

Two Northern Ontario Organizations Amongst Winners of COVID-19 Challenge

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Sudbury, May 08, 2020 - On April 3, the Vale COVID-19 challenge was launched in Canada to help propel innovative COVID-19 solutions developed by companies, startups, institutions, universities or professionals into the marketplace by offering financial support of up to USD \$1M.

A total of nearly 1,800 solutions were submitted globally, of which over 300 came from within Canada. All solutions were carefully reviewed by a select group of employees as well as external partners and supporters, which, in Canada, included:

- Mater Dei Hospital in Brazil,
- Dr. Ken Jenkins (Horizon supported by TELUS Health),
- Dr. Farrell Cahill (Medisys supported by TELUS Health),
- Dr. Greg Ross (Health Sciences North Sudbury),
- Don Duval (NORCAT),
- Dr. Shahid Husain (University Health Network)
- Sheryl Thingvold (MaRS Discovery District).

"The participation on this initiative was incredible, exceeding my expectations and is a great example of how open innovation can bring people together globally as partners in finding innovative solutions to critical problems," said Afzal Jessa, Chief Digital Officer, Vale Base Metals. "It's been an eye opener on the power of fostering collaboration among innovative leaders across diverse institutions to move quickly on a unified cause."

After careful review, 11 solutions were selected to receive financial support as part of the Vale COVID-19 Challenge with two of them being Canadian companies, both based in Northern Ontario.

FloSonics Medical is a venture-backed start-up based in Sudbury, Ontario that develops and commercializes wearable sensors, which improve clinical management of critically ill patients inside and outside of the hospital. To help during the COVID-19 Pandemic, FloSonics developed a wearable wireless single-use hemodynamic monitor, which allows clinicians to access vital information about a COVID-19 patient's cardiovascular state remotely via Bluetooth. The funds received from Vale will help them increase capacity to manufacture and deliver the devices which have already been cleared for use in the US by the FDA.

"FloSonics is pleased to partner with Vale in this important initiative," explained Joe Eibl, Chief Executive Officer at FloSonics Medical. "Our aim with this solution is to facilitate monitoring where resources are limited, and to help support clinical decisions to improve patient outcomes."

First Team 1305, a group of high school robotics students from North Bay, Ontario, developed a DIY ultra-violet (UV) sterilizer that facilitates the cleaning and sterilization of personal protective equipment. They currently have two prototypes being used at the North Bay Regional Health Centre in the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit. The funds will allow them to further develop these prototypes and build an open source model to be shared internationally. They also plan to purchase the required material to build 50 units to donate to local hospitals and medical centers.

"The funds provided by Vale for the UV Sterilizer Project will have a positive impact on the people at risk of COVID-19 in our community and will help others to make a difference in their community as well," explained Fionna Truong, First Team 1305 student. "The safety equipment and masks are key in keeping our first responders and those at risk safe. By being able to sterilize and reuse masks we will be able to continue protecting our community, and with the help from Vale, others will now be able to help their community."

“We had such a strong and positive response to Vale’s COVID-19 Challenge,” said Dino Otranto, Chief Operating Officer of Vale’s North Atlantic Operations and Asian Refineries. “Organizations across the country have demonstrated extraordinary ingenuity and resilience to come together during these challenging times. We are pleased to fuel some of the ideas that were brought forward to help extend their reach and their impact in communities across Canada.”

To view and to get to know the solutions being supported through this challenge, please visit www.vale.com/canadacovid19challenge

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