Portland biotech company gains FDA Fast Track designation

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Aronora Inc., a Portland biotech startup that is developing a new kind of blood clot treatment, received some news from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that could give its drug candidate a big boost.

The FDA granted Fast Track designation for Aronora’s proCase, an enzyme intended to reverse blood clot formation without increasing the risk of bleeding.

The designation will enable Aronora, which is based at the OTRADI Bioscience Incubator, to accelerate clinical development of proCase for patients with life-threatening blood clots, such as from heart attacks and strokes, said Erik Tucker, Aronora’s co-founder and chief operating officer.

It’s been more than 30 years since the FDA last approved a new clot-busting drug, tissue-plasminogen activator, he noted.

“However, tPA can significantly increase the risk of bleeding, so it is used only in a very small percentage of blood clot victims,” Tucker said in a written statement. “It’s time for a new generation of safer emergency blood clot treatments, and we look forward to working closely with the FDA to develop this truly revolutionary drug candidate.”

The Fast Track designation allows for drug candidates to qualify for accelerated approval. Aronora has started a phase 1 clinical trial for proCase.

Founded in 2009, Aronora has collected $21 million in NIH Small Business Innovation Research Grants and has inked a partnership with Bayer HealthCare.

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