



Amgen Teams Up With Cambridge Biotech Community To Select Two Startups To Receive Golden Tickets At LabCentral

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Amgen Golden Tickets Provide Innovative Startup Companies With Free Lab Space to Aid in Further Advancement of Their Science

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Dec. 14, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Amgen (NASDAQ:AMGN) and LabCentral today announced that Kernal Biologics Inc. and QurAlis have won the Amgen Golden Ticket at LabCentral. The two Golden Ticket winners were chosen by an Amgen internal committee and live audience members at a "Quick Pitch" event hosted by Amgen at its Cambridge R&D and Operations facility on Dec. 11, 2017. Five finalists pitched their business plan to attendees where the audiences' input represented one vote of the overall results, along with the Amgen internal committee's voting decision.

As one of LabCentral's platinum sponsors, Amgen can nominate up to two early-stage companies annually to take up residence in LabCentral's Kendall Square facilities in Cambridge, Mass. The Golden Ticket represents one year of bench space for one scientist, including benefit of LabCentral's shared infrastructure and services (such as conference rooms, permits, shared equipment and facilities, participation in LabCentral training modules and seminars). Amgen scientists also provide informal mentoring. LabCentral is a first-of-its-kind shared laboratory space designed as a launchpad for high-potential life sciences and biotech startups.

"The event captured the essence of why Amgen is committed to contributing to and collaborating in the Cambridge biotech ecosystem. Not only were we evaluating ideas from five very strong startup companies advancing innovative science right in our own backyard, but we could be joined by our industry colleagues with a diverse set of backgrounds to assess the best innovations to help bring forward," said John Dunlop, vice president of Neuroscience at Amgen. "Awarding the Golden Tickets to Kernal Biologics Inc. and QurAlis aligns with Amgen's ongoing research focus within oncology and neuroscience."

Kernal Biologics Inc. develops therapeutic messenger RNAs via deep learning for immuno-oncology applications. Kernal's unique methods of sequence engineering and smart design are intended to develop a technology platform that will dramatically improve the efficacy of existing mRNA technologies.

"We are honored to be awarded with an Amgen Golden Ticket at LabCentral," said Yusef Erkul, M.D., president at Kernal Biologics Inc. "With Amgen's scientific guidance and LabCentral's innovative and supportive environment, this award will greatly enhance our research efforts to bring safe, tolerable and efficacious mRNA medicine to patients with acute myelogenous leukemia."

QurAlis develops precision medicine for treatment of patients with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). QurAlis is currently developing therapies for three different forms of ALS with known disease mechanisms which include: a transformative device to remove toxic proteins; a drug that mediates overactive neurons and prevents them from dying; and a drug that restores a dysfunctional waste clearance system in cells. Success with any of these therapies will have a tremendous impact on ALS patients and their families.

"We are extremely excited to win the Amgen Golden Ticket," said Kasper Roet, Ph.D., founder and chief executive officer at QurAlis. "The space and facilities at LabCentral will enable QurAlis to enhance our ALS patient-derived stem cell platform, which we will use in the development of all three of our therapeutic programs. It is also an incredible testament to our team, progress and potential for developing therapies for ALS patients."

In 2014, Amgen began sponsoring the Golden Ticket program with LabCentral to assist high-potential life sciences and biotech startups in their efforts to continue further research in advancing unique approaches to treatments for serious conditions. Amgen has awarded LabCentral Golden Tickets to five innovative startups: [Novopyxis](#), [Cocoon Biotech](#), [Platelet Biogenesis](#), [Holobiome](#), and Torus Therapeutics.

About Amgen

Amgen is committed to unlocking the potential of biology for patients suffering from serious illnesses by discovering, developing, manufacturing and delivering innovative human therapeutics. This approach begins by using tools like advanced human genetics to unravel the complexities of disease and understand the fundamentals of human biology.

Amgen focuses on areas of high unmet medical need and leverages its expertise to strive for solutions that improve health outcomes and dramatically improve people's lives. A biotechnology pioneer since 1980, Amgen has grown to be one of the world's leading independent biotechnology companies, has reached millions of patients around the world and is developing a pipeline of medicines with breakaway potential.

For more information, visit www.amgen.com and follow us on www.twitter.com/amgen.

About LabCentral (www.labcentral.org; twitter [@labcentral](https://twitter.com/labcentral))

LabCentral is a first-of-its-kind shared laboratory workspace in the heart of the Kendall Square, Cambridge, biotech innovation hub. Designed as a launchpad for high-potential life-sciences and biotech startups, it offers everything startups need to begin laboratory operations on day one and move their science forward faster and more cost-efficiently. This includes: fully permitted laboratory and office space, first-class facility and administrative support, skilled laboratory personnel, a domain-relevant expert speaker series – as well as the other critical services and support. A private, nonprofit institution, LabCentral's first site opened in 2013, thanks to a capital grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, with support from its real-estate partner, MIT. Founding sponsors include Triumvirate Environmental and Johnson & Johnson Innovation. To accommodate demand for its growing startups, LabCentral, with support from Pfizer, Inc., plans to open *LabCentral 610* in December 2017. In 2018, LabCentral will have capacity to serve a total of ~450 scientists and entrepreneurs in about 66 companies across its two-building campus.

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