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**Victoria Biotech Idea a Finalist in
TELUS New Ventures BC Competition**

A Victoria physician and research scientist is among ten finalists in the second annual TELUS New Ventures BC technology business idea competition. Six winners, who will be announced October 10 at a gala reception in Vancouver, will share in \$120,000 in cash and prizes.

Dr. Sergei Khartchenko, of New Dia Tech Life Science Group in Victoria, has developed a patented saliva diagnostic test strip that smokers can use to check their cyanide exposure and its affects on their metabolism. Physicians can use it to evaluate the effectiveness of medical treatments in patients with both long-term and emergency conditions related to cyanide exposure or who have protein, carbohydrate and lipid metabolic disorders.

Khartchenko says the test strip is a more sensitive and specific metabolic diagnostic test tool than some current blood and urine tests. He says that because the test is non-invasive, inexpensive and provides immediate results, it should be in demand from paramedics, emergency rooms, clinics and hospitals.

Last April, 148 BC entrepreneurs entered the TELUS New Ventures BC competition. Over the past six months, competitors strove to advance through four rounds of competition as they participated in business education seminars, networking events, one-on-one mentoring and presentations before jury panels. Their goal? To build a business case capable of convincing each round of jury panelists that their business idea is good enough to attract capital and succeed in the marketplace.

On October 10th, the six best business ideas will share in \$120,000 in cash and prizes, including the BMO Bank of Montreal grand prize of \$25,000 in cash and \$25,000 in services.

Initiated by SFU Business and operated by the non-profit BC Ventures Society, the competition is sponsored by both the public and private sectors.

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