



PRESS RELEASE

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National Cancer Institute Awards Ascension SBIR Grant to Support Cancer Intervention

Ascension and Boston Hospital Researchers to Collaborate in Phase II Study of Image-Guided System for Diagnosing Pancreatic Cancer

BURLINGTON, VERMONT; October 3, 2008: Ascension Technology, in collaboration with the **Center for Integration of Medicine and Innovative Technology (CIMIT)**, a consortium of Boston-area teaching hospitals and engineering schools based in Boston, MA, has been awarded a Phase II *SBIR (Small Business Innovative Research) Grant* from the **National Cancer Institute (NCI)**. It will support the evaluation of Ascension and CIMIT's Image-Guided System that combines magnetic tracking, pre-operative CT imaging, real-time ultrasound and optical imaging with 3D visualization software to guide the diagnosis and surgical treatment of pancreatic cancer.

During Phase I of the project, Ascension completed development of the 3D Guidance tracking hardware (flat transmitter and microminiaturized sensors for integration into CIMIT's experimental imaging device). CIMIT incorporated the sensors into an image-guided laparoscope for displaying its location for image-guided cancer interventions. Phase II began September 2, 2008. CIMIT researchers at two Boston hospitals will now conduct clinical trials over the next 18 months as Ascension adapts hardware to meet procedural requirements. Surgeons at Massachusetts General Hospital will evaluate the system in laparoscopic surgeries; gastroenterologists at Brigham and Women's Hospital will evaluate the system in endoscopic ultrasound guided biopsies.

Assessing the spread of pancreatic cancer with greater accuracy and efficiency is a major challenge

for physicians. The guidance system will enable doctors to better visualize and understand the extent of the disease in a patient and make informed decisions about treatment options. Researchers anticipate significant downstream potential to apply the technology to several other solid organ cancers, including lung cancer and diseases of the kidney.

The goal of the National Cancer Institute's SBIR Grant Program is to engage domestic small businesses in "research and development of novel technologies and products to prevent, diagnose, and treat cancer." Grants are awarded to projects that have both "the potential for commercialization and public benefit." Kirby Vosburgh, Ph.D., Principal Investigator of the project and Associate Director of CIMIT, states: "Ascension and CIMIT's collaborative development of this Image-Guided System represents great synergy between technology developers and medical researchers with the shared goal of improving cancer therapy for patients. Through this SBIR award, NCI recognizes the potential of this project to radically improve the use of minimally invasive systems for cancer diagnosis and treatment."

Jack Scully, Ascension's Vice President states: "3D tracking of ultrasound planes fused with pre-acquired images is a real breakthrough for minimally invasive procedures. We are pleased to collaborate with leading researchers at Mass General and The Brigham to develop the technology for improving procedural vision and diagnosis."

Center for Integration of Medicine and Innovative Technology (CIMIT) based in Boston, MA, is a non-profit consortium of Boston area teaching hospitals and engineering schools. It fosters and nurtures interdisciplinary collaboration among world-class experts in medicine, science, engineering, industry, and government to rapidly improve patient care. CIMIT provides innovators with resources to explore, develop and implement novel technological solutions for today's most urgent healthcare problems. For more information about CIMIT or its partners, visit www.cimit.org or contact Dyke Hendrickson, CIMIT Communications, at 617-643-3847.

Ascension Technology Corporation, based in Burlington, Vermont, USA, is a world leader in magnetic 3D localization and guidance solutions for medical applications. More information about Ascension trackers is available at www.ascension-tech.com or contact Trish Scott at 802-893-6657, ext 34.

Biomedical references and medical procedures described here are examples of what can be accomplished with 3D tracking and imaging technology once users have complied with all pertinent FDA/CE/IRB directives.

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