



*Fannin's Atul Varadhachary accepts the 2016 Tibbetts Award from US SBA's Administrator, Maria Contreras-Sweet and Associate Administrator, Mark Walsh.*

## Fannin Wins SBA Tibbetts Award, Recognizing Role in Leveraging SBIR Funding

Calling Fannin's life science development business "a unique approach to supporting commercialization of University research," the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) presented Fannin Innovation Studio with its coveted 2016 Tibbetts



Award in ceremonies held in January at the White House's Eisenhower Executive Office Building. Fannin joins an elite class of companies that have excelled by leveraging the SBA's \$1.2 billion annual Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. Called America's Seed Fund™, the programs are the largest of their type in the world.

"We are grateful to the SBA and its SBIR program for the critical role they play in technology commercialization by small companies. We

are especially appreciative of the many SBIR and STTR reviews and awards we have received throughout 2016 for Fannin portfolio companies, such as Pulmotect, BreviTest, Guidabot and Atrapos," states Fannin Managing Partner, Dr. Atul Varadhachary, who accepted the Tibbetts Award in Washington, D.C. from SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet, Associate Administrator Mark Walsh and John Williams, Director of Innovation and Technology.

"The awards and support from the SBA allow us to further bridge the commercialization gap in the Houston community. SBA support contributes to our capital-efficient model, and the zero-dollar direct burn rate that our portfolio companies enjoy in their first two years enables us to seek SBIR and other grants to support early development. Our model allows us to focus on the science behind the innovative technology, and we are delighted to receive the Tibbetts Award that provides further validation of our model and vision from the scientific and business community," said Varadhachary.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**FANNIN SPRING  
PORTFOLIO EXHIBITION**

**Friday, April 28**

**8:00 to 11:00am**

### UPCOMING INDUSTRY EVENTS OF NOTE

**SXSW, Austin, March 8-18, 2017**

**Who goes? >>** Atul is a panelist at SWSXedu on "Solve for Z: Accelerating Lab to Market Innovations" and at the SBA Investment & Innovation Pop Up Summit at SXCF at Capital Factory.

**What do you learn? >>** Networking with start-ups, investment and funding pros from various technology sectors.

**Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM) annual convention**

**Hollywood, FL, March 12-15, 2017**

**Who goes? >>** Atul is a panelist on Venture Capital and judge in the business plan competition.

In attendance are tech transfer professionals, IP lawyers, industry.

**What do you learn? >>** Latest trends in technology licensing terms and deals.

**BIO International**

**San Diego June 19-22, 2017**

**Who goes? >>** Atul presents Houston as a Global Innovation Hub to biotech and pharma execs, investors, tech transfer, BD professionals

**What do you learn? >>** Networking

FEATURED FANNIN TEAM MEMBER

MICHELLE HO, PHD



**AS AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP FELLOW** for Fannin Innovation Studio, Michelle currently manages two of Fannin's portfolio companies: rHDL Therapeutics and GuidaBot. Michelle earned her B.S. in Bioengineering from the University of California, Berkeley in 2010 where she researched the role of stem cells in aging and muscle regeneration. In 2015, she completed her Ph.D. in Bioengineering from Rice University, developing therapeutic virus-based gene therapy vectors for cancer and cardiovascular disease treatment. Prior to joining

Fannin, Michelle was a T32 Postdoctoral Fellow at Rice University and MD Anderson. Michelle is originally from California and enjoys sipping on Stone IPAs while cheering on her Golden State Warriors.



**BELLICUM** Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (BLCM) appointed Rick Fair as President and CEO, replacing Tom Farrell, the founding CEO who led the company from a virtual start-up through its current late-stage clinical status, including raising \$140 million in its late 2014 IPO. The Houston-based company with a current market value of \$325 million is preparing for commercialization of BPX-501, an adjunct T-cell therapy incorporating the company's CaspaCIDE® safety switch, and has a pipeline of CAR-T and T-cell receptor (TCR) product candidates. Fair joined Bellicum from Genentech/Roche, where he was SVP and Head of Oncology Global Product Strategy.

**JLABS@TMCx** appointed Tom Luby as leader, replacing the departed Emmanuelle Schuler. Luby was formerly J&J's senior director of new ventures for its Boston Innovation Center. The 34,000sf lab/wet lab start-up space currently houses dozens of early-stage companies, both from the Houston area and elsewhere.

**PLx Pharma, Inc.**, a late-stage Houston-based biotech developing Aspertec™, the company's safer and more effective aspirin product using the PLxGuard™ delivery system, announced a reverse merger with Dipexium Pharmaceuticals, New York. PLx shareholders will hold 77% of the new public company when the deal closes. In Austin, another reverse merger will see Savara Inc. joining with San Diego-based Mast Therapeutics. Savara will use the cash from the merger to continue developing its inhaled dry-powder vancomycin drug and other inhaled therapies and will continue to be based in Texas. Savara shareholders will own 76% of the combined company.

**MD Anderson's** deal machine keeps cranking, as its Institute for Applied Cancer Science (IACS) unit run by Phil Jones inked a deal with New York-based Deerfield Management (\$7B AUM) to provide drug discovery and development for Deerfield's start-up Vescor, LLC. Vescor's target approach looking for autophagy inhibitors is based on the work of co-founders Eileen White of Rutgers and Alec Kimmelman of NYU. Terms weren't disclosed.

**InGeneron Inc.**, a Houston-based clinical-stage regenerative medicine and cell therapy company, reported that Sanford Health has invested \$20 million in the company in a Series D round. Sanford is one of the largest integrated health providers in the US, based in the Dakotas. InGeneron's technology looks to improve outcomes in orthopedic and wound-healing indications.

FANNIN STUDIO UPDATES

- **PROCYRION** – has plans to be back in Asunción, Paraguay in April to continue its first-in-human trial. So far, four patients have been successfully implanted with the Aortix device. In the mean time, Procyrion is busy conducting large animal trials in Durham and in Boston.
- **PULMOTECT** - appointed Dr. Nestor Molfino as Chief Executive Officer. Dr. Molfino is a respiratory medicine specialist who has led global drug development design and planning strategies in the biopharmaceutical industry. Prior to joining Pulmotect, Dr. Molfino was the Chief Medical Officer at KaloBios, a public company developing a portfolio of patient-targeted, first-in-class monoclonal antibodies for multiple difficult-to-treat diseases. Pulmotect also gained FDA approval to start its next trial at MD Anderson and targets Q2 2017 for patient enrollment. It continues to develop pre-clinical data supporting novel uses of its technology, and a Scientific Advisory Board is being assembled for an initial meeting in Q2 2017.
- **BREVITEST** - was awarded a Phase I SBIR grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for \$225,000. The funding will go toward development and optimization of an affordable and quick urinary opioid assay for physicians to objectively and accurately assess patients prior to prescribing opioids.
- **ACELEROX** - was awarded \$195,665 by the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to advance a therapeutic antioxidant solution that will reduce platinum chemotherapy's unwanted ototoxicity (damage to hearing and balance systems), without interfering with the chemotherapeutic's tumor-killing effects. Currently, no therapies are approved by the FDA to prevent or reduce side effects of chemotherapy-induced injury and late effects of treatment on the hearing and balance, brain, and kidney systems.
- **EXOTECT** - recently completed a project with the Southwest Research Institute (SwRI) in San Antonio to identify potential inhibitors of Syt2 function. The collaboration consisted of computational modeling and docking and yielded a variety of candidate molecules that are currently being further tested in biochemical assays.