

## Densitas gets \$250,000 from Innovacorp to help sell cancer screening software

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Published October 22, 2015 - 6:43pm

Last Updated October 22, 2015 - 6:49pm



Densitas Inc. CEO Mohamed Abdoell is seen at Innovacorp in Halifax on Thursday. Innovacorp announced it was giving Densitas \$250,000 to help the medical software firm market its breast cancer screening product. (TIM KROCHAK / Staff)

A Halifax medical software firm got a \$250,000 push from the province to get its first commercial product to assist in breast cancer screening into the market.

The money from Innovacorp announced Thursday is “an added reassurance to us that we’re going to get to the revenue-generating point,” Adele MacLean, director of communications and operations for Densitas Inc., said in an interview Thursday.

The firm, founded in 2011, has developed a software technology called DM-Density that provides consistent breast density measurements from digital images taken during mammograms as an added level of precision.

“Densitas is developing unique technologies that have the potential to impact millions of women, in Nova Scotia and worldwide,” Dr. Lidija Marusic, investment manager at Innovacorp, said in a news release issued Thursday.

“This homegrown innovation promises to have a significant impact on clinical outcomes and the appropriateness of care.”

In addition to DM-Density, the company is also working on DM-Dose, intended to provide a calculated estimate of the radiation a mammography patient is exposed to during the process.

The funding announced Thursday is also expected to help the company “continue to push the additional products that we have to market as well,” MacLean said. Densitas has been working with regulatory bodies in the European Union, Canada and the United States, and while there is no set timeline, MacLean said the company is hoping for approval in the next couple of months.

The company, which employs 14 people, is also in discussions with potential buyers, such as diagnostic imaging departments in hospitals and owners of private clinics, “so that we’re ready to go to market when we’re able to go to market,” MacLean said.

Earlier this year, the company presented its technology at the European Congress of Radiology in Vienna. This first foray into Europe helped generate interest in the product and showed it will be “competitive in the marketplace,” MacLean said.

The firm is hoping for a similar result following the Radiological Society of North America’s annual meeting in Chicago in late November, she said.

The software is being developed in Halifax, led by CEO Mohamed Abdoell, a biostatistician and Dalhousie University professor.

Being part of that made-in-Canada brand carries a certain trust factor, MacLean said. But International Organization for Standardization certification, which the company earned earlier this year, demonstrates the company “has a lock on quality control.”

“(It) says very clearly we meet the rigorous standards of an internationally driven organization that assures product quality,” MacLean said.

This stamp of approval in medical device standards “assures the end users what we have is developed with strict controls and is managed well.”

The designation also offers the ability to trace back in the development process if there are any issues or bugs in the software to address, said MacLean.

“We’re not going to start cranking these things out like bobby pins. ... Absolutely, this would be a fairly low-cost investment relative to the potential for gains, and some of those would be easier to evaluate than some of the other ones.”