

A SPECIAL-INTEREST PUBLICATION: CELEBRATING INNOVATION DURING COVID-19

THE SPARK

BUSINESS & INNOVATION MAGAZINE



PIVOTING

IN A PANDEMIC

Celebrating 20⁺ Ontario businesses and the innovation
born as a result of COVID-19

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PANDEMIC PIVOTS

Celebrating **24** Ontario-based businesses and the
innovation born as a result of COVID-19.

BY LISA VAN DE GEYN

9

CLEANSLATE UV Toronto

About CleanSlate UV.

Manjunath Anand, chief technology officer: CleanSlate UV is the manufacturer of the most rapid (20-second cycles) UV sanitization device for sanitizing mobile devices and other portable electronics equipment. CleanSlate UV allows staff, patients and visitors to sanitize their personal items (phones, tablets and badges) while they wash or sanitize their hands. This helps improve hygiene and reduce the risk of acquired infections. The company was founded in June 2014 out of Queen's University in Kingston, Ont. Since then, our solution has been deployed by more than 300 hospitals, food-processing facilities, hospitality, retail and airports in 12 countries globally. In October 2015, we were awarded a \$500,000 (USD) innovation investment by 43North in Buffalo, followed by \$7 million Series A financing led by Prolog Ventures in March 2020. Since our Series A financing, our team has grown from six in March 2020 to more than 50, and we continue to grow.

On business before COVID-19.

Prior to March 2020, our primary focus was maturing the product, continuing to stabilize our supply chain and internal innovation for future product variants. Our flagship product "CleanSlate UV" was introduced into the market in March

2018 and has been deployed in more than 50 organizations in six countries. This was all made possible by that small team of six, including co-founders, until the Series A was completed. The team was also developing proof of concept for three new product offerings with the help of public funding and co-op students from universities across Canada.

Fighting the pandemic.

Thanks to the team and our partners, we had our product matured and ready to scale. During the pandemic, our team was able to scale our supply chain and add a new manufacturing facility in Guelph, Ont., which resulted in scaling our production quantities to almost 20 times. We conducted additional testing to validate CleanSlate's performance against SARS-CoV-2. Due to limited access to the SARS-CoV-2 strain, a substitute and harder to deactivate pathogen, MS2 bacteriophage, was tested in July 2020, and later, a surrogate virus Human Coronavirus (HCoV-229E) was tested and showed greater than 99.999 percent deactivation rate. These studies helped grow our presence in healthcare and non-healthcare facilities and have expanded our presence in six new

counties in less than six months. Today, CleanSlate UV is available for the public at Hudson's Bay in Canada, Pearson Airport in Mississauga and we are currently deploying at a local burger chain.

Looking ahead.

In the next several months, we plan to unveil two new products aimed at further strengthening the utilization of CleanSlate UV devices. We will be partnering with local universities and hospitals to conduct additional research studies to validate the efficacy of CleanSlate UV against SARS-CoV-2 and enable reuse of masks through UV disinfection by CleanSlate UV. We will also be ramping up our production capabilities at our partner located in Guelph, Ont., as our sales have grown exponentially increasing since March 2020. We will continue to grow our team to keep up with our demand for the product and currently we have five new positions and a lot more to come in the near future. ●



"Thanks to the team and our partners, we had our product matured and ready to scale."

10

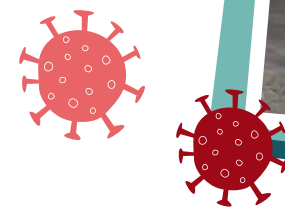
PENTAVERE Toronto

The Spark: For those who don't know Pentavere, tell us about the company.

Erin Stewart, clinical research manager, and Nadia Bilal, computational linguist: Pentavere is an AI health technology company that exists in response to a single hard-hitting question: "Why is it that we have all the information we need in financial markets to make money and maximize profit, but we don't have the information we need, when we need it, to save lives?" This is the question that inspired both of us to leave the research we were doing in respected academic institutions. We both felt that we could have a larger impact by working in AI and healthcare technology, specifically working on the types of challenges that Pentavere solves. Even though we come from different fields and were engaged in different types of research, we were united by a common cause of doing research to ultimately save lives. We came together at Pentavere, bringing our passion and enthusiasm to use AI to help unleash insights into healthcare, with the singular focus of improving patient care and outcomes.

The Spark: What were you working on prior to March 2020?

ES & NB: Our work prior to March



2020 does not look any different than the work we are doing today, because the problem we solve has only gotten more acute and garnered more attention due to COVID-19. All of our work is focussed on getting better data and better insights to the right decision-maker at the right time to improve patient care and outcomes. For us, the key difference between what we were working on prior to March and today is around the validation of our mission — the urgency and need for our work has never been more apparent. We now include COVID-19 insights in the work we do.

The Spark: How have you been able to help during the pandemic?

ES & NB: Both of us have always focused our research on improving and saving lives. Today, we are both working on projects that leverage AI to help patients during the pandemic. One project that stands out is a study we're doing on Major Depressive Disorder. Every day in Canada, 200 people try to commit suicide, according to the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention. Every day, about 10 people succeed. That number is no doubt going up because of the stresses of COVID-19. Even before COVID, suicide was a leading cause of

death in Canada, especially in young people ages 15 to 34. We have a huge group of people haunted by depression, and yet, when it comes to depression, there are so many unknowns. Right now, we don't have access to the data we need to answer so many questions — and that is what we are working on.

The Spark: What have you learned from helping to fight the pandemic?

ES & NB: We're seeing the incredible things that happen when people come together and cooperate with each other. We are also fortunate to be working with researchers from various backgrounds and from across the country. The pandemic has shown us that we are all so interconnected — what impacts one of us, impacts all of us, and we must work together. If it wasn't for COVID and the pressing need for data, these stakeholders wouldn't traditionally be coming together. We have been amazed by what people can do together and accomplish in the backdrop of a crisis. It has taught us to be hopeful and shown us the power of what we can achieve, especially when our efforts are joined together and supported by the power of AI. ●