



Accelerate Long Island and the Long Island Emerging Technologies Fund invest \$100,000 in Symbiotic Health; Co-founded by North Shore-LIJ infectious disease expert

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Accelerate Long Island and the Long Island Emerging Technologies Fund (LIETF) have invested \$100,000 in Symbiotic Health Inc. The biotechnology startup is dedicated to developing and commercializing bacterial therapeutics for the treatment of *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*), a bacterium that causes diarrhea and more-serious intestinal conditions such as colitis that requires prolonged use of antibiotics.

Accelerate Long Island provided a \$50,000 grant to Symbiotic Health from its \$500,000 Seed Fund, which was established by a grant from New York State Empire State Development awarded by the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council. Jove Equity Partners from the Long Island Emerging Technologies Fund (LIETF) also invested \$50,000 in Symbiotic Health, for a total investment of \$100,000. Symbiotic Health is the eighth investment to date made by the Accelerate Long Island Seed Fund and the LIETF.

The company's approach is based on an innovative treatment for *C. difficile* developed by Bruce Hirsch, MD, an infectious disease specialist at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset and Gerard Honig PhD, CEO of Symbiotic Health. Their team has developed a protocol to successfully treat numerous *C. difficile* patients using an ingestible capsule, instead of a fecal transplant, to balance gastrointestinal bacteria. "This is a tremendous opportunity to develop a new treatment for an urgent health threat," said Dr. Hirsch, who founded Symbiotic health in 2013. "I'm honored to be working as part of the North Shore-LIJ Health System in partnership with Symbiotic Health and Accelerate Long Island to help our patients who are living with *C. difficile*."

C. difficile causes approximately 500,000 infections and 30,000 associated deaths annually in the United States. It is one of the nation's most prevalent hospital-acquired infections. Available pharmaceuticals fail more than 20 percent of patients, often leading to chronic diarrhea lasting months to years; poor outcomes; impaired quality of life and billions in excess healthcare costs.

C. difficile is prevented in the body's gastrointestinal tract by the microbiome, a community of trillions of different bacteria that fight dangerous infections from invading our bodies. However, overuse of antibiotics can kill the microbiome, creating an opportunity for the *C. difficile* infection. Symbiotic Health has developed a proprietary technology for the targeted delivery therapeutic bacteria to the gastrointestinal system, using oral capsules.

The grant money will be applied to finalize the development of Symbiotic Health's oral capsule therapy for *C. difficile* infection and perform a clinical outcomes study at North Shore-LIJ. Larry S. Miller, MD, the health system's Chief of Gastroenterology, and other clinicians and researchers from North Shore-LIJ and the Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine are collaborating with Symbiotic Health.

As a result of the investment from Accelerate Long Island and the clinical partnership with North Shore-LIJ, Symbiotic Health will be moving its operations in the New York City Harlem Biospace Incubator back to Long Island. They currently have two full-time employees and are expected to grow to four full-time employees by the end of the summer.

The company is actively seeking to partner with other providers to deliver the recognized benefits of fecal-derived microbiome transplantation for treatment-resistant *C. difficile*, using this improved, patient-friendly and scalable approach. By working with Symbiotic Health, hospitals and other health care providers can rapidly improve patient care and reduce the human and financial burden of *C. difficile*. The company will build on this initial program to develop next-generation therapeutics, using select lab-grown bacteria for the treatment of *C. difficile* and other infections.

"On behalf of the entire Symbiotic Health team, I would like to thank Accelerate Long Island, the Empire State Development Corporation and Jove Equity Partners for this grant and investment, which will catalyze our development and allow us to bring our technology to the clinic," said Gerard Honig, PhD. "I would also like to acknowledge the vision of the clinical, academic and scientific leaders of the North Shore-LIJ Health System, which has been critical to our progress. We look forward to applying this funding to work with Long Island institutions to deliver improved treatments to patients suffering from *Clostridium difficile* and other debilitating conditions."

Dr. Honig has led the company as CEO since 2013; he is a basic scientist who has dedicated his career to understanding the mechanisms of disease and its treatment. He was a research fellow at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research until 2013, when he founded the company with Dr. Hirsch, who has a long-standing interest in innovative patient care and therapeutics. Steve Popielarski PhD leads the company's commercial strategy and execution, drawing on his extensive experience developing and launching new products and business models at Johnson & Johnson and numerous startups.

"Symbiotic Health is an innovative company established by researchers and active clinicians with ties to many divisions of the North Shore-LIJ Health System, including the Feinstein Institute. We are delighted that this investment will assist Symbiotic Health with developing cutting edge therapeutics for diseases of the microbiome, which are debilitating to hospital patients recovering from other conditions," said Mark Lesko, Executive Director of Accelerate Long Island.

"With a talented and educated workforce, Long Island is a great place for cutting-edge manufacturing to thrive," said Cara Longworth, Regional Director of Empire State Development's Long Island Regional Office. "We are supporting Accelerate Long Island in their quest to find new ways for Long Island's research institutions to partner with the business community, by investing in

companies like Symbiotic Health, a biotechnology startup that is creating jobs and working to eradicate life-threatening gastrointestinal infections."

"There is a huge opportunity for Symbiotic Health to develop effective treatments for the microbiome. Diseases such as C. difficile are very difficult to treat, are very painful for the patient, and affect many people in hospitals. We have confidence that the well-qualified management team will help create jobs on Long Island," said David Calone, CEO of Jove Equity Partners and founder of the Long Island Emerging Technologies Fund.

"Accelerate Long Island is proud to support a biotech startup that is commercializing technology in partnership with North Shore-LIJ Health System, a leader in innovative patient care and groundbreaking translational research," said Kevin Law, Chairman of the Accelerate Long Island Board and President and CEO of the Long Island Association.

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