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## Backbone of Success: NP Solutions Wins Wharton Business Plan Competition Grand Prize with Next Generation Back Pain Treatment

*RejuvaDisc™ Injectable Hydrogel Provides Alternative to Implants, Spinal Fusion  
For \$4.87 billion Market*

PHILADELPHIA, Pa., April 26, 2007—Student team NP Solutions, which has developed a polymer based injectable hydrogel treatment for back pain related to degenerative disc disease that is less invasive, more effective with fewer side effects than current approaches, won the \$20,000 grand prize of the 2007 Wharton Business Plan Competition (<http://bpc.wharton.upenn.edu>). The prize was awarded at the Wharton School's annual Venture Finals April 24, 2007 where student finalists received a total of \$70,000 in combined cash prizes, access to capital and in-kind legal/accounting services.

The students of NP Solutions are studying such diverse fields as neurosurgery, pharmacology and business at the University of Pennsylvania and include Serena Kohli, a second year Wharton MBA student; Patrick Mayes, Jason Covy, Peter Buckley, Brian Bingham, PhD candidates in Pharmacology (University of Pennsylvania's School of Medicine, Biomedical Graduate Studies); and Neil Malhotra, a resident in Neurosurgery at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

The 2007 Wharton Business Plan Competition winners are:

- Grand Prize: \$20,000 to NP Solutions (developer of RejuvaDisc™ treatment for back pain);
- Second Prize: \$10,000 to Nantronics (low cost higher performance flash memory company; first of its kind in China)
- Third Prize: \$5,000 to Energetica (biogas processing with higher output, lower costs)
- Finalist Certificates: Angiologix; CircuMed Biopharmaceuticals; Tamara Kanesh; Vektor
- Frederick H. Gloeckner Award: \$5,000 for highest ranking Wharton undergraduate team to Foodilly Chocolate Factory (make-your-own mix in candy bar cafes)

This year's Venture Finals, the culminating event of the year-long Wharton BPC, attracted nearly three hundred venture capitalists, business leaders, faculty and students. The Venture Finals judges who selected the winning teams represented a range of organizations and included:

- >Madi Ferencz, WG'71, Founder, Magic Sliders LP
- >James Lussier, W'78, General Partner, Norwest Venture Partners
- >David Piacquad, WG'84, Senior Vice President, Schering-Plough Corporation
- >Richard Thompson, WG'96, Chairman & CPO, Adify Corp
- >Rob Willenbacher, WG'03, Vice President, Venture Leader, Johnson & Johnson Development Corporation

Note: WG=MBA alum; W=Undergraduate alum

Neil Malhotra, a member of grand prize winning team NP Solutions, invented RejuvaDisc™ after seeing patients during his training as a medical student. He noticed that patients with early stage degenerative disc disease had little alternative but to wait in pain for up to two years for their condition to improve or worsen to a point where invasive steps are warranted. The company has received funding from the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and has two patents pending for its therapeutic process. NP Solutions plans animal trials as among its next steps. In its Venture Finals presentation the team asserted that the market for spinal treatment is \$4.87 billion and growing.

Other teams with notable accomplishments include third place winner Energetica and Frederick H. Gloeckner Award winner Foodilly Chocolate Factory which are both members of the Wharton Venture Initiation Program. Energetica also made it to the semi-final round at MIT's business plan competition. In addition, Angiologix was named an inaugural winner of the Wharton Venture Award (WVA) receiving \$10,000 to encourage the venture's development over the summer.

Over the years, the Wharton Business Plan Competition, which is open to any University of Pennsylvania student and managed by Wharton Entrepreneurial Programs, has seen numerous student teams go on to become successful businesses including PayMyBills.com, buySAFE, NetConversions, Stata Labs, DealMaven, Verge Solutions and MicroMRI.

In fact, grand prize winners from five of the past six years are still in business with several earning millions in revenue and/or financing. Information about past participants is available on the Wharton BPC Web site: <http://bpc.wharton.upenn.edu>.

### **About the Wharton School and Wharton Entrepreneurial Programs**

In 1973, The Wharton School became the first school to develop a fully integrated curriculum of entrepreneurial studies. Today Wharton, through Wharton Entrepreneurial Programs <[www.wep.wharton.upenn.edu](http://www.wep.wharton.upenn.edu)>, supports and seeds innovation and entrepreneurship globally through teaching, research and outreach to a range of organizations through its many programs, initiatives and research centers. At the same time, Wharton students and alumni are helping to build entrepreneurial enterprises around the world and impacting virtually every industry.

The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania — founded in 1881 as the first collegiate business school — is recognized globally for intellectual leadership and ongoing innovation across every major discipline of business education. The most comprehensive source of business knowledge in the world, Wharton bridges research and practice through its broad engagement with the global business community. The school has more than 4,600 undergraduate, MBA, executive MBA including those at Wharton West, and doctoral students; more than 8,000 annual participants in executive education programs; and an alumni network of more than 81,000 graduates. Wharton at 125: [www.wharton.upenn.edu](http://www.wharton.upenn.edu)

For more information on the Wharton Business Plan Competition, go to:  
<http://bpc.wharton.upenn.edu>.

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