

ACCELE BIOPHARMA

Oklahoma City's Accele BioPharma Inc. was founded as a life science accelerator in 2010 to identify, fund and manage promising early stage biopharma companies developing therapeutics across diverse challenges to human health.

Through strong scientific and managerial expertise, Accele supports new life science companies that show promise in dramatically improving human healthcare and have a strong potential for commercial success. The firm's venture capital arm, Accele Venture Partners, provides seed funding for the programs.

The four biopharma startups in Accele's portfolio are developing new treatments that tackle the growing threat of antibiotic resistance, treat diabetes, restore hearing loss and diagnose and treat infectious diseases including pneumococcal pneumonia. However, the development of new drugs can be a long and expensive process.



“Our goal is to accelerate the formation and growth of promising biopharma companies in a capital-efficient manner,” said Clayton Duncan, Accele's founder and chief executive officer. “We identify early-stage biopharma companies or help spin them out of a university or research institute, provide experienced management and core facilities and support them with seed capital necessary to complete some early stage – but important – milestones.”

Accele BioPharma collectively manages the startups, spreading costs over the portfolio, which allows the research teams to focus on advancing their therapeutics.

“These are very early stage research programs,” Duncan said. “Having a discreet management team for each of them would be too expensive. With the Accele model, we can move these companies through various preclinical milestones, and then once those early questions are answered, bring in outside investors and partners. It's been successful for us so far.”

Startups under the Accele BioPharma umbrella are:

- Synereca Pharmaceuticals, which addresses the growing problem of bacterial resistance to current antibiotics;
- Jortan Pharmaceuticals, which is developing novel approaches to treating diabetes;
- Otologic Pharmaceutical, which is developing novel therapeutics to both prevent and restore hearing loss; and
- Pamlico Biopharma, Inc., which is developing antibodies for the diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases and cancer.

Accele BioPharma was co-founded by Clayton Duncan, chairman and CEO, in partnership with the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, the Presbyterian Health Foundation, and i2E Inc. Richard Gammans, Ph.D., is chief operating officer. Clayton and Dr. Gammans have worked together previously at biotech companies in North Carolina and came to Oklahoma to found Accele.

Today, the biopharma accelerator employs nearly 20 people and its portfolio companies have secured \$25 million in aggregate funding. Accele Venture Partners LP provided initial funding and was subsequently joined by other funding sources, including i2E and Seed Step Angels, grant funding from the OCAST Oklahoma Applied Research Support (OARS) program and federal funding sources.

With the aid of the Oklahoma SBIR Collaborative Resources (OSCR) program managed by OCAST, Jortan was recently awarded a \$295,000 Phase I SBIR grant to advance research on enzyme inhibitors that show promise in restoring insulin-producing beta cells in diabetics.

“I think OCAST has a fantastic grant support program,” Duncan said. “We couldn’t have gotten this SBIR without the assistance of OCAST and the OSCR program. We look forward to working with them again in the future. This SBIR award for Jortan will validate our early proof of concept research and be the foundation of for progressing on to clinical trials.” There are important milestones on the long journey from lab to the marketplace.

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