

## Restorative Breast Cancer Solution Start-Up Wins the 2018 FACIT Pitch Competition

*Biotechnology competition modeled after popular TV program Dragons' Den*

**TORONTO, April 12, 2018** – A panel of investor-judges has selected Ontario-based oncology researcher Soror Sharifpoor of Polumiros Inc. as the winner of the 2018 FACIT Falcons' Fortunes competition. The \$50,000 award is intended to support further development of their innovative cancer research. FACIT runs the annual competition as part of its broader mandate to support translating research into Ontario companies to impact the lives of patients with cancer.

Now in its fifth year, the FACIT Falcons' Fortunes competition is open to any Ontario-based oncology researcher (academics, research institutions, research hospitals and start-ups). Entrepreneurial scientists are invited to pitch innovative research ideas to a panel of four investors in a competition that is modeled after the popular CBC television program Dragons' Den. The winners receive the \$50,000 "Ernsting Entrepreneurship Award." After follow-up technical evaluation of the underlying innovation, the money funds product development for one year.

"We are really, truly thrilled. We put a lot of time into this technology," says Dr. Sharifpoor. "This has been years of work and effort by our team. To have FACIT's help to get to the next stage, this means the world of difference to us."

Polumiros Inc. specializes in the development of ReFilx™, a polymeric soft tissue filler that provides breast cancer patients with an esthetically superior and minimally-invasive solution for the permanent restoration of breast tissue defects following lumpectomy.

FACIT received a total of 38 applications from across Ontario for this year's Falcons' Fortunes competition. From those initial entries, FACIT narrowed the field to six researchers to appear in-person and pitch their innovation to the investor judging panel. Since it started in 2014, the number of applications has grown by about 15% per year. The event has also grown in popularity with the community and this year's event is at capacity.

"Without companies to develop experimental therapies and technologies, the benefits of research can be confined to the laboratory. With our partners at the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, FACIT plays a leading role in supporting Ontario entrepreneurs," says David O'Neill, acting President of FACIT. "Securing funding to bring an innovation to market is a difficult but necessary step if you want your idea to impact patients at the bedside."

The six entrepreneurs each gave a 10-minute pitch to the panel, followed by a five-minute question and answer session. The winner was announced at a reception immediately following the competition on April 11 in Toronto.

Scott Tanner, former President and Chief Executive Officer of DVS Sciences, transformed an early breakthrough technology into a highly successful company that continues to employ a number of Ontario scientists. Dr. Tanner started DVS with funding from FACIT and returned this year to share some of his wisdom and experience as one of the panel judges.

"As a researcher, being challenged to pitch your ideas effectively is crucial," he says. "It's not enough to have just a great technology. You have to provide incentive for people to invest in your business. It's a risky thing for them. FACIT helps scientists like me become businesspeople investors can trust."

### **About FACIT**

Established by the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR) and the Province of Ontario as a strategic partner to accelerate commercialization of oncology innovations, the Fight Against Cancer Innovation Trust (FACIT) leads these innovations from the lab to the marketplace to benefit patients, researchers, investors and the Ontario economy. For more information, please visit the website at [facit.ca](http://facit.ca).

The Ernsting Entrepreneurship Award is named in honour of Dr. Mark Ernsting, Senior Biomedical Engineer at OICR, whose life was tragically cut short in December 2015. Mark exemplified the entrepreneurial spirit that FACIT strives to build and support within Ontario.

### **Contact**

Lisa Milestone, PhD  
Senior Project Manager, FACIT  
[Lisa.milestone@facit.ca](mailto:Lisa.milestone@facit.ca)