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Pair of profs pull in separate grants for health projects

03/28/2005 07:16 AM

By [Dyke Hendrickson](#)

Professors at separate New England universities recently marked progress in their drives to develop companies based on research in their laboratories.

Bill Hersman, a physics professor at the University of New Hampshire, recently landed a \$300,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health that will be put toward the development of his new company, **Xemed** LLC.

The company is attempting to commercialize technology it developed for polarizing xenon gas in an effort to learn more about the lungs.

And Joseph Jabre, a professor of neurology at Boston University School of Medicine, has reached the final round of the \$30K Business Plan competition at Boston University.

Hersman employs one full-time staff member, and about a half-dozen unpaid post-doctoral and graduate students. He has received numerous federal grants from the National Institutes of Health, including several grants in recent months.

Herman's technology is focused on enabling magnetic resonance imaging to better see inside the lungs. He said his research could eventually help doctors reveal obstructions in the lung. Feedback from his units could also help identify ventilation defects.

The company has received permission from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to carry out certain tests at Brigham and Women's

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Hospital.

"We have received approval from the FDA to demonstrate that our technology is clinically useful," Hersman said. "There is no market for it now, but we have an exciting opportunity to demonstrate that it has commercial value."

Hersman said he has been working on the technology for about a decade. He estimated that he has captured eight federal grants in 19 attempts as his team has sought funding for the technology.

"Professor Hersman's initial work was driven by intellectual curiosity and wasn't designed for commercial development," said John Aber, UNH vice president for research and public service, in a statement.

"This demonstrates the value of basic research at UNH, both for our ability to improve the human condition and to support economic development."

Jabre started TeleEMG in 1997. Its signature software, Expert Neurographer, seeks to minimize errors in interpretation in widely performed diagnostic nerve conduction studies.

Nerve conductions are used in the diagnostic evaluation of neuropathies, diseases of the peripheral nerves and parts of the spine that are complications of low back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome and diabetes.

TeleEMG's goal is to resolve the problems arising from the misinterpretation of these diagnostic tests by providing analysis and interpretation software that delivers a superior diagnostic to nerve conduction providers.

This service is intended to minimize patients' pain and suffering from unnecessary treatments, and save insurance companies millions of dollars in unnecessary costs.

TeleEMG's services will be automated, repeatable, billable and delivered to the provider over the Internet at the time and point of service. Jabre said the company began as a means to provide residents and trainees with up-to-date information on the EMG and nerve conduction test.

Jabre began to work on developing web applications that would help patients and doctors understand the test better and acquire skills in performing it. As those products started selling on the web, TeleEMG began generating revenues almost immediately.

"If there is one thing that I wish I'd known going into this process, it would be the importance of starting my MBA much earlier," Jabre said. "But, it's better late than never, and I am only 58 now."

Winners of the contest will be announced April 13.

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