

## Oxford AHSN case study

**Date:** Q4 2019/20

**Programme / theme:** Strategic and Industry Partnerships

**Title:** CanSense and Dravya Discovery each receive £50,000 investment through Oxford AHSN Accelerator programme

### Overview Summary

The Oxford AHSN Accelerator programme, in collaboration with BioCity and regional partners from the NHS, industry and research within the Thames Valley, offers a launchpad for entrepreneurs and their ventures to move from idea to market. CanSense and Dravya Discovery won a place on the intensive eight-week programme and pitched to investors on the final day of the Accelerator programme in November 2019.



CanSense is a diagnostic research company that has developed an accurate, fast, non-invasive diagnostic for the early detection of bowel cancer through a blood test combined with use of artificial intelligence (AI). The diagnostic tool can be used in primary care to stratify patients appropriately and rapidly in the clinical pathway, significantly reducing the need for invasive procedures, such as colonoscopy and speeding up the diagnosis of cancer.

Dravya Discovery is a start-up offering a pre-clinical solution for drug discovery in the field of Ophthalmology. Ophthalmology is a branch of medicine dealing with the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases of the eye and vision. Dravya Discovery help research and discovery teams identify new drugs, using their translational assays combined with digital tools to analyse, share and report data.

CanSense and Dravya Discovery pitched to investors on the final day of the Accelerator programme in November 2019 and became the first two companies receiving an investment of £50,000 of in-kind support from BioCity through the Oxford AHSN Accelerator programme.

### How is the AHSN involved?

During 2019, the Oxford AHSN together with delivery partner BioCity, ran the first Oxford AHSN Accelerator programme aimed at identifying and developing innovative and sustainable solutions to proven NHS needs and meeting the commercial ambitions of investors.

CanSense want their test to empower GPs to be able to make a quick and accurate decision to better triage their patients, reducing the time to diagnosis of bowel cancer and provide better patient

outcomes in line with the NHS Long Term Plan. CanSense needed to refine their business plan to secure further investment to make this ambition a reality.

Dravya Discovery want to help ophthalmology discovery teams identify new drugs using their translational assays combined with digital tools to analyse, share and report data. They want to improve the quality of life of patients with ocular diseases and needed to go on a journey of understanding the market better. The Oxford AHSN Accelerator programme is an intensive eight-week programme focused on developing start-ups, helping companies to build a robust, tested value proposition and identify their key stakeholders within the health care and life sciences environments.

The programme required the cohort to spend one day a week going through a series of increasingly demanding and informative developments, to produce a fully viable business venture. They used tools, which included Strategyzer canvases, to assist with customer discovery, global and local market access and stakeholder engagement that are specifically tailored to the



healthcare and life sciences industry. Innovators were required to meet their dedicated coach, attend regular learning sessions and were encouraged to go out and test their key assumptions on the canvases, as part of their customer discovery, by talking to key stakeholders and customers and obtaining structured feedback.

### **Impacts and outcomes of the AHSN involvement to date**

The Oxford AHSN Accelerator programme has helped CanSense and Dravya Discovery to validate their assumptions about their customer base and refine their product offering to be more in line with clinical needs, by providing the business with access to NHS clinicians and mentors. This has given them a good understanding of how clinicians and stakeholders within the NHS can benefit from their offering.

During the Accelerator programme, CanSense and Dravya Discovery were able to complete a value proposition canvas to understand the pains and needs of their customers and the impacts their products could have. The programme also helped them to refine their business model and explore partnerships within the NHS and commercial landscape.

CanSense and Dravya Discovery pitched on the final day and were awarded £50,000 of investment each as in-kind support from BioCity investors.

The programme enabled CanSense and Dravya Discovery to refine their value proposition for the NHS and validate their assumptions about commercial access strategies. Key markets have been identified and both companies will use this to extend their business model, engage with relevant

stakeholders and produce deeper market analysis, while continuing to work with Oxford AHSN on pathway mapping for the NHS.

### **Supporting quotes**

#### **Innovator**

The Oxford AHSN Accelerator programme was short and intense and packed full of evidence-based knowledge. I enjoyed it very much. Our journey with Oxford AHSN has only just begun and I look forward to what is ahead.

#### **Adam Bryant, CEO and Director, CanSense**

The programme has been a steep learning curve challenging us to go beyond our comfort zone. It has helped us fine tune our value proposition, thereby ensuring that we are ready to pitch our business model to potential investors.

#### **Vineeta Tripathi, CEO and Director, Dravya Discovery**

#### **AHSN**

The first year of the programme was a real success. We look forward to hearing how the programme has helped CanSense and Dravya to flourish. We are excited to embark for the second year on a journey with innovative start-ups in our joint quest to deliver better patient outcomes.

#### **Julie Hart, Director of Strategic and Industry Partnerships at Oxford AHSN**

### **Plans and timescales for spread and adoption**

CanSense are continuing to maximise their growth and accelerate their route to market by looking for investors. They are also working towards achieving a CE mark for their product. There is an opportunity for interested AHSNs to work with Oxford AHSN to run a real-world evaluation of the impact of using CanSense in a primary care setting once the technology is CE marked.

Dravya Discovery are looking for seed funding to help set up the organisation. They will continue to validate their assumptions and refine their potential customer base and understanding of the NHS market.

There is an opportunity for interested AHSNs to run clinical feedback of the impact of using Dravya Discovery for drug discovery.

### **Start and end dates**

May 2019 – ongoing

### **Contact**

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