EP.120 – BHI Strategists

Narrator: You're listening to *BioTalk* with Rich Bendis, the only podcast focused on the BioHealth Capital Region. Each episode, we'll talk to leaders in the industry to breakdown the biggest topics happening today in BioHealth.

Rich Bendis: Hi, this Rich Bendis. I'm your host for *BioTalk*, and as you know we do podcasts with leaders within the BioHealth Capital Region—very interesting entrepreneurs, innovators, scientists, researchers—and we're going to do something different today. We're actually going to have a couple BioHealth Innovation associates on this podcast to tell you what they do and the types of services that we can help provide to those emerging BioHealth companies in our region, in the United States, and around the world. I have Monique Bennett, Senior Life Science Business Strategist, and Kelly Murphy, Life Science Business Strategist with me on *BioTalk,* today. Monique and Kelly, welcome to the podcast.

0:01:05

Monique Bennett: Thank you.

Kelly Murphy: Hi, Rich.

Rich Bendis: Hi, how are you doing? I just saw you recently as we've been talking about our pipeline of companies that we're trying to help support for the submissions for the April 5th deadline for some of the SBIRs, but we're going to get more in the detail on that later. The first thing that we normally do on the podcast is give each of you an opportunity to introduce yourself to the listeners because you can do it better than I can, so a little bit of background on what you did in college, brought you into your career, and how you ended up with BioHealth Innovation. We're going to start with Monique. Monique, a little bit about your history.

Monique Bennett: Yeah, thanks for having us, Rich. I'm so happy to be here today. I was a scientist for about 10 years before joining BHI. I did my undergrad work at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana where I majored in biology.

0:02:03 I then did a master's in cellular and molecular biology at William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, where I worked with Mark Forsyth and studied two-component signal transduction and Helicobacter pylori,

which is a really mean bug. It can cause ulcers and even gastric cancer. I really enjoyed that work and decided to continue pursuing a degree in microbiology, so I went on to do my PhD at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. There, I worked with James Crowe and Eric Skaar, where I studied the antibody-mediated humoral response to staph aureus, so we really did a lot of basic science research looking at vaccine design to staph aureus, which is a really hot topic in the field because a lot of people have spent a lot of time and money trying to make a vaccine to staph aureus, yet there's still not one brought to market. So, I really enjoyed that.

0:02:56 After graduating, I stayed on for a few years as a professor at Vanderbilt University, working in pediatrics infectious disease with Doctor Isaac Thompson who's an absolutely amazing pediatrician and scientist, and we continued to look more on the host side of the immune response of staph aureus, and looking more at what happens after you have invasive infection in children with staph aureus, and if we could discover any factors in serum that can really help attack and prevent staph aureus infection moving forward. But through all of those studies, I realize that what I was really interested in was more of the commercialization, more of the vaccine development and bringing that to market, so I decided to pursue a career a little bit outside of academia, and that's what brought me here to BHI.

Rich Bendis: Well, we're so glad to have you, Monique, and your background's fantastic. I know James Crowe personally, who's world renowned, and also was sort of the lead scientist with the Global Pandemic Prevention and Biodefense Center, which is headquartered in Montgomery County, Maryland.

0:04:05 Doctor Crowe has been very active in our partnership in standing up that new center, which is trying to look at biologics which can be stockpiled potentially when the next pandemic hits, so you've been very fortunate to work with some very renowned scientists in your careers based on your past histories, and we're glad that you joined us. By the way, how did you find BHI?

Monique Bennett: LinkedIn, actually, is where I found it.

Rich Bendis: Really? Okay, so the social media is working, huh?

Monique Bennett: That's right.

Rich Bendis: Very good. Well, you have a partner that you work with on a day-to-day basis, Kelly Murphy. Kelly, talk a little bit about your background.

Kelly Murphy: Yeah. Hi, everyone. I'm Kelly Murphy. I'm excited to be here today, and I am a life science business strategist at BHI. Have been working here for a little over six months, or about two grant-cycles worth.

0:04:57 For college, I went to the University of Nevada, Reno, where I studied neuroscience and chemistry. I worked in a concussion lab there. I graduated May 2020, right in the pandemic, decided to knockout my master's in that time, and I recently graduated from Northwestern University with my master's in biotechnology. I just moved back to my hometown of Las Vegas. I also found BHI through LinkedIn, but now I feel we have a strong connection with Northwestern through that. I also found myself not so interested in benchwork science anymore and was also interested in the commercialization aspect. I found BHI very interesting for that point, but then also for their broad portfolio of companies that they work with. I figured it would be an amazing experience to get a lot of exposure and meet some really great people.

0:05:57

Rich Bendis: Kelly, we're glad to have you at BHI and glad that LinkedIn is one of our partners, [laughs] and we probably should maybe advertise a little bit more on it. One of the things that's very unique about Kelly and Monique is, prepandemic, BHI used to hire all of its Analysts and Entrepreneurs-in-Residence who were local to Maryland, DC, and Virginia because everybody came to the office. What's interesting now, with Monique being in Asheville and Kelly being in Las Vegas, is we're able to get the best talent that's available in the United States and not have to require them to move to Montgomery County, Maryland, because we're sort of in this hybrid virtual-work environment right now, and we're really glad; we might not have been able to attract Monique or Kelly to BHI if it would have required a move to Montgomery County, Maryland. Maybe I'll ask them that. Monique, would you still have come to BHI if you would have

had to move?

0:06:58

Monique Bennett: I probably wouldn't even have applied, actually, if I had known, so I'm glad that in this virtual world that they are more opportunities.

Rich Bendis: How about you, Kelly?

Kelly Murphy: I would have considered, definitely. I wasn't tied down to Chicago; it was too cold for me, [Rich laughs] so I liked the freedom of getting to choose where to go. I haven't lived near home in a long time, so it's been nice being back.

Rich Bendis: Great. You talked about it was too cold in Chicago, but in our staff meeting today, you said it's 35° in Las Vegas today, so you can't get away from the cold can you?

Kelly Murphy: No, it's very annoying.

Rich Bendis: [laughs] Let's talk a little bit about your day-to-day functions. Before we do that, BioHealth Innovations has been around about 11 years, and we have a history of supporting entrepreneurs, scientists, researchers, and small businesses in what we call “preproposal assistance” as they're looking to apply for different types of federal grants, whether it's NIH, NSF, DOD, or other different organizations.

0:08:02 It's something that has been very fundamental for us, because when we created BHI, we did an analysis of the different types of needs that entrepreneurs have and where are the gaps of things that are not readily available to help them with. One of the first things I found was that in our region, the BioHealth Capital Region, there was not what you'd classify a formal preproposal assistance service offered by a local entity in our region. There are a number of national firms that do this, but we really didn't have people within the region providing this type of a detailed and hands-on experience working with companies. There are other entities in our region, like TEDCO, that might provide tutorial programs or mentoring services, but as you listen to Kelly and Monique talk today, you'll find what the difference is of what BHI offers versus other people in this industry.

0:09:03 The other thing that's very unique is that we've helped raise over $57 million in research grants for our winners. We have a 51% success rate, and approximately 100 companies that we have helped have won federal grants based on the services that our team has provided to them. We know that is well above the national average, but we're very selective in the companies that we work with because we know everybody can't win, and we really have to do a good job in screening these companies in advance before we try to assist them, because we want each of them that has the best shot to get the best support in the proposals that they're writing. So, that's a little history, and I'm not going to go into the details of what we do because Monique and Kelly are much better prepared to do that than I am.

0:09:56 Why don't we start a little bit, Monique, and just talk about some of the basic elements of what we describe as our proposal assistant services.

Monique Bennett: Yeah, absolutely. We have a few different types of services that we provide. One of them is more of a full-development program, and then one is targeted development. If we contract with a company to do full development, then we really come alongside the company from start to finish. We help them project-manage; we help them with the overall narrative; we help them craft specific aims, develop the budget, and even submit the grant, so we're really going to become your partner at this stage and do whatever you need to get your grants submitted. Whereas if we do a more targeted submission, then we're going to commit a little bit less time.

0:10:53 This is more 10 to 20 hours where we're going to provide general feedback, grantsmanship advice, maybe do some editing of your commercialization plan and your business strategy because that's sometimes what companies struggle with, but it's a little bit more of a targeted assistance.

Rich Bendis: Basically, you talk about "something" aims, and we'll talk a little bit more about this in depth, but isn't that one of the more critical elements that is needed that NIH or the other agencies will be looking at, is what the aims are for this proposal?

Monique Bennett: Absolutely. One thing that I think is important to keep in mind is that not everyone is going to read your entire proposal. These things are 10s of pages long—60 pages or so, maybe even 100—so, if not everyone's going to read your proposal, one thing they are going to read is that one-page specific aims, so you want to make sure that that really shines. One problem that I think a lot of academics in particular have, is that they use specific aims that are very academic focused.

0:12:01 They recycle them from their R01s, for example, or maybe they're too similar—aim one is very similar to aim two, and they don't separate them enough. So, you really want to make sure you spend a great deal of time on that specific-aims page and let it shine and really represent your project accurately.

Rich Bendis: We'll talk a little bit more about aims later as we get into some of those recommendations you're going to have, Monique, but Kelly, you mentioned you've been through two cycles now, and you've probably been involved in different phases of full proposals as well as just doing some targeted. You want to explain a little bit of difference in the way that you've worked on the full proposals versus the targeted proposals?

Kelly Murphy: Yes, absolutely. With the full proposals, like Monique said, we really do become a part of your team. Some companies will come to us with an idea of what their aims will be, or we will help guide them and kind of help with the strategy of the grant, of the project, even, to come up with these aims.

0:13:04 As far as the more targeted program, it's sometimes with a resubmission. We'll take a look at reviewers comments and help improve different areas that were highlighted, but then it also could be just from scratch. If someone has experience writing grants and just wants a fresh set of eyes to look at it, we can also help with that or look at specific areas. If you're not very familiar with how to do a budget, we can help with the budget. If you're not very familiar with the commercialization plan, we can help with that.

Rich Bendis: For both of you, we're really heavy into the business assistance, but at the same time you have to have some understanding of the science, so how

much do you take for granted that the scientist or the technology you're working with is unique/innovative?

0:14:00 Where we're really going to focus more on the business side—commercialization strategy, market strategy, and things like that—how deeply do you get in analyzing the science for those differential advantages where they would have a chance of winning with their proposal? Monique?

Monique Bennett: This is something that we really rely on the company to think through. While we work with them quite a bit, we want to make sure that they're confident in their science. We can come alongside them and help them talk through their science and make sure that it makes sense, and as an outside group, we can play the part of reviewer, read through it, make sure it's logical, rational, that it's well developed, but at the end of the day, the company's going to be the one performing the science and analyzing the data, and we have to make sure that they're comfortable doing that and communicating that coherently.

Rich Bendis: Great. Kelly, what kind of experience do you have with the companies you work with related to this science versus business balance?

0:15:01

Kelly Murphy: Like Monique said, we can't be subject-matter experts in every single type of technology that we help out with even though we do have strong scientific backgrounds, so we'll take some time, read some papers, and become very familiar, but we will also have to rely on the company to have an idea and be able to write the scientific-heavy sections. We'll be able to craft it in a way that makes sense for the grant, but we will need the extra help from the scientists themselves.

Rich Bendis: I think one of the benefits both of you have today, which some of our earlier analysts did not have, is that we have 15 Entrepreneurs-in-Residence, or personnel, working at NIH now, under our contract with NIH, and we have three new Entrepreneurs-in-Residence in Montgomery County, Maryland working with Montgomery County companies.

0:16:04 So, the diversity of experienced networks that these EIRs have, I would

imagine, have been beneficial to both of you as you're looking for additional knowledge related to the companies, the technologies, the markets. Maybe talk a little bit about that interaction, Monique.

Monique Bennett: Yes, you bring up an excellent point, Rich. Speaking of the Entrepreneurs-in-Residence, I also wanted to mention: Not only are they just a great resource because they have expertise in regulatory and different scientific matters, and just even owning a company and what that looks like, but we also offer assistance that's completely free for companies called EIR Day.

0:16:50 So, if a company wants one hour to just present to BHI, maybe get some feedback on their pitch deck, or ask targeted questions about how their company should be structured, what the best next steps for them are, how to find investors, any of these types of questions, we can bring on some of our Entrepreneurs-in-Residence, have them on that call, and the company can get feedback from everyone. That's a really great way just to find out if you're ready for an SBIR, so that's another assistance that BHI offers.

Rich Bendis: Yeah, thank you; I'm glad you brought that up. It's a monthly program. We just had it on January the 18th. We had three companies present, and they got instantaneous feedback from the EIRs, the analysts, and the other members of the BHI team. These companies can be from anywhere in the United States or around the world, and we have talked to a number of international as well as other companies. The funny thing that this EIR Day does, Monique and Kelly, is that we're talking to companies in California, or San Francisco, or Boston, or New York, where you would think all of the resources in the world exist to have this type of feedback, but they're coming to BioHealth Innovation in Montgomery County, Maryland to get this kind of feedback.

0:18:07 So, it's really neat to know that we have some unique resources to provide those kinds of insights, that some of these other locations don't have—organizations similar to BHI. Kelly, are you finding that to be true based on some of the companies you've interacted with?

Kelly Murphy: Yes, of course. I love the EIRs. They're part of the reason why I was

interested in BHI in the first place, just because they have so much experience and I have so much to learn from them. These companies have so much to learn from; they're just a great resource for all of us, really.

Rich Bendis: Great. Well, we hope to continue to expand that program and also find ways to get them more integrated in what you guys do every day. Let's also talk about the stage of a company that is the typical person that you work with or should be considering working with BHI and our analyst team in this proposal world.

0:19:05 Monique, what do you believe are the basic elements that a company needs to be at, or a different stage that the company should be at before they should consider applying for some of this non-dilutive funding?

Monique Bennett: I think what we really want to look for is a company that's in a growth stage, maybe one that's ready to pursue healthcare initiatives, that is looking into commercialization already, maybe one that has already some solid traction, has existing customers. You don't necessarily need to be profitable yet, but you know how to look toward solid growth. If you're still working on your business plan, if you haven't even developed your product yet, if you don't even have a board or things like that, if you're still trying to figure out some of those kinks, then you might want to sit tight a little bit and get some of the fundamentals of the business nailed down. I think, really, growth-stage companies are what we are most interested in helping.

0:20:05

Rich Bendis: Let’s also talk about what areas of—our term of BioHealth is very broad. It's not biotech; it’s not pharmaceuticals; it's not medical devices. If you look at the range of companies from pharmaceuticals, to biologics, devices, digital health, or whatever, Kelly, I guess we have a chance to work with many different companies in many different fields.

Kelly Murphy: Yeah, that's very true. In my short time here, I've seen everything from traditional drug development in the way that you would think of pharmaceuticals, larger molecules, proteins, and digital health interventions as well, so we're able to help in a lot of different ways for a

lot of different companies.

Rich Bendis: And that's sort of where the EIRs come in, because there is no one individual that has knowledge about everything that there is in the whole BioHealth field.

0:20:58 Based on your experience and other members of the BHI team, we feel we cover the waterfront because no one can know it all, but we basically pull upon the resources we have to draw their expertise as we're evaluating companies. Another thing on stage of company is that each company, if you're going to submit, has to have a PI. Do you want to talk a little bit about the PI requirement, Monique?

Monique Bennett: Yes. This is a really important point, I think, especially for scientists that work in academia or that have other full-time jobs, because being an investigator is one of the five things that the NIH scores on, and the principal investigator who applies on the grant needs to commit more than 50% of their time to the proposal and the work that's being proposed in the grant. So, if you have a full-time position at a research institution somewhere, you can't also be the PI on the grant, so you need to find someone who's fully committed to the work that's being proposed.

0:22:02 As I mentioned, that's something that they're going to score you on as well, so you need to show that you're fully committed to the grant.

Rich Bendis: Well, I'm glad you brought up scoring because it was sort of my next question. How do they evaluate grants, and who evaluates proposals at the NIH or the different agencies? Maybe between you and Kelly, you can talk about the five elements that proposals are scored on and actually who does the scoring. I'll let you two determine who wants to cover what part of that.

Kelly Murphy: After submission, it will take a little bit of time, but you'll receive an overall-impact score as well as kind of a broken-down criteria score. The overall-impact score is on a 9-point rating scale, with 1 being exceptional and 9 being poor. As a 5 considered to be an average score, you'll typically see somewhere between 1 and 3.

0:23:00 It could also be seen as about 10 to 99; 1 and 3 being what gets funded from the NIH usually. There are five different criteria that you will be scored on. These are significance, investigator, innovation, approach, and environment. You'll be able to see your score on a summary statement that you'll receive from the NIH, and you'll also be given a breakdown from each reviewer on that criteria, so three people will be looking at your grant. Each criteria is given a numerical value of one to five, one being the best score, five having the most issues. The summary statements will also provide written feedback from each reviewer on each criteria. Then, with these measures, the NIH is assessing the project's importance, but also likelihood of success. With both the overall-impact score and the criteria scores, the lower, the better, pretty much.

0:24:03

Rich Bendis: That's great information, Kelly. Maybe Monique can talk about what happens when the company gets scored. What do they do with that scoring, and how long does it take after the proposal's been submitted to be scored? If they get a good score, what happens then? Also, what happens if you get a bad score?

Monique Bennett: Yes. About 30% of applications are not going to be discussed, which can be really difficult because then you don't know exactly where you went wrong, and it can be difficult to know if you should resubmit. If you received maybe a score between 1 and 3.2 (or 32), that's usually where the payline is going to fall, so you have a great chance of getting your grant funded at that point. That money's going to take a while to arrive, usually about six months, maybe even longer because it takes a little bit of time to determine who's going to get that money and to get that divvied out.

0:25:04 So, you should know that when you apply for an SBIR grant, that you're not going to get that money for a while. Not only is it going to take a few months to apply, but it's going to take some time for it to be reviewed and then even longer before those funds are received. Now, if you got a score in the 3s—or around 30, as they do often multiply that by a factor of 10, so 3.2 can become a 32, for example—so, if you get a score in the 30s that ended up not being funded, you have a great chance of

resubmitting and potentially getting that funded. At that point, when you get your summary statements a few months later after resubmitting, then you may want to consider just addressing the concerns that the reviewers brought up and resubmitting at that time.

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Rich Bendis: When you're talking about resubmitting, first of all, timing for grants, the NIH, specifically, has solicitation dates generally throughout the year, which apply to most agencies, but some institutes have a little variance. We're looking at April 5th, September 5th, and January 5th for three primary submission dates. So, you submit, you get scored, you don't get a good score. How soon after you have gotten your score that's not going to be funded can you resubmit back on that proposal?

Kelly Murphy: You can submit with the next grant cycle. Say you submitted January 5th, found out you got a decent score, but were not funded. You could submit then again for April 5th. I wanted to add to Monique's point for the last question that, once you've received your score, you should be reaching out to the program officer for the agency that you submitted to, to discuss how you were scored, why you were scored, maybe get some additional feedback.

0:27:00 That can help assess whether you want to submit, whether you're ready to resubmit for this next grant cycle. You could always take a beat and apply, maybe in September, instead, and then really understanding your areas of improvement.

Rich Bendis: You're talking about reaching out to the program manager after you've been scored, but there's nothing that prevents you from reaching out to the program manager before submission. They're not going to tell you all of the answers, but they're willing to talk to you about that—talk to you about what you're thinking about proposing. Do you want to talk a little bit about that process, and how you would encourage everybody to try to have some preliminary discussions with the Institute or the program manager before they actually submit their proposal?

Kelly Murphy: Yeah. Definitely, this is not the first time you should be talking to your program manager. We encourage as early as possible.

0:27:56 Pretty much, the program manager is a person within the specific agency that you're going to be submitting to, whether that's the NIA, NCI, anything within the NIH. This is a person who administers these different programs, sets priorities on committing the federal funding, and will advocate for a specific area, so early on in the writing process, you'll reach out to the appropriate program manager to see if your project is a good fit for funding from that agency. This can be done before you even seek out help with BHI, or within the first few weeks of working together, we can also help coordinate this meeting.

Rich Bendis: Monique, how much time is required to really develop a good quality proposal that you're going to submit? Because, we get people that will inquire two weeks before the date, but if it's April 5th and somebody gets to you on March 15th, it's highly unlikely that you're going to be able to put a high-quality proposal in unless they've had a lot of writing experience.

0:29:02 So, what are your recommendations or guidelines on how much time it would take to really do a quality proposal?

Monique Bennett: We recommend three months. That's a really good amount of time because it takes a while to really reach out to, for example, the program manager. That's one of the things that is really important to do at the very beginning because they can help you determine what phase of grant to go for, what overall FOA to go for, which is the funding announcement. You just want to make sure that you are finding the right fit for your proposal, and that's something you need to determine at the very beginning. It also takes some time to get your grants' registrations done, and some of them actually take weeks to process. If you're doing those at the last minute, two weeks before, you may not even be registered in time to submit your grant. That would be a real travesty if you've got your proposal package all together, and then you went to submit, and you weren't registered and couldn't even get it done.

0:30:04

Rich Bendis: Talk a little bit about the types of registrations that are required.

Monique Bennett: There are a few main ones: grants.gov, SAM.gov (System for Award

Management), and then NIH has eRA Commons. Those are the three big ones that we recommend going ahead and registering for as soon as you know that you want to submit a grant.

Rich Bendis: Super, and I think that's very important, because, as you say, it could take two weeks to get a registration, or sometimes we've worked with some companies that has taken as much as six months, so if you're anticipating, the sooner the better. One of the other things I wanted to go back on, when you talk about it might take six months to get funding from the award after you've been notified that you've won, most people need to understand you can't fund your business on SBIR grants.

0:30:56 They are supplemental to what your day-to-day funding should be, and it would be looked at as incremental funding rather than primary funding for your company. You need other sources, because there's no guarantee that you're going to win your proposal, and use that for your day-to-day operating capital to keep your company going.

Let's focus on some of the challenges for the future with these entrepreneurs and scientists. What do you see as the most common problems that you run into? Whether it's evaluating a company, whether it's in the writing of the proposal stage, or the communication with them, what are the most common problems you encountered in working with these companies?

Monique Bennett: I think one of the biggest issues that we see is that there are just fundamental differences between an SBIR grant and an academic grant, like an R01. Whereas an academic grant is focused on discovery, and the point of a lot of that research is to get a publication, and you want to show that you've been active in discovering, and publishing papers, an SBIR is focused on developing a product and commercialization.

0:32:08 For most SBIR grants, you're going to actually submit a 10-page commercialization plan where you talk about your patents, for example. So, if you are not submitting a provisional patent, or if you don't have a patent, that could be a real problem. You need to make sure that you can show that this idea is something that you own and is protected by your company. That's something that can be a little bit different for a small

company, or that is spun out of a university, for example.

The PI issue is also something that we see quite a bit, where you need to make sure that you're really committed to your company. Perhaps you have a second job and you can't give 51% of your time. You really want to make sure that you're fully dedicated to the company and your product.

0:32:57

Rich Bendis: Kelly, what specific problems have you run into in the companies you worked with?

Kelly Murphy: Not necessarily with the companies that we've worked with, but maybe some companies that we have vetted, one thing is that they're just simply not ready. How Monique was talking about the difference between an SBIR and an academic grant, yes, you need money to fund this project, but also you need to have enough done beforehand. You need enough primary research. You need some solid data for the NIH to believe in your product and its likelihood of success.

Rich Bendis: Now that you guys are old hands at this, and unbelievably experienced, and yes, two members of BioHealth Innovation, let's close by talking about your top tips for those scientist, entrepreneurs, companies out there listening—if they're considering, or they're in the process of preparing a proposal to submit to, whether it's NIH or some other federal agency. We'll start with you, Monique.

0:34:02

Monique Bennett: We've already touched on this a little bit, but just to elaborate, one of the most important things is to make sure that you're choosing the right institute. Whether it's one for aging, for Alzheimer's, for muscular dystrophy, there are multiple different agencies within the NIH, so you want to make sure that you choose the one that fits your company and the product you're showing.

Then, under each institute, there are also different requests for proposals, requests for applications, and funding announcements; those are going to tell you the amount of funds set aside, the number of rewards they're going to give, and then once again, the due dates. So, if you choose the

right application or the right announcement for your application, then you have a better chance of success from the very beginning, because if your product just doesn't match what you're applying to, then you're not going to have a good chance of getting your grant awarded. So, that's one of the things that, from the very beginning, you need to make sure that you're really thinking about.

0:35:04

Rich Bendis: Great tip. How about you, Kelly? You have some tips, too?

Kelly Murphy: Yeah. I guess kind of the echoing Monique with that is, reach out to the program manager as soon as possible. This will help to understand if it is a good fit. Another thing would be to stay focused. You might have a million ideas for your project, and it could help with a million different indications, but for the purpose of the grant, you should stay focused, or as narrow as you can get. This will also help: reaching out to the program manager to narrow down your ideas.

Rich Bendis: Well, this has been very helpful for me, and I guarantee it's helpful for the listeners, because I've learned some things today that I might not have known based on what you guys interact with on a day-to-day basis.

0:35:54 We generally close this session of the *BioTalk* podcast with any comments that either of you would like to make that we didn't cover, that you feel the listeners would be interested in. I'll close first with Monique Bennett, our Senior Life Science Business Strategist at BHI. Monique, anything else you want to share?

Monique Bennett: Just that if anybody wants to reach out to us, they can feel free to find us on the website, and we will be happy to talk with them and plug them in with EIRs or help them directly as best we can.

Rich Bendis: If they wanted to email you directly, what is that email address?

Kelly Murphy: They can reach out to me. It's kmurphy@biohealthinnovation.org.

Monique's is mbennett@biohealthinnovation.org. (Two Ns, two Ts.)

Rich Bendis: I surprised you with something that's really the most difficult question of the whole podcast, Monique. [laughs]

Monique Bennett: Right, too many email addresses.

Rich Bendis: Kelly, did you have any other words you wanted to share?

Kelly Murphy: I think we covered all the good tips, everything already, but we're excited to learn about all these different companies, all these different projects, so please reach out.

0:37:04 We can help in more ways than just SBIRs. If you're interested in EIR Day, we have a lot of great things going on at BHI.

Rich Bendis: Super. By the way, if anybody wants to know the dates for the EIR Day, all you have to do is to go to biohealthinnovation.org, our website, and you look under "Events" and EIR Day is listed there. I think the dates are posted for the rest of this year. There's one date per month that is eligible, and you can sign up actually online, or contact us directly.

I think that Monique Bennett and Kelly Murphy, our life science business strategists with BioHealth Innovation, are basically describing how we're here to help. Even if you are not a candidate, we'll be glad to answer questions for you if you're considering doing something, and also help you prepare to get ready. If you're not ready today, it might be a year from now, we'll be glad to work with you in that interim period to help you prepare so that you can put a quality proposal together.

0:38:05 Monique and Kelly, welcome to BHI. We're glad that you're doing a fantastic job, today. We've got nothing but accolades from all the companies that you've worked with, and we look forward to servicing many more companies in the future. Thank you for being on *BioTalk*.

Monique Bennett: Thank you.

Kelly Murphy: Yeah, thanks for having us, Rich.

Narrator: Thanks for listening to *BioTalk* with Rich Bendis.

End of recording.