

Prize4Life Awards Prizes for ALS Biomarker Challenge to InnoCentive Solvers

Extends \$1Million Challenge Seeking ALS Biomarker

WALTHAM, Mass. – April 28, 2009 - [InnoCentive](#), Inc., the global open innovation marketplace, and [Prize4Life](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to reaching breakthroughs in effective treatments for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), announced that prizes totaling \$100,000 will be awarded to two InnoCentive Solvers. Dr. Harvey Arbesman and Dr. Seward Rutkove will receive awards for their significant accomplishments made while competing for the Prize4Life ALS Biomarker Challenge, which seeks a biomarker for measuring disease progression in ALS.

ALS, commonly known in the US as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a rapidly progressing neurodegenerative disease that typically steals the life of patients within 2-5 years of diagnosis. Affecting as many as 30,000 Americans, there is no known cure for the disease and only one FDA-approved treatment, which has only been shown to extend life by a few months. A biomarker that reliably tracks disease progression will play a critical role in reducing the time and cost of ALS clinical trials, thereby encouraging companies to test more potential therapies and accelerating the rate at which treatments and a cure are found.

According to Prize4Life's Scientific Advisory Board, responsible for reviewing the 12 entries received from 7 different countries by the deadline, two Solvers submitted solutions that reflected especially strong progress and merited special recognition:

Harvey Arbesman, MD MS, is a board-certified dermatologist and one of the winners of a 2007 Prize4Life Thought Prize, which was designed to award the best theoretical solutions to finding an ALS biomarker. Dr. Arbesman, who had never conducted ALS-related research prior to this Challenge, received a Discovery Prize for his team's identification of a potential skin-based biomarker that could function as a biologic correlate of ALS. Dr. Arbesman's team, comprised of researchers from Columbia's Neurology and Dermatology departments, adapted a technology used in the cosmetic industry, the Cutometer©, to non-invasively measure skin elasticity to see whether changes in this property of skin correlate with disease progression in ALS patients.

Seward Rutkove, MD, an ALS researcher and clinician who has worked in the ALS field for more than 10 years, received a Progress Prize for his proposed biomarker based on the observation that electrical current flows differently through healthy vs. diseased muscle tissue and these changes in current flow can be sensitively measured. His team is developing handheld technologies capable

of taking these highly sensitive measurements to determine how changes in current flow correlate with disease progression in ALS patients.

“Prize4Life has been impressed with the scientific progress made over the course of the ALS Biomarker Challenge. Scientific research is complicated and takes time,” said Melanie Leitner, Ph.D., Chief Scientific Officer, Prize4Life. “It can often take a researcher two years just to get an NIH grant funded, and yet in this short period of time both Dr. Arbesman and Dr. Rutkove have demonstrated promising preliminary results that indicate that an ALS biomarker is within reach. This is great news for the ALS research community.”

To recognize their significant accomplishments, Prize4Life will honor the recipients at the [Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Neurology](#) in Seattle, WA. (booth 2308a). Both Dr. Arbesman and Dr. Rutkove will be presenting their research during the conference.

“If this Challenge hadn’t been issued, there is little chance I would have even pursued this idea,” said Dr. Harvey Arbesman. “This approach has been an effective way to get people across disciplines, from all around the world to think about ALS and has been an effective way to tap new perspectives from outside the field. I am greatly encouraged by the results of our research thus far and am hopeful it will have a positive impact on ALS treatment in the future.”

“When I became aware of the Challenge, I had already been pursuing this very research in neurological diseases for several years,” said Dr. Rutkove. “In a way it was a lucky coincidence, but participating in the Challenge helped to refine my thinking. It led me to apply my technology research specifically to ALS focusing on both the animal studies and device development. In our case, participation has effectively sped the development of a handheld device to sensitively measure disease progression.”

The two winning solvers have shown significant progress in identifying biomarkers for ALS, but a validated biomarker that meets all of Prize4Life’s stated criteria has yet to be found. Therefore, in commemoration of Prize4Life’s third anniversary, the Prize4Life ALS Biomarker Challenge will reopen May 15, 2009 with a rolling deadline until closing October 2010. Interested researchers can learn more about the prize and register to compete at <http://www.prize4life.org>.

“The Prize4Life ALS Biomarker Challenge has helped prove that prize-based open innovation can in fact be a valuable tool in the research community’s arsenal in the fight against ALS,” Dwayne Spradlin, CEO of InnoCentive, Inc. “It has already helped move existing research forward in a targeted way and we are confident it will lead to the discovery of a novel ALS biomarker. The ALS Biomarker Challenge has inspired creative new minds to join the fight against this horrendous disease.”

About Prize4Life

Prize4Life was founded by a group of Harvard Business School students when one of them, Avi Kremer, was diagnosed with ALS at the age of 29. The first disease-oriented organization to utilize the incentive prize model to address neurodegenerative disease, Prize4Life focuses specifically on finding treatments and cures for ALS. The founders sought to attract new minds, media, and money to the battle against ALS to expand upon existing efforts and increase the resources available to researchers. Several years later, even as the disease takes its inexorable toll, Mr. Kremer continues to lead and drive the organization which has garnered a significant amount of attention for its pioneering model and has helped inspire a newfound hope in ALS patients and their families.

About InnoCentive

Founded in 2001, InnoCentive built the first global web community for open innovation, enabling scientists, engineers, professionals and entrepreneurs to collaborate to deliver breakthrough solutions for R&D-driven organizations. InnoCentive Seekers, who collectively spend billions of dollars on R&D, submit complex problems to the InnoCentive Marketplace where more than 175,000 engineers, scientists, inventors, business people, and research organizations in more than 175 countries are invited to solve them. Solvers who deliver the most innovative solutions receive financial awards ranging up to US\$1,000,000. InnoCentive's Seekers include commercial, government and non-profit organizations such as Avery Dennison, SAP, Procter & Gamble, Pendulum, Eli Lilly and Company, Janssen, Solvay and The Rockefeller Foundation. For more information on InnoCentive, go to: www.innocentive.com.

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