



ASPIRE

medtech

IMPACT REPORT

Fall 2021

In partnership with
TechTown Detroit and MedHealth

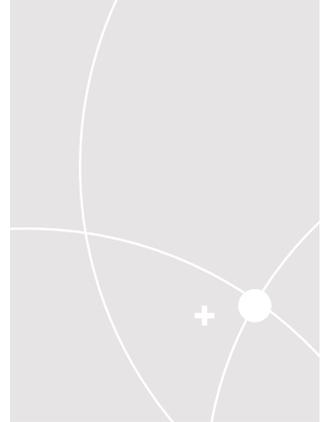


Overview

The 2021 virtual ASPIRE medtech program was held October 4 - November 19, 2021 in partnership with TechTown Detroit and MedHealth, and supported 12 startup companies. The startups are commercializing technologies including medical devices, surgical tools, diagnostics, drug delivery technology, digital health, and safety products ranging from patient care in a clinical setting to supporting athletes on the playing field. A full agenda, including descriptions of the participating startups is attached. VentureWell hosted the workshop on Zoom over a period of seven weeks, with workshops held each Monday and Friday, and a mix of mentor office hours and peer-to-peer networking each Wednesday.

Six mentors-in-residence from across the country attended the virtual workshop, along with 22 guest mentors, including 12 sourced from the local Michigan entrepreneurship ecosystem through the support of TechTown Detroit. In addition to the support generously provided by TechTown Detroit and MedHealth through their funding with the William J. Davidson Foundation, the program was sponsored in part by Dickinson Wright, a national law firm with offices in Detroit; in2being LLC, a medical device development firm in Michigan; Greenlight Guru, a quality management software design firm specializing in the medical device industry in Indiana; and Rook Quality Systems, a consulting firm specializing in quality and regulatory strategy for emerging medical device startups in Georgia.

Following the workshop, VentureWell administered surveys to all participants and mentors, to understand and learn from their experiences of the program. This report includes highlights from the surveys as well as other learnings and feedback gathered during and after the program.



Participant Perspectives

Participants responded with positive feedback. Based on the post-workshop surveys:

- All participants rated the workshop as good or very good.
- The workshop met or exceeded expectations for 100% of participants. The majority of respondents (75%) said that the workshop exceeded expectations, an accomplishment we are particularly proud of given this is the second medtech cohort in an entirely virtual format.
- On a scale from zero to ten, where zero means “not at all likely” and ten means “extremely likely,” respondents rated their likelihood to recommend the ASPIRE program very highly, with a 9.0 average rating.

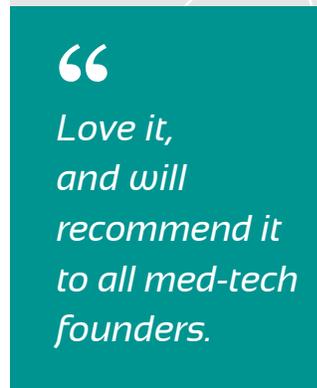
Open-ended comments from participants included:

“The interaction with actual investors was the highlight, assisting us with understand[ing] the what and how of presenting our startup for (we hope) successful follow-on investment to our current runway. An appreciation goes out to the volunteers and the organizers.”

“Love it, and will recommend it to all med-tech founders.”

Venture Development: Overall, participants reported that the workshop had an impact on their venture development: 100% said their project would improve “a lot” or “a great deal” because of their participation in the workshop. In particular, the opportunity to take time to learn and gain confidence in the fundraising stood out as a primary value driver.

“As a product-focused, engineering team, we focus heavily on how to mitigate technological failure, but VentureWell’s ASPIRE program gave us insight into key business areas that could result in failure if we didn’t mitigate risk from a company perspective as well.”

A teal-colored rectangular box containing a white quote. The quote is: “Love it, and will recommend it to all med-tech founders.”

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"The greatest insights for me were the convertible note and fundraising portions of the workshop. This is not knowledge that you could pick up off the street or on a YouTube video. Actually walking through the different documents and negotiating terms was a big deal for me."

"[We learned] how unprepared we were from a corporate structure standpoint and have taken the steps to rectify that. I feel much less intimidated about attempting to raise money now and very confident with my understanding of our corporate structure and related implications."

Investment-readiness: Participants reported gaining significant insights into the investment process and feeling more prepared in approaching investors and thinking through key decisions related to the business milestones. The ASPIRE program offers a unique combination of facilitated group discussion, small group deep dives with mentors-in-residence, and individual office hours with mentors, allowing entrepreneurs to dive deep with investors on a weekly basis.

"The impact for [our venture] lay in the feedback from actual investors. It was not always 'nice' feedback; but, it helped us understand holes in our business planning and avoid, we hope, spending time on activity that will not add value to our company."

"I think office hours helped us get connected to top level individuals in our space by coming prepared with dedicated asks."

"[We] realized the depth and importance of bringing on an investor. Understanding the true due diligence that is done and the questions that get raised. Being more prepared to handle what might seem like 'stressful situations.'"

Confidence: Entrepreneurs identify personally with their startups, and while the development of the venture is the main goal of the program, ASPIRE also tends to have strong, positive impacts on the participating individuals themselves. Following the Fall 2021 ASPIRE, participants reported increased confidence in their refined knowledge and skills as entrepreneurs.

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[We] realized the depth and importance of bringing on an investor.

"I came into this program with far less experience than my partner in positioning the company for investors and in speaking to investors in a way that would result in funds being raised for the company. I may still not be 100% confident in my ability to do this but I feel like this has significantly improved my chances in doing so. It has also given me the tools to build upon to become more confident."

"It built confidence in myself as someone who could represent the company through the fundraising process, I previously felt like much more of an imposter approaching this process."

"I think the program helped me refocus on taking negative feedback stoically, and being prepared to receive criticism even when I feel I've put my best leg forward."

"The mock board meeting emphasized my ability to communicate with board members and external stakeholders, however it also made clear all the ways in which we as a company were not prepared for investment which ultimately falls on me as a CEO."

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Fundraising Goals: Beyond the improvements the entrepreneurs identified for their individual ventures, each startup team completed the program by seeking approval from a mock board on their next steps, which typically includes a planned fundraising ask. VentureWell has tracked these fundraising targets; the cohort is seeking to raise a combined \$15M in the coming year.

Mentor Perspectives

Mentors included a mix of individuals and have experience as business leaders, angel investors, venture capital fund managers, intellectual property and corporate attorneys, regulatory consultants, and startup board members and advisors.



Mentors-in-Residence

- Greg Campbell** President and CEO, Rainmaker, Inc.
Managing Director, Medingenii Capital
- Mike Clarke** Advisor, Astia Angels
- Marianne Hudson** Founder and Executive Director Emeritus, Angel Capital Association
- Deborah Livneh** Executive Director, Windsor Essex Capital Angel Network
Co-founder of a medical device company that was successful acquired
- Dr. Eddie Patton** CMO, Vyripharm Enterprises
General Partner, Medingenii Capital
Neurologist (formerly at University of Texas Neurosciences)
- Denise Saltojanes** Managing Director, Golden Seeds
Seed Investor, Tech Coast Angels

Following the event, mentors-in-residence praised the combination of group and individual sessions. They reported that the virtualized format had allowed them to meet many entrepreneurs over the course of the program, and that the mock board meeting format enabled them to provide deeper feedback to two specific companies. They also said that the cycle of the program worked well and had allowed for regular interaction with fellow mentors and with participants. In particular, one mentor-in-residence that has participated in both the in-person format and virtual programming saw benefits to both. They noted that they saw more improvements for entrepreneurs in the 1:1 Wednesday office hours sessions during the virtual six-week program compared to the previous one-week program. The mentors-in-residence indicated that they were primarily active investors and had committed their time to the engagement for a variety of reasons, including opportunities to seek deal flow, to understand the local Michigan entrepreneurial ecosystem, and to network with one another.



In addition to the mentors-in-residence, VentureWell worked with TechTown Detroit to recruit 22 additional guest mentors and speakers. In follow-up conversations with these mentors, many reported a willingness to continue engaging with the startups they met, and to return as mentors in future programs.

Partnership with TechTown Detroit

VentureWell worked closely with Stacey Frankovich, Dawn Batts, and Paul Riser Jr. to engage startups, investors, and other supporters of Michigan-based entrepreneurs in the program. This included reaching out to dozens of colleagues to provide referrals for prospective applicants. Thank to TechTown’s engagement and direction and partnerships over the years, entrepreneurs from across the country benefited from access to:

- Connections to local service providers, including medical device development and manufacturing consultants (in2being) and attorneys for intellectual property and startup corporate law (Dickinson Wright)
- Awareness of local economic development funding and network opportunities through entities such as the MedHealth Cluster, Invest Detroit, Ann Arbor SPARK, Trinity Health, and Spectrum Health Innovations

Investors got exposure to these resources as well – including the non-Michigan based investors who might not have been aware of the robust ecosystem activity happening in the region if not for the program.



Mentors and Guest Speakers

Ken Bahk	Co-founder and Managing Partner, Kaleidoscope Health Ventures
Kurt Baumgarten	Vice President & General Counsel, Applied Licensing, LLC
Ben Bernstein	Principal, ID Ventures
Albert Elston	VC Associate, Equal Opportunity Ventures
Yafeez Fatabhoy	Associate, Dickinson Wright PLLC
Tania Fernandez	Founder & Managing Partner, DreamCatcher Ventures General Partner, Biomed Innovations
Dave Giarracco	CEO, Noninvasix Investor, Rockies Venture Club
Kim Hanke	CEO, Elm Park Labs
Adrienne Harris	Director of Regulatory Affairs & Product Manager, in2being, LLC
Luciano Hernandez	Product Specialist, Spectrum Health Innovations
William Hurles	Member, Dickinson Wright PLLC
John Laughlin	Director of Partnerships, Near the Box
Jesseca Lyons	Operations and Enablement Guru, Greenlight Guru
Sumedha Mandpe	Director of Marketing & Consumer Engagement, Trinity Health
Dave Morin	Founder and Managing Member, Care Technology Advisors
Kristine Nash-Wong	Director of Entrepreneurial Services, Ann Arbor SPARK East Innovation Center
Gene Parunak	Managing Director, in2being, LLC
Aditi Rajagopal	Associate, ID Ventures
Kyle Rose	President, Rook Quality Systems
Praful Shah	Board Member, Social Venture Circle
Kevin Tyan	Co-Founder, Kinnos Venture Associate, Petri/Pillar VC
Adam Wallace	Member, Dickinson Wright PLLC

Sponsors



The Lemelson Foundation

The Lemelson Foundation uses the power of invention to improve lives, by inspiring and enabling the next generation of inventors and invention-based enterprises to promote economic growth in the US, and social and economic progress for the poor in developing countries. Established by prolific US inventor Jerome Lemelson and his wife Dorothy in the early 1990's, and led by the Lemelson family, to date the Foundation has provided or committed more than \$185 million in grants and Program-Related Investments in support of its mission.



TechTown Detroit

We are Detroit's Entrepreneurship Hub. We help tech startups and local businesses launch and grow. We are an incubator and accelerator. We support businesses with coworking and office space, meeting space and event space. We also connect entrepreneurs to resources, and learning and networking events in Detroit.



MedHealth

MedHealth is a regional collaboration connecting, convening, and educating the medical innovation ecosystem in Southeast Michigan and Southwest Ontario to accelerate the adoption of technologies that improve quality of care and contribute to economic growth.



in2being, LLC

in2being, LLC is a medical product development and consulting firm located in Ann Arbor, MI. Focused on helping small companies navigate the new product development maze, in2being, LLC has leverage-able expertise in microfluidics, system design, FDA 510K pathway, and intellectual property management. The company's flexible system enables effective collaboration with small companies, external vendors, and individual consultants, providing a centralized technical and strategic hub to effectively manage development projects.



Sponsors



Greenlight Guru

Greenlight Guru is the developer of quality management software designed to foster better decision-making by providing assistance with compliance, audit readiness and visibility. The company's SaaS platform helps to bring safer, high-quality medical devices to market faster and provides visibility that decreases risk by automating the process of traceability that facilitates inter-team communications and also includes tools for design control, risk management, and document management, enabling medical device companies to help them get to market faster and with less risk.



Rook Quality Systems

Rook Quality Systems is a Quality Consulting Firm specializing in Quality and Regulatory Strategy for emerging Medical Device Companies. Rook works closely with teams to help get their devices to market, faster. Their vision is to enable their clients to implement compliant Quality Management Systems (QMSs) so to ensure these clients can efficiently produce effective and reliable medical devices. They aim to build these QMSs so that their clients can get their devices to market faster than standard methods, and once on the market, use these systems to continue producing quality devices. Rook consultants provide their clients with the necessary tools to comply with regulations in domestic and international markets. Rook QS provides expertise in FDA regulations, MDSAP audits, ISO 13485:2016 compliance, and MDR conformity.



Dickinson Wright

Dickinson Wright is a full-service intellectual property and commercial litigation law firm with offices in ten US states. Dickinson Wright's attorneys focus on patent and trademark prosecution, IP and complex litigation (including patent, trademark, copyright, and securities litigation and counseling), post-grant patent proceedings, IP/technology opinions and investigations, licensing and transactions, and IP portfolio management. Dickinson Wright's clients include Fortune 500 companies, multinational corporations, individual inventors, startups, and world-renowned universities. Visit www.dickinson-wright.com for more information.



Session Types and Schedule

Sessions convened three times each week for the duration of the program.

Presentation and Full Group Discussion (Mondays & Fridays)

Led by VentureWell facilitators and expert speakers, we will walk through the topics and content and engage the mentors to add their perspectives and the entrepreneurs to ask their questions. These are intended to be dynamic discussions, not monologues, guided by shared understanding in the principles.

Peer-to-Peer Networking (first and last Wednesdays)

For the bookend Wednesdays, startups will share one big question they are struggling with and offer one resource they've have come across that's really helped them (give/get). For each meeting, teams will have the chance to connect with two teams, 30 minutes each session.

Office Hours (Wednesdays)

For five weeks, entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to sign up for 30-minute sessions with mentors-in-residence and a number of other investors and experts to check in, secure feedback, ask questions, review progress and network.

Small Group Discussions (Mondays & Fridays)

These sessions are a chance for startups to learn from one another in facilitated small group discussions.

Overview of Topics

- Accounting for Startups
- Board of Directors and Advisory Boards
- Corporate Housekeeping
- Due Diligence Overview
- Financial Projections
- Investor Discovery
- IP Strategies for the Growing Startup
- Management and Strategy
- Quality Systems
- Regulatory Pathways
- Reimbursements
- Team Building
- Venture Math and Valuations

Participating Teams

Ai-Ris

College Station, TX

Ai-Ris is addressing the problem of preventable blindness by empowering primary care physicians with the ability to offer eye disease screening.

Aurie

Syracuse, NY

Aurie, formerly known as CathBuddy, Inc. is developing a reusable intermittent urinary catheter system for the 600,000 people in the US living with urinary retention.

Cellens

Medford, MA

Cellens offers an accurate and noninvasive bladder cancer detection test suite to support physicians' decisions and improve patients' quality of life.

Colonai

New York, NY

Colonai devises artificial intelligence (AI) tools for precision colonoscopy ensuring better detection of missed tumors, effective removal of tumors, and detection of dysplasia in tissue.

HealthOpX

West Bloomfield, MI

HealthOpX partners community-based organizations with health insurers, health systems, and government to engage and improve the health of at-risk patients.

Lura Health

Cambridge, MA

Saliva is the new blood of health diagnostics and Lura Health is creating a wearable, intraoral, saliva diagnostic sensor platform to prevent health emergencies and manage chronic diseases.

MIST

Richmond, VA

MIST provides ML-powered diagnostics & insight to improve care for patients suffering from spinal deformities.

NextStep HealthTech

Durham, NH

NextStep is developing an immersive mental health mobile app that utilizes virtual reality technology to provide both synchronous and asynchronous resources and services for under-resourced communities.

OxyGen

Baltimore, MD

OxyGen has developed a portable oxygen concentrator for patients on long-term oxygen therapy that combines high-flow ambient air with pulses of concentrated oxygen in a mechanism that is easily maneuverable and energy-efficient.

Reaction Technologies

Ann Arbor, MI

Reaction Technologies is a leader in training solutions for athlete safety and performance.

SafetySit

Detroit, MI

SafetySit has developed a mobile backrest allowing clinicians to treat recovering patients without additional staff, eliminating \$1.8B of unnecessary or unsafe support labor in healthcare.

Stack Medical

Detroit, MI

Stack Medical is developing a unique, patented pump technology addressing a wide range of pain points in the delivery of biologic and biologic similar drugs.



“When we were selected to participate in the VentureWell Aspire program we were very excited. As first-time entrepreneurs, it gave us a chance to be around other start-ups to learn from their experiences and benefit from their advice. But the best part about the program was the opportunity to work with the mentors-in-residence and the experts they brought in to speak with us. It gave us a safe space to ask questions and get feedback each week. I have no doubt that the things we learned and the connections we made through the VentureWell program will help us successfully grow our business. We are very grateful for the opportunity and would suggest the VentureWell ASPIRE program to other entrepreneurs.”

Brandon Martin (Participant)

Founder, Reaction Technologies

– a startup company leading the way in training solutions for athlete safety and performance



“ASPIRE enabled us to get excellent feedback on all aspects of our business and investment strategies. Instead of just finding holes in our plan, the investors/mentors offered suggestions on how to make it better and ultimately made us more investable. By forcing us to go through the stress tests, they made us focus on issues we were either avoiding or oblivious to, and these exercises helped us bridge the gaps or create a plan to fill them. The lessons, mentors, and exercises definitely provided us with a lot of knowledge. As a company that has participated in many “accelerators,” we would say that ASPIRE was definitely one of the most organized, helpful, and productive ones we’ve attended. In addition, I would like to mention how fantastic it was to have an exclusive cohort for Medtech. The Medtech path can be arduous and isolating in the startup ecosystem so having a cohort that understands and can support you goes a long way.”

Mark Harburg (Participant)

CEO and Co-Founder, SafetySit

– a startup company that has developed a mobile backrest allowing clinicians to treat recovering patients without additional staff, eliminating \$1.8B of unnecessary or unsafe support labor in healthcare





“As a mentor for the Fall 2021 program, I was impressed to see the breadth and depth of knowledge and enablement offered in the VentureWell ASPIRE program. The entrepreneurs featured came with well-thought through ideas up to prototypes and a lot of drive and passion. But running a startup and securing funding is a never-ending learning opportunity for everyone involved. With mock term sheet negotiations, one-on-one mentoring sessions with various subject matter experts, practice board meetings, leadership-focused stress tests, and more, the ASPIRE program offers entrepreneurs a one of a kind hands-on entrepreneur enablement platform to expedite growth, personally, professionally and with future investors.”

Denise Saltojanes (Mentor-in-residence)

Managing Director, Golden Seeds

– an investment firm dedicated to pursuing market returns through the empowerment of women entrepreneurs and the people who invest in them

Seed Investor, Tech Coast Angels

– one of the largest and most active angel investor networks in the nation, and a leading source of funding for seed-stage and early-stage companies



“Being a mentor for the ASPIRE program is always an enlightening experience for me. Even as a mentor I learn from the experiences of the entrepreneurs, staff of VentureWell, and other mentors. The most rewarding part of the experience is the engagement with the entrepreneurs. The feedback I receive from helping them, either through office hours or the mock board meeting, makes the experience worthwhile. I watched the startups grow in their understanding of their strategy as well as their ability to go out and raise the funds that they need. I really enjoy being a part of that growth.”

Dr. Eddie Patton (Mentor-in-residence)

CMO, Vyripharm Enterprises

– a leading biopharmaceutical / biotechnology innovator in personalized medicine

General Partner, Medingenii Capital

– a venture capital firm based in Houston, TX that invests in early-stage companies in the medical, healthcare, fem tech, and life sciences sectors.





"I thoroughly enjoyed working with each of the teams on navigating their entrepreneurial journey. I was struck by their passion to solve healthcare problems and their determination to move their companies forward. The entrepreneurs were very candid and open to feedback, which provided an opportunity for great dialogue and idea sharing. I look forward to staying in touch with them as they continue forward."

Dave Morin (Office hour mentor)

Founder and Managing Member at Care Technology Advisors

- a consulting firm that provides advisory services to digital health technology firms, healthcare providers and researchers.

ASPIRE Impact to Date



Since 2015, VentureWell has facilitated **12 ASPIRE programs** with **130 startups** and over **75 active mentors**, including four cohorts in partnership with TechTown Detroit. The startups have raised over **\$220 million in funding**, of which \$158 million was in early-stage capital from seed, angel, and VC investors. Additionally, VentureWell is proud to report that **89% of the startups** that have completed the ASPIRE program continue to operate.

Post program, VentureWell continues to engage with the startups and offers mentorship, an opportunity for follow-on matching investments (to startups that meet our funding eligibility), engagement with an external network of investors and domain experts, and alumni networking opportunities.

VentureWell is thankful for the continued support from TechTown Detroit and MedHealth Cluster and is excited to grow the partnership in 2022, and beyond, and support entrepreneurs in their journeys to solve the world's most difficult problems.

