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## UNH professor develops innovative technology for use in MRI

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The recipient of \$300,000 in grants from the **National Institutes of Health** (NIH of Bethesda, Md), **Bill Hersman**—a professor at the **University of New Hampshire** (UNH of Durham)—has launched **Xemed LLC**, a spinout company tied to UNH that will enable him to commercialize his technology for polarizing xenon gas.

When inhaled by patients, polarized xenon allows MRI to produce a clear picture of the interior of the lungs, which cannot be seen with conventional techniques. The technology could benefit patients who suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease by allowing physicians to see which parts of the lungs are affected.

Hersman has secured FDA approval for testing polarized xenon with MRI in humans, which will be conducted later this year. "The pressure is on now," Hersman said. "The world has been waiting long enough for a diagnostic procedure for lung health, so we're scrambling to provide that."

Hersman developed his technique for polarizing xenon with previous NIH funding. The new grants will fund research to further refine the technology and reduce its size.

"To make it practical, we had to make it fit into a cabinet small enough so that every hospital with an MRI unit could have one," Hersman explained. "The challenge is to bring everything together into a small space without the three magnetic fields involved interfering with one another."

UNH already has filed for three patents based on Hersman's innovations and is in



Bill Hersman has developed the xenon polarizer and formed his own company around the technology.

the process of filing for two more.

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