



New Trade Association Reflects Growing Medical Device Presence

By John Yates and Tom Price, Special To LTW

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ATLANTA - The Southeast is becoming a haven for medical technology companies.

Entrepreneurs in the region are starting companies that provide innovative products and services to the medical and healthcare industries. These companies focus on several areas, including medical devices, software and information technology. Universities throughout the Southeast are spawning engineers, scientists and physicians who are interested in starting new entrepreneurial ventures in the medical field.

Several of these entrepreneurs have joined forces to start a new trade association – the “Southeastern Medical Device Association”. SEMDA will focus on the following key goals:

- Helping entrepreneurs in the region create med/tech and device businesses;
- Introducing these entrepreneurs to sources of capital;
- Developing a network of investors who are willing to fund early-stage med/tech businesses;
- Working with university technology licensing officers to commercialize new inventions; and
- Promoting our region's entrepreneurs to the national and international investment community.

Membership – The Association will draw its membership from several groups:

- **Established companies** – There are dozens of established entrepreneurial companies in the region that focus on medical technologies and devices. Many are offshoots from experimental work at leading universities such as Duke, Emory, Georgia Tech, N.C. State and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Companies like Salumedica (biomaterial), TranS1 (lower spine treatment), Alveolus (vascular stents), Biopulse (transplant rejection) and Medical Optical Imaging (optical mammography techniques) are examples of businesses that may benefit from greater collaboration among med/tech entrepreneurs in the region.

- **Venture Capitalists/Investors** – There is a small but active group of venture capitalists and investors that focus on investments in medical technologies and devices in the U.S. These investors will be prime candidates for membership in the Association.

A key benefit to these investors will be early access to newly created entrepreneurial ventures in the medical technology area. Members will get a sneak preview of the executive summaries of early-stage medical technology businesses.

SEMDA will also provide an efficient way for entrepreneurs to find interested investors. Entrepreneurial members will be able to post their company's executive summary for review by other members. The goal will be to enhance the communication between start-up businesses and interested investors.

- **Research Scientists** - For research scientists interested in "testing the waters" with new medical device ideas or technology solutions, SEMDA will provide a forum for sharing such ideas with experts in the field and investors who are knowledgeable about businesses that are fundable by the investment community.
- **Physicians** – There is an active group of entrepreneurial physicians who are interested in developing medical device technologies. Often, these doctors/entrepreneurs are unable to find the financial and other professional resources to launch their businesses. SEMDA will serve as a platform to assist in this regard.
- **Financial Researchers** –Financial analysts can provide useful research reports to SEMDA members on developments in relevant medical device areas. They will also be able to interact with private companies that are early adopters in new med/tech fields.
- **Advisory Board** – SEMDA will also be establishing an Advisory Board of serial entrepreneurs, service providers and successful business leaders to work with its members. The collection of experienced business, medical, financial and technical leaders should be a valuable resource to the entrepreneurial members of SEMDA.
- **Southeastern Branches** – As SEMDA grows, expect to see the association branch out into other areas of the Southeast. These med/tech centers will include RTP, Birmingham and Atlanta, with other regional expansion thereafter.

For more information regarding the Southeast Medical Device Association, please contact me at jyates@mmmlaw.com or 404-504-5444.

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