

PRESS RELEASE

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UMass Amherst Wins AUTM 2025 Better World Project Award for Groundbreaking Water Purification Technology

[Washington, D.C., March 13, 2025]– AUTM has named the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Amherst) the winner of the 2025 Better World Project Award for its groundbreaking technology that eliminates harmful “forever chemicals” from water. The award was determined by public vote, recognizing the technology’s significant impact of global water quality. The announcement was made at the AUTM Annual Meeting, where industry leaders gathered to celebrate excellence in innovation and leadership.

Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), commonly known as “forever chemicals,” pose a significant threat to global water supplies due to their persistence in the environment. Addressing this critical challenge, UMass Amherst researchers Julie Bliss Mullen, a former PhD candidate, and Emeritus Professor David Reckhow developed the Octa™ System—an electrochemical treatment capable of permanently destroying PFAS.

With support from the UMass Technology Transfer Office, Mullen co-founded Aclarity, a startup now working to eliminate PFAS on an industrial scale. “We are delighted and thrilled to see Aclarity receive this prestigious award. It is exciting to see UMass researchers take a lab concept to a fully commercialized product that is making an impact in the world,” says Burnley Jaklevic, Director, UMass Amherst’s Technology Transfer Office.

The Better World Project Award honors technology transfer professionals who drive positive global impact by transforming academic research into real-world solutions. Octa™ System joins more than 600 stories in the Better World Project collection that highlights innovations that are driving a better world.

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