



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Forward BIOLABS Announces 15 Biohealth Startups as Forward Membership Winners

Forward Memberships support early-stage biohealth companies with lab space, resources, and community to accelerate innovation.

Madison, WI, [12/10/2024] — **Forward BIOLABS**, with support from the **Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation** (WEDC), is thrilled to announce the recipients of the 2024 Forward Membership Program.

The **Forward Membership Program** awards early-stage startups a variety of memberships with access to Forward BIOLABS' fully equipped co-working laboratory and office, complemented by shared resources and a vibrant community. The awards help startups transition from concept to commercialization more efficiently by providing the essential equipment, resources, and connections needed to thrive in the competitive biohealth industry.

All recipients work within the biohealth sector. A notable 74% of the selected companies include a woman or minority as a founder or leader, highlighting Forward BIOLABS's commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion in the industry.

"Forward Memberships exemplify our mission to accelerate innovation by providing promising startups with not only physical lab space but also a robust variety of state-of-the-art equipment as well as real-time technical, operational, and business support. We are excited to see their work progress within our community," said Jessica Martin Eckerly, co-founder and CEO of Forward BIOLABS.

WEDC is supporting the Forward Membership Program with a \$192,200 *Entrepreneurship Partner Grant* to provide direct support to biohealth entrepreneurs. Applications were carefully reviewed and approved by a selection committee composed of local and regional leaders.

"The Membership applicant pool was incredibly strong, and the recipients embody the innovation and resilience that define Wisconsin's growing biohealth ecosystem," said Lisa Johnson, CEO of BioForward. "These programs continue to highlight the importance of fostering collaboration and innovation, which is a major part of the **Wisconsin Biohealth Tech Hub** projects as well. The companies are not only advancing groundbreaking technologies but also strengthening Wisconsin's position as a leader in the global biohealth industry."

The 2024 Forward Membership Recipients are:

- **Allostasis LLC** – *developing next-generation platforms to prevent rejection of pluripotent stem cell-based therapies*
- **Axio BioPharma** – *a CDMO leveraging AI to accelerate mammalian protein development, focusing on cost-effective antibody manufacturing services*
- **AyrFlo Innovation Labs, Inc.** – *developing a non-invasive wearable wireless patch to monitor patient's breathing health and to prevent respiratory failure*
- **Embr Genomics** – *pioneering the science for multi cancer early detection through a simple liquid biopsy*
- **Intrinsic Powers** – *developing neurotechnology to detect consciousness in unresponsive patients, supporting clinical and family decision-making on life sustaining care*
- **Nelambos LLC** – *developing a diagnostic assay for the early detection of urinary tract infections (UTIs)*
- **NextGen Cells LLC** – *using patented technology, developed a workflow to extend the functional life of donors' non-immortalized primary human hepatocytes (PHHs)*
- **Polymer Forge** – *synergizing advanced optoelectronics, polymer chemistry, and facilitated evolution in a powerful platform for high-throughput multimodal drug discovery*
- **RojoBio** – *harnessing biotech to unlock plants' full potential for pharma, nutrition, cosmetics, and agriculture*
- **SeLight, LLC** – *Developing a label-free flow cytometry system to measure cell metabolism on the single-cell level in real-time*
- **Sensify Life** – *developing scalable non-invasive digital biomarkers for early detection of neurodegeneration by measuring changes in smell and in the retina*
- **Squire Biosciences** – *developing viral backbones and cell lines to lower manufacturing costs and boost yields of major viral vectors for gene and cell therapy*
- **Synpha Biosciences** – *building synthetic phage therapeutics to treat bacterial disease*
- **VGSK Technologies** – *sustained platform drug delivery system*
- **WisperBio** – *research and early development of a biologic*

About Forward BIOLABS: Forward BIOLABS is a non-profit co-working life science laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, with a mission to make it easier to start a company. This goal is accomplished by providing early-stage startups with a fully equipped and supported laboratory on an affordable and flexible basis, and a collaborative community of scientists, entrepreneurs, and industry experts. Learn more at forwardbiolabs.org.

About WEDC: The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is a state agency focused on supporting economic development initiatives, fostering business growth, and creating job opportunities across Wisconsin. Learn more at wedc.org.