



NEWS RELEASE

Austen BioInnovation Institute, OMNOVA Solutions Launch Joint Project to Tackle Healthcare Infections

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AKRON, Ohio, June 5, 2014 – Teams at the Austen BioInnovation Institute in Akron (ABIA) and OMNOVA Solutions today began working on a pioneering project to explore the interactions between disinfectants and common health facility surfaces, with the goal of developing solutions that effectively minimize the risk of infection while preserving physical assets. The partnership, which is being funded by a grant from the OMNOVA Foundation, includes technical support from the Clorox Professional Products Company, a division of The Clorox Company, and global health equipment and diagnostics manufacturer Midmark.

The project involves use of OMNOVA's flagship PreFixx® protective coating in healthcare applications and analyzing which surfaces, cleaners and cleaning methods are most effective in disrupting the transmission of healthcare-acquired infections (HAIs). Through expanded use of the PreFixx® protective coating, the aim is to aid in the fight against HAIs, which 1 in 25 patients develops during care, according to a recent U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report. HAIs account for roughly \$4 billion in annual healthcare expenses.

"This project will help answer a major healthcare industry need. There is a lot of uncertainty around what surfaces, cleaners and cleaning methods are most effective against HAIs and how the surfaces are impacted," says Miles Clark, OMNOVA Market Manager, Hospitality and Healthcare. "The market is experiencing damage to upholstery as cleaning frequencies are increased and more combinations of cleaning and disinfecting chemicals are utilized. The project by ABIA will really help provide the healthcare industry with answers to the critical question of how to effectively keep surfaces from harboring infection while preserving the surfaces for long-term utilization."

ABIA offers an industry-driven approach to solution creation through its BioDesign for Business Management program. Graduate and post-doctoral students in several fields, including medicine, business administration, health sciences, healthcare management, polymer science and engineering, and other fields form multidisciplinary teams

to conduct first-hand ethnographic research. The teams venture into real-life conditions and settings to gain a full understanding of how products and users operate and question the "standard operating procedures" that most professionals might take for granted.

"Healthcare-acquired infections and the consequence of disinfectant interaction with common surfaces is a poorly understood area," says Dr. Vivek Narayan, ABIA Director of Program Management and Entrepreneurial Education. "The teams come to this project with fresh viewpoints to identify needs from the perspectives of the patient, physician, healthcare professionals and payer that help to develop what can be the basis for an innovative product or solution."

Each team has access to experts, professionals and customers in a particular field and is guided by an ABIA staffer. As possible solutions are developed, the teams begin work with ABIA's Product Innovation and Commercialization Division on concept design, assessment of markets and intellectual property, and regulatory implications. The in-house team at ABIA includes scientists, physicians, engineers, researchers, regulatory experts and entrepreneurs in the biomedical devices and materials space that routinely work with companies and inventors in product development, strategy and long-range planning.

"We are pleased to support this initiative because we have confidence it could provide an impetus in addressing a serious healthcare issue, while also providing a unique immersive educational opportunity," says Theresa Carter, OMNOVA Solutions Foundation President. "The Austen BioInnovation Institute has a growing track record of bringing together diverse teams to address real-world challenges, and we look forward to working together on a project with the potential to serve our region and our customers."

ABIA's BioDesign approach has been used for several projects in the areas of wound care, orthopaedics, cardiology, obstetrics and social health – many of which have resulted in potential products and prototypes under development.

In support of the project's educational mission, Clorox is providing technical assistance on its healthcare-branded disinfectants, including information on the impact of different chemistry types on various surfaces. Representatives from the company's Research & Development operation also are offering guidance on the project plan and proposal.

"OMNOVA is a fantastic partner and, with assistance from Clorox and Midmark, is tackling an incredible threat that takes its toll in human lives and increased costs," says Dr. Frank L. Douglas, ABIA President and CEO. "By working together on industry-driven initiatives like this project, we are able to approach a problem with a renewed, multifaceted perspective that will ultimately help companies, providers and payers improve patient care."

OMNOVA OMNOVA Solutions Inc. is a technology-based company with 2013 sales of \$1 billion and a global workforce of approximately 2,300. OMNOVA is an innovator of emulsion polymers, specialty chemicals and functional and decorative surfaces for a variety of commercial, industrial and residential end uses. Visit OMNOVA Solutions at www.omnova.com.

Austen BioInnovation Institute in Akron The Austen BioInnovation Institute in Akron (ABIA) – an exceptional collaboration of Akron Children's Hospital, FirstEnergy, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Summa Health System, and The University of Akron – brings innovative minds together to create economic and personal vitality by inspiring patient-centered discovery and invention. The ABIA partnership shortens the time from idea to commercialization of new technologies and solutions by bringing together world-class scientists, physicians, engineers, researchers and entrepreneurs in the biomedical product and polymer science industries. ABIA works to secure Ohio's economic future through its patient-centered product innovation and cutting edge health workforce training. For more information about ABIA, please visit www.abiakron.org.