

Warsaw Health Innovation Hub EN

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Call #Nephrohero - Race against the invisible enemy - how to detect chronic kidney disease earlier?

First call within Warsaw Health Innovation Hub launched

The #Nephrohero - Race Against the Invisible Enemy call is designed to support projects in the area of diagnostics and treatment of chronic kidney disease, as well as educational activities in this field. This is the first initiative of this kind implemented within the Warsaw Health Innovation Hub (WHIH), a unique partnership of the Medical Research Agency and leading entities from the sector of medicine, pharmacy and biotechnology. The winner will receive funding to develop and implement a pilot solution that could improve the treatment of thousands of Polish patients. The call for applications lasts until 31 May this year. The sponsor of the competition is AstraZeneca.

In Poland over 4 million people suffer from chronic kidney disease (CKD), while only 200 thousand of them are patients with already established diagnosis. It is the second most common chronic disease in Poland, which in its initial phase is relatively easy to detect and simple to treat, but diagnostic efforts can be described as a 'race against the invisible enemy'. Over 90% of people are unaware of their disease, while undiagnosed and untreated CKD progresses unnoticed and even leads to total renal failure, resulting in long-term treatment.

- Prognosis of chronic kidney disease depends on its stage. Recognising the disease at an early stage is crucial as it allows the implementation of medical interventions that can significantly slow its progression, reducing the risk of kidney failure requiring dialysis or organ transplantation. A very important role in early diagnosis of CKD is played by primary care physicians (PCPs), who are most often in contact with patients from risk groups - suffering from cardiovascular diseases or diabetes. Therefore, projects raising awareness of this disease, but also implementing practical systemic solutions to improve the process of diagnosis of these patients by PCPs are particularly important and have the potential to save thousands of patients from the inconvenience of dialysis or kidney transplantation. - says Agnieszka Mastalerz-Migas, MD, professor of the University of Warsaw, national consultant in family medicine.

The #Nephrohero call is aimed at, among others, innovators developing digital diagnostic methods, entities running nationwide educational campaigns or teams improving pathways for patients with CKD based on value-based healthcare. The aim of the call is to find innovative solutions that can significantly improve early detection of the disease, as well as increase awareness of patients, doctors and decision-makers about it.

PLN 400 thousand for the development and implementation of the best project

One of the pillars of the Warsaw Health Innovation Hub, established in 2021 under the auspices of the

Medical Research Agency with the support of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki as a platform for cooperation between public stakeholders and the largest investors in the medical and biotechnology sector in Poland, are programmes created and financed by business partners for the development of the Polish biomedical sector and the pragmatic use of innovation to raise the standards of healthcare services.

After several months of work on optimisation projects, the Warsaw Health Innovation Hub is becoming a real platform for cooperation between the business and public sectors. This is the first step in building a transparent partnership, in which the Agency as a public party can count on the support and involvement of experts from global entities in solving the most current health problems. Warsaw Health Innovation Hub today already consists of 23 entities - in the near future, together with private partners, we will launch further, very interesting, innovative projects, including those directed from start-ups, young scientists and medical entities. - emphasises Deputy President for Research Funding at the Medical Research Agency Sławomir Gadomski

Substantive partner of the first call and funder of the grant of minimum 400 thousand PLN is AstraZeneca, strategic partner of the Warsaw Health Innovation Hub, which was one of the first to join the initiative.

- We are honored that as a strategic partner of the Warsaw Health Innovation Hub we can announce the first call carried out within this platform. Our global experience shows that collaboration between the private and public sector significantly improves access to innovation for patients. This makes us even more excited to collaborate on the #Nephrohero project, which addresses the very serious health problem of chronic kidney disease. This disease, this invisible enemy, has a much smaller chance when we join forces. We expect many interesting projects, which will help patients and strengthen innovation in the Polish healthcare sector. - says Wiktor Janicki, President of AstraZeneca Pharma Poland.

The operator of the call, and the WHIH Strategic Partners platform, is EIT Health, the largest partner organisation in the field of medical and peri-health innovation in Europe.

The call rules, including detailed information on project requirements, how to apply, how to evaluate and how to communicate results, are available on the #Nephrohero call website.

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