



## **Cydan Supports Innovation for Patients with Rare Diseases through MassChallenge Scholarships**

**Cambridge, Mass., March 19, 2015** – [Cydan Development, Inc.](#), an orphan drug accelerator that identifies and de-risks programs with significant therapeutic potential, announced today that it partnered with [MassChallenge](#) in funding scholarships to support innovations that improve the lives of patients with rare diseases.

Cydan Scholarships for Rare Diseases, Biotechnology & Therapeutics will identify and support startups that target rare genetic conditions and accelerate the development of therapies and diagnosis of such disorders as well as startups whose groundbreaking technology have the potential to change patients' lives.

“Our goal is to have an impact on rare diseases, and we believe MassChallenge scholarships allow us to support innovators starting companies,” said Chris Adams, Ph.D., Cydan Founder and Chief Executive Officer. “We continue our work to identify promising therapeutic approaches and accelerate their development because developing such products takes many years. We believe there are tremendous opportunities to utilize technology and devices to improve the quality of life for people with a rare disease since these can be made available relatively quickly.”

MassChallenge Boston sponsors, such as Cydan, will award \$5,000 scholarships to eligible companies participating in the 2015 Accelerator Program. The scholarships will be awarded to winning startups before the accelerator begins in late June, giving them more flexibility to participate in the four-month program. Sponsors will engage with these startups, providing hands-on mentorship and access to resources in addition to the benefits offered by MassChallenge. Interested entrepreneurs can get more information and apply at <http://masschallenge.org/accelerator/howtoapply>

Other scholarship sponsors include Autodesk, The John W. Henry Family Foundation, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and Microsoft.

### **About Rare Diseases**

An orphan or rare disease is one that affects fewer than 200,000 patients – or about 1 in 1,500 patients – in the U.S. Other countries including the EU and Japan have defined rare diseases as those affecting similar portions of their populations.

There are nearly 7,000 recognized rare diseases affecting nearly 30 million Americans and an estimated 350 million people worldwide, according to the National Organization for Rare Diseases (NORD, EURORDIS and Global Genes). Most of these rare diseases are genetic and

may appear early in life – 75 percent of rare diseases affect children and 30 percent of rare disease patients will not live to the age of five. The vast majority of rare and orphan diseases have no approved treatment options, and there is a critical need for new therapies.

### **About Cydan Development, Inc.**

Cydan is an orphan drug accelerator that identifies and de-risks orphan drug products with significant therapeutic and commercial potential. Cydan evaluates products for treating rare diseases with high unmet medical need with the goal to start multiple companies to develop such therapies. Cydan's first spin-off company, Vtesse, was launched in January 2015 and is developing drugs for Niemann-Pick Disease Type C (NPC) and other rare, severe diseases with great unmet need.

Cydan was founded in 2013 by a management team with extensive drug discovery, clinical development and business development experience financed by leading life sciences investors NEA, Pfizer Venture Investments, Lundbeckfond Ventures Bay City Capital and Alexandria Venture Investments. The accelerator is based in Cambridge, Mass. For more information, please visit [www.cydanco.com](http://www.cydanco.com) or contact Cydan at [info@cydanco.com](mailto:info@cydanco.com)

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