

# 2024 MEDICAL THREAT REDUCTION CHALLENGE

JANUARY-JUNE 2024

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Medical CBRN Defense Consortium (MCDC) and ATI partnered with TechConnect in order to find innovators interested in supporting national defense efforts to enhance medical, chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear capabilities and with the technical capabilities to make a difference. Areas of interest included:

**PREVENTION:** Vaccine manufacturing platforms, needle free delivery platforms, mRNA vaccines for biological threat agent diseases, vaccine encapsulation technologies, vaccine capability areas, accelerated antibodies prototype development, etc.

**TREATMENT:** Reactivating and consolidated nerve agent treatment systems, small molecule therapeutics, therapeutics capability areas, gene-encoded MCM development and response platforms, etc.

**DIAGNOSTICS:** CBRN medical decision systems and agent identification, opioid exposure diagnosis, microphysiological systems, advanced diagnostic capabilities, etc. As a way of measuring success, the Consortium hoped to gain new members who, by joining would be able to to engage with requests for solutions from the federal government; branding and awareness; and access to nontraditional innovators who may not otherwise have known about the Consortium and would not necessarily have access to the federal customer.

## OUTCOME & RESULTS

We launched an open call in early February and recruited innovator applications through late March. In that time, we hosted an informational webinar with the consortium to highlight best practices for the application process, clarify scope, and answer questions from potential respondents. We were pleased to receive far more quality submissions than we could convert into finalists. Following a review period, TechConnect made recommendations to the Consortium client who did a secondary review and ultimately confirmed TechConnect's finalist placements. On site at TechConnect World Innovation Conference, each finalist pitched for five minutes and responded to two minutes of Q&A from a group of judges who included:

*Kerrie DeMarco, SAINC*

*Lauren Palestrini, ATI*

*Alex Brown, Programmatic Project Manager at Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) via Tunnell Consulting, Inc.*

*Lillian Mu, Portfolio and Investment Management Consultant Supporting BARDA Ventures at DRIVe via Tunnell Consulting, Inc.*

### They named these winners:

First place for a \$25,000 award: **Thylacine Biotsherapeutics, Inc.**

Second place for a \$15,000 award: **Ceria Therapeutics, Inc.**

Third place for a \$10,000 award: **Vaxess Technologies, Inc.**

## TESTIMONIAL

TechConnect's coordination of the Medical Threat Reduction Challenge was outstanding. They ensured high-quality submissions, attracted new members, and fostered strong innovations for the federal government, all while making the process seamless and easy for us.

**- Dr. Mike Stebbins**

*Senior Vice President for ATI, lead for their Medical and Threat Countermeasures Division and Executive Director of MCDC*

**95**  
APPLICANTS

**27**  
U.S. STATES

**\$50,000**  
IN AWARDS

**67%**  
PROTOTYPE  
DEVELOPMENT  
STATUS

**88%**  
INTEREST IN CONSORTIUM  
MEMBERSHIP

**45%**  
DIAGNOSTICS FOCUS

**85%**  
NONTRADITIONAL

**6**  
COUNTRIES

**3**  
WINNERS

**32%**  
TRL 4

**23%**  
COMMERCIAL  
PRODUCT  
AVAILABLE

## TESTIMONIAL

Participating in the Medical Threat Reduction Challenge was the highlight of TechConnect and an amazing experience overall. The opportunity to present in front of an experienced panel of judges and engage in substantive exchanges on medical countermeasure solutions is uncommon, and proved immensely valuable to our company. The feedback we received, as well as the connections made with other entrepreneurs and industry attendees, will positively influence our trajectory moving forward. We would not hesitate to participate in future Challenges.

**- Daniel Graifman, President, Thylacine Biotherapeutics, Inc.**

**15**  
FINALISTS

**73%**  
STARTUP