York to deliver Business Plan workshops to hundreds of clients annually. In 2005, KU SBDC will partner with the Reading SCORE to help Reading-area business owners. Many entrepreneurs benefit from this enormous partnership between KU SBDC and SCORE. We wanted to share a success story from the West Chester SCORE Chapter.

Hospitals are not immune from the nationwide problem of rising health care costs. A convergence of trends has left many health care organizations mired in red ink, even as the demand for their services continues to increase. Conventional cost-control measures are not always applicable, as they may jeopardize the hospital's ability to maintain the personnel and equipment resources necessary to provide quality care to patients.

Curtis Lambert felt he had a viable solution to help hospitals cope with this dilemma. Having taken advantage of early retirement from a health care technology company, Lambert had applied his IT expertise and familiarity with hospital operations around the world to develop PORis™, a cost management system based on patient outcomes. PORis™ tracks the events and costs of an individual patient's diagnostic/treatment regimen, and compares them to the outcome. The approach provides a far more objective measure of what combinations of cost-effective treatment options correlate with the most favorable patient outcomes.

Despite his product's many advantages, Lambert found few takers. "I was approaching the market as a nonprofit, offering better outcomes when hospitals were more focused on saving money," he says. "I knew I needed business counseling, but having relied heavily on personal savings to get my company, Infonale going, I couldn't afford to spend very much."

Lambert heard about SCORE's free counseling services through the local SBA Small Business Development Center, and began looking for an advisor. He found the perfect match in Don Surr, a retired marketing professional with a national pharmaceutical company. "Don was a breath of fresh air," Lambert says. "He brought the 'big picture' perspective of the market, and how it operates. I think in IT possibilities, Don thinks in dollars. He taught me how to hone my dreams into practical reality."

Working in-person and by email, Surr helped Lambert develop business and marketing plans. Surr also pointed Lambert toward cultivating prospective clients through professional networking and media exposure.

After Lambert secured his first client, it didn't take long to prove the power of PORis™. By applying the system to its operations, the hospital saved \$1.3 million in six months. "The physicians were willing to tweak their procedures and use less costly resources where possible," Lambert says. "However, the patients recovered more quickly and could be discharged sooner."

Today, Infonolé has added more clients and employee resources to its portfolio. The company has also attracted the interest of venture capitalists to help guide the firm through its second stage of growth, which includes the national launch of PORis™ to major hospital chains.

Lambert has also gained a valuable confidant. Both self-described “morning

people,” he and Surr frequently get together for breakfast, exchanging ideas over coffee and omelets. “We’ve developed a good business relationship, and a good personal relationship as well,” Lambert says. Don helps keep me focused and stimulates my thinking. And, he has the personal satisfaction of seeing this venture succeed.”