



January 29, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Utah Innovation Fund invests \$700k in local healthcare, life sciences startups

Collagen-hybridizing peptide (CHP), a non-opioid anesthetic, and male infertility diagnostic among innovations

SALT LAKE CITY – As part of a new partnership, [3Helix](#), [Rebel Medicine](#), and [Inherent Biosciences](#) were recently awarded a collective \$700K in funding by the [Utah Innovation Fund](#), a state-backed venture capital fund. 3Helix is a part of the University of Utah’s [startup portfolio](#), Rebel Medicine was founded by a U grad, and Inherent Biosciences is a joint development with BYU and the U.

“The Utah Innovation Fund is deeply committed to fostering the advancement of pioneering technologies, and these companies have made significant strides in the field of biomedical innovation,” said Gabi Tellez, managing director for the Utah Innovation Fund.

Innovation Fund Managing Director Jefferson Moss agreed, adding, “We want to make an impact with the funds we invest in to solve some of today’s biggest problems, and the talented teams at 3Helix, Rebel Medicine, and Inherent Biosciences are finding those cutting-edge solutions.”

[3Helix](#) aims to address issues arising from damage to collagen, the most abundant protein in the body, leading to problems like arthritis, skin aging, auto-immunity, and fibrosis. When damaged, collagen loses its normal structure and binding sites, reducing the body's ability to regenerate and respond to problems correctly. 3Helix's solution, called bioACTIVE CHPs, is a technology that binds to damaged collagen and brings with it signals and binding sites that fold into the native environment, allowing cells to respond to their environment appropriately. Tests have shown that CHPs are able to achieve several times the response of today’s best therapies.

“We are incredibly excited about our bioACTIVE CHP technology, and the results we’ve seen are beyond even what we initially expected,” said 3Helix Vice President Toby Barrack. “It represents a complete paradigm shift in therapeutic development where, for the first time, we can target and treat the cellular microenvironment with a set of collagen-based cell signals and binding sites. If cells are cars, most therapies focus on pressing the gas or the brake; for the first time, we

can change the signs on the road. For inflammatory and fibrotic conditions, as well as some other changes that happen in aging, this approach is uniquely better."

[Rebel Medicine](#) developed Alevatrix as an injectable and long-lasting non-opioid anesthetic for post-operative pain. Currently, opioids are commonly used for this purpose, but they come with various problems, including the risk of addiction and side effects like respiratory depression, cognitive impairment, nausea, and more. Alevatrix delivers safe and effective pain relief through a cost-effective, easy-to-use pre-filled syringe that lasts up to four days after surgery, eliminating the need for opioids and the negative impacts that come with them. In pre-clinical trials, Alevatrix demonstrated a robust analgesic effect in two pig models. Clinical trials are planned to begin later in 2024.

"Alevatrix will provide clinicians with a safe, effective, and affordable alternative to opioids after surgery. It can be used in nearly every surgery and will be a potent tool to prevent new opioid addiction, improve patient outcomes, and reduce the cost of healthcare," said Brett Davis, co-founder and CEO of Rebel Medicine.

[Inherent Biosciences](#) seeks to accurately diagnose men who are experiencing infertility and hopes to improve the current standard of care. The World Health Organization reports that one in six people globally has trouble conceiving, and women too often bear the burden of tests, even though half the time infertility can be attributed to males. Inherent Biosciences' Sperm Quality Test (SpermQT) analyzes the genetics inside sperm, specifically looking at sperm DNA methylation, to diagnose infertility better than the usual tests that just count sperm and general movement patterns. This innovation aims to understand male fertility better, offering personalized, effective treatments for those facing fertility challenges.

"A lot of subfertility in men goes undiagnosed, and when men go undiagnosed, women are put through ineffective treatments," said Andy Olsen, co-founder and CEO of Inherent Biosciences. "We aim to bring more equity to the fertility journey with SpermQT, and this investment will aid us in completing our pivotal clinical trial to gain insurance coverage and clinical guideline inclusion."

Tom Ngo, Utah Innovation Fund Board Member, added, "We are proud to stand behind 3Helix, Rebel Medicine, and Inherent Biosciences and their innovations, which we believe have the opportunity to make a significant and positive impact on the biomedical industry, Utah communities, and beyond."

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About the Utah Innovation Fund

[The Utah Innovation Fund](#) was created by the State of Utah to elevate Utah's economy by commercializing technologies discovered, advanced, or developed at Utah's higher education institutions. Our mission is to support and fund promising startups working on innovative solutions to the world's most pressing problems.

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