

ACS BrightEdge Entrepreneurs

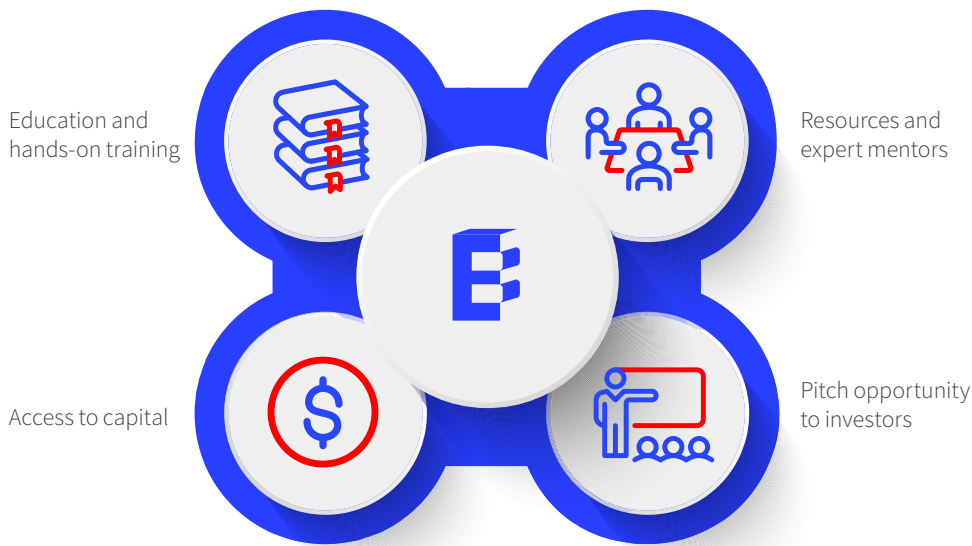


Propelling Cancer Innovation

Although laboratory findings are often promising, the path from scientific innovation to patient benefit is complex. The “valley of death” between research funding and development of viable treatments and technologies, can delay the delivery of innovative solutions to cancer patients in need.

The BrightEdge Entrepreneurs (BEE) program is designed to bridge the valley of death by equipping entrepreneurs with resources to effectively launch companies that will progress cancer research discoveries. The BEE program will leverage the expansive ACS ecosystem to identify, recruit, support, and train promising future entrepreneurs to drive cancer innovation forward.

The BrightEdge Entrepreneurs Program Provides:



The BEE selection committee focuses on identifying individuals with innovative ideas, strong entrepreneurial spirit, and demonstrated ability to overcome challenges. This geographically agnostic program prioritizes the potential of all ecosystems and regions. Through BEE, the American Cancer Society aims to amplify the efforts of budding scientist entrepreneurs connecting them to broader opportunities with a goal to ultimately create investable oncology startups and advance sustainable cancer innovation.

BEE By the Numbers*

9 Entrepreneurs selected from **80** applications

Representing **8** different States across the US

6 First-time female founders

40+ Mentors

11 Advisors

*As of 09.2024

Prepare the scientific entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Empowering Early-Stage Cancer Innovators: BrightEdge Entrepreneurs Program & Pitch Event



2024 BEE Pitch Event



The inaugural BEE Pitch Event marked the culmination of the 10-month program for its first cohort, showcasing nine pioneering cancer-focused startups with transformative solutions across areas such as diagnostics, women’s health, pediatric cancers, and patient-centered treatments. Entrepreneurs shared their visions for reshaping cancer care and bridging critical gaps in treatment, underscoring BrightEdge’s commitment to accelerating impactful solutions through early-stage innovation.

Metrics and Milestones



Nearly 200 cancer-care stakeholders, including impact investors, biotech and healthcare experts, academics, and patient advocates, gathered to hear from the BEE.



Eight of the nine startups were founded by former ACS grantees, highlighting ACS’s research network and BrightEdge’s dedication to advancing meaningful cancer solutions.



While in the program, **cohort entrepreneurs have secured lab space, hired critical team members, raised initial capital, and won industry pitch competitions**, emphasizing the program’s impact and effectiveness.

End cancer as we know it, for everyone.

Keynote Insights

The event featured a keynote panel with insights from distinguished leaders in biotech and cancer innovation:

Dr. Sangeeta Bhatia: John J. and Dorothy Wilson Professor of Engineering at MIT and Investigator at Howard Hughes Medical Institute, encouraged innovators to “ask shamelessly” for advice as they navigate the journey from scientific discovery to patient impact

Dr. Cigall Kadoch: Associate Professor of Pediatric Oncology at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Medical School, emphasized the importance of involving non-scientists early to align visionary ideas with operational realities.

Dr. Julie Gerberding: President and CEO of the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health, urged entrepreneurs to have both a strategic company plan and a personal roadmap, emphasizing the power of a thoughtfully curated network.



Left to right: Farnaz Bakhshi, PhD, Director Innovation, BrightEdge; Dr Julie Gerberding, President and CEO of the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health; Dr. Cigall Kadoch, Associate Professor of Pediatric Oncology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute; Dr. Sangeeta Bhatia, Professor of Engineering at MIT and Investigator for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

Spotlight on Mission-Driven Tech: Pioneering Cervical Cancer Treatment

Mission-Driven Tech, a member of the 2024 BEE cohort, exemplifies the program’s patient-focused approach. Founded by cervical cancer survivor and former Google executive Eve McDavid, and radiation oncologist Dr. Onyinye Balogun, Mission-Driven Tech aims to eradicate cervical cancer through a modern Brachytherapy device designed specifically for women’s anatomy. This innovation addresses longstanding issues with outdated devices that have caused significant pain and complications since the 1970s.

Mission-Driven Tech’s work in cervical cancer treatment reflects the high-impact solutions The BEE program is designed to foster and accelerate. By empowering scientific entrepreneurs through mentorship, resources, and a collaborative network, BrightEdge is building a transformative ecosystem to advance the future of cancer care.



Enhanced Patient Experience

The device aims to reduce pain and trauma, improving the patient experience and addressing disparities for women in underserved communities.



Improved Health Outcomes

By increasing treatment completion rates, the device has the potential to raise cure rates and reduce recurrence.



Comprehensive Education

Mission-Driven Tech is also developing educational materials for both patients and providers to raise awareness about cervical cancer and Brachytherapy and to empower patients to advocate for their best care options.