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- On the Job
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- Stepping Out
- Special Publications
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« May 2012 »						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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Boulder, CO
 70°F
 Fair



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BCBR ARTICLE

Breath analyzer designed to use 'biomarkers' to diagnose ailments

By Beth Potter



May 15, 2012 --

LONGMONT — If you go to the emergency room with chest pains, a new device being developed by TeraBAT Inc. may tell in the future whether you're having a major heart attack or just indigestion from a really bad burrito.

You would blow into a tube attached to the device, which would look for a "biomarker" in the molecules of your breath to indicate whether or not you're having a heart attack, said Eyal Gercht, founder of the medical diagnostic company based in Longmont.

The microwave-size device also could be used to look for biomarkers on your breath of other chronic diseases such as Type II diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Gerecht said.

The device will work by using electromagnetic waves to read molecules in gases. Gerecht first worked on the technology at the University of Massachusetts - Amherst and developed it further with researchers at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, or NIST, a federal lab in Boulder, where he worked for 10 years. He licensed the technology from University of Massachusetts - Amherst in February for an undisclosed amount.

"It is very rewarding that, after years of laboratory research, we can launch the commercialization stage for this technology and begin to make a real impact in everyday life," Gerecht said.

Researchers have identified several "biomarkers" of various human diseases in recent years. But Gerecht said he plans to focus on heart disease first because the breath test device is expected to work so much more quickly than current diagnostic tools that it could save the lives of thousands of heart attack patients every year. Rapid diagnosis time is a key predictor of survival from a heart attack, according to the American Heart Association.

Gerecht believes the new device will someday be as common as the magnetic resonance imaging, or MRI, machines found in hospitals. But first, he must receive approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to market it, a process he expects to take another four years or so.

"This is a game-changer, in a nutshell," Gerecht said. "Once it's in hospitals, it will make the ways the emergency room doctors will do their business, different."

Potential investors are interested in the new technology, said Alex Sammouy, executive director of the Longmont Entrepreneurial Network, the business incubator where the company is housed. To date, the company has been "boot-strapped" with personal funds. But to grow, TeraBAT is looking for \$3 million in funds to develop a prototype device, according to the company business plan. The device

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will then start down the path toward needed regulatory approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration — a process expected to take about 30 months, according to the company business plan.

“There has been very good interest in their specific technology because of its uniqueness and how they can reduce the time to detect what is wrong,” Sammoury said. “The company is definitely headed in the right direction.”

TeraBAT is planning to have a budget of \$750,000 in 2012 and larger budgets in future years, according to the company’s business plan.

The first device prototype is expected to cost \$100,000. Initial production units are expected to cost about \$50,000 each, according to the business plan. Gerecht plans to have 16 to 18 employees by 2015 to help meet his planned business timelines.

While TeraBAT is still in its early stages, Michael Jaremchuk, senior licensing officer at the University of Massachusetts - Amherst, feels it has huge future revenue potential in medical diagnostics and in environmental and industrial uses as well.

“It has the application to address direct patient diagnosis and patient care,” Jaremchuk said. “We would love to have a rapid response diagnostic device that can be quickly installed

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BREATH ANALYZER DESIGNED TO USE 'BIOMARKERS' TO DIAGNOSE AILMENTS

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