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## **SANO LLC WINS FIVE-MINUTE PITCH CONTEST FOR CHRONIC WOUND DIAGNOSTIC TOOL**

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Water Franchise Company Drinkwell Takes Audience Choice Award

**March 12, 2014** – A company producing a new diagnostic tool to enable physicians to better understand and therefore treat chronic wounds with more efficacy won The Venture Forum's 2014 Five-Minute Pitch Contest last night. Bringing a lab process to the bedside, Wellesley-based Sano LLC has developed WounDx, a diagnostic swab resembling a pregnancy test kit that indicates in three minutes the concentration of certain enzymes in a non-healing wound. With this information, doctors can determine whether skin grafts will succeed or if other measures need to be taken earlier, avoiding more costly treatments and needless patient discomfort. As co-founder and president Paul Hayre noted in his presentation, the device can reduce the cost of treating these wounds by 30 percent and save \$8 billion for the 6.5 million patients in the U.S. and 34 million worldwide who suffer from them. The winning prize is for \$2,500.

Attendees at the pitch contest held at WPI voted to give the \$500 Audience Choice Award to Drinkwell, a company founded to transform the global water crisis into economic opportunity for local communities in developing countries. Building water storage tanks that filter out toxic arsenic and high fluoride concentrations from ground water in communities that are willing to invest in water sales, Drinkwell has developed a franchise model for local, low-cost production and sales of clean water in 20 liter jugs in rural areas in India and Bangladesh. The model has been tested in Laos and Cambodia as well. Presenter Minhaj Chowdhury explained that local businesses invest \$500 to enter their own water sales business.

The pitch contest began with a poster presentation of other entrants, and attendees voted for AMProtection and their explanation of their antimicrobial peptide coating to reduce infection in orthopedic implants. They were awarded a \$250 gift card.

The Venture Forum is a community of science and technology entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs that hold monthly events to help educate, launch and grow businesses in the MetroWest and Worcester region. Growing out of two decades as the WPI Venture Forum, the evolving organization continues its commitment and support with invaluable programs and resources.

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