

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NIH Funds \$1M Research at Quest Product Development and University of Colorado for New Digitally-Controlled Endoscopes

Denver, CO (August 2008) - Quest Product Development, with partner University of Colorado, has been awarded a \$1,000,000 Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Phase II grant by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to continue the development of the MicroFlex scope, an innovative flexible, digitally-controlled endoscope that will allow minimally invasive sinus diagnosis and surgery. This next-generation endoscope comes from research by Dr. Dale Lawrence, a University of Colorado Aerospace Engineering Professor, and uses shape metal alloys and micro-sensors to actively control the shape of the scope. Surgeons will guide this ultra-slim 3mm (1/8") diameter scope via a joystick-like control, and reach previously inaccessible spaces in the sinuses to visualize and diagnose problems. Specialized tools fit through the scope and allow therapeutic and surgical procedures. "Our goal is to improve health care and provide a new frontier in minimally-invasive surgery," said Dr. Lawrence.

This technology and endoscope may provide easier out-patient surgery for patients suffering from chronic sinusitis. The sinus application, the first of many potential applications of this technology, was selected due to the prevalence of chronic sinusitis, which effects 33 million Americans, and the challenge of surgery and treatment in these difficult anatomical structures.

Development is being done by Dr. Lawrence's research group and an engineering team from Quest Product Development. Another NIH Phase I STTR grant funded research that demonstrated MicroFlex can be fabricated in 1mm (0.04") diameter devices, which will allow access into peripheral areas of the lungs not currently possible for diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer. "We're excited about the potential of this technology to access small areas of the anatomy," said Dr. Lawrence. A National Science Foundation Phase I SBIR grant is funding work to add force-feedback to MicroFlex devices, providing surgeons a sense of feel for the amount of force being applied to tissues. Ultimately, MicroFlex technology may provide a useful tool for diagnostic and surgical care for a variety of medical uses including ear-nose-throat, lung, neurosurgery, neonatal and cardiac applications.

MicroFlex is very innovative technology with the potential to revolutionize minimally invasive surgery. Alan Kopelove, Quest Director for Technology, says "MicroFlex endoscopes offer advantages over current one degree of freedom, pull-wire, semi-flexible catheters. MicroFlex scopes could improve healthcare by improving surgeon access, reducing treatment costs, reducing patient trauma and improving recovery times".

Quest Product Development is a specialized engineering and product development company that focuses on medical products and analytical systems. Quest provides tech transfer expertise to help new concepts get funded, developed and commercialized, and is developing two medical technologies licensed from University of Colorado, which are funded by Phase II NIH SBIR or STTR grants.

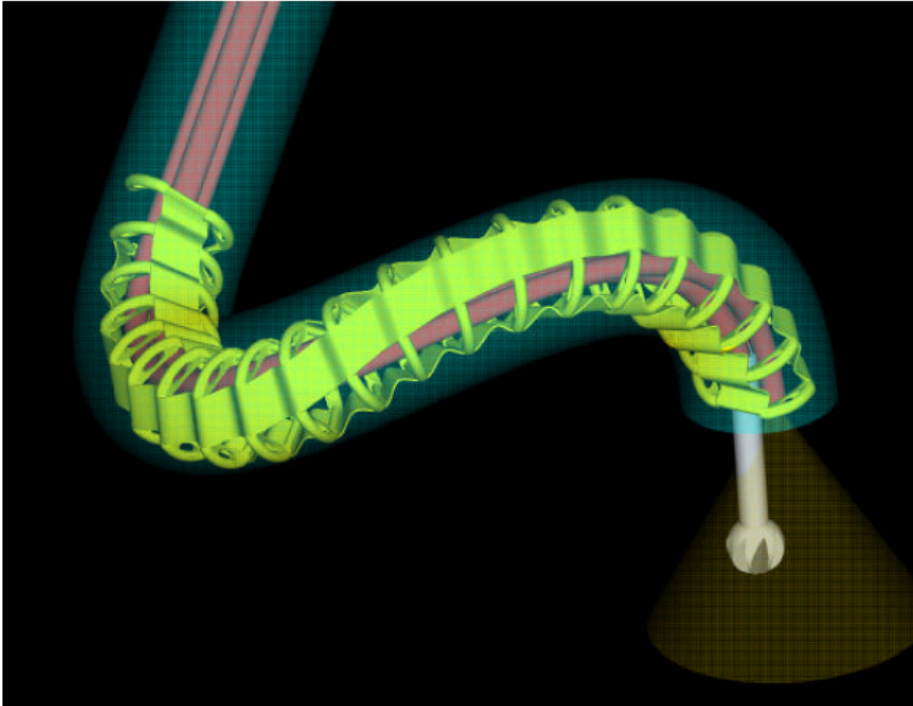


Figure. CAD model shows MicroFlex's unique fabrication in an endoscope system

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