

News Release

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SynerFuse™ CEO Justin Zenanko Named to Minnesota 500 List of Most Powerful & Influential Leaders

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. – January 5, 2023 – SynerFuse™ Co-Founder & CEO Justin Zenanko has been recognized as one of the 500 Most Powerful and Influential Leaders in Minnesota in 2022, in the med-tech category by Greenspring Media, an initiative of Minnesota Monthly.

The Minnesota 500 celebrates Minnesota’s leading business executives across myriad industries. It began as a list of more than 7,000 executives. After months of research, the list’s editors culled this down to the top 500 using a host of criteria, looking at everything from the impact each executive is having on their industry as a whole (both in their current role and prior roles), the success and impact the company itself is having under their leadership, special awards or accolades both in the executives’ professional and personal lives, participation in community/philanthropic endeavors, position on other boards, and the like.

Under Zenanko’s leadership, SynerFuse was named the 2022 Blazer Award Winner from MinneInno, a division of the Minneapolis St. Paul Business Journal, in the med-tech category, for “lighting its industry on fire.” SynerFuse was also recognized as a 2022 Tech20 innovator to watch by Twin Cities Business magazine. The company was recognized by Best Startup as being among the 48 top Minnesota therapeutics companies and startups and 101 top Minnesota medical companies and startups of 2021, and it was recognized by Startup Pill as among the 70 best Minneapolis medical device startups in 2021.

SynerFuse Inc. is on a mission to help end the opioid crisis with a novel option for addressing pain relief related to spinal fusion procedures. The concept combines spinal fusion and neuromodulation into a single operation with the goal of being a long-lasting alternative to a narcotic-based regimen in relieving pain. More than 500,000 spinal fusion procedures are performed every year in the U.S. with as many as 40% of cases resulting in chronic pain.

“We’re going after the opioid crisis. And we are going after it in spine surgeries because pain is the leading factor in opioid addiction,” said Zenanko. “Everyone can relate to someone who has suffered from opioid abuse. What we’re trying to do is stop opioid addiction from ever occurring because we are targeting an option that addresses chronic back pain despite a successful spine fusion.”

More information about SynerFuse and Zenanko is available at www.synerfuse.com.

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About Chronic Lower Back Pain (cLBP)

cLBP is defined as lower back pain that continues for 12 weeks or longer, even after an initial injury or underlying cause of acute lower back pain has been treated.¹ With more than 500,000 procedures performed annually, spinal fusion remains a common treatment for spinal instability, albeit with a high incidence of residual neuropathic pain². Up to 40% of patients who undergo spinal fusion end up with Failed Back Surgery Syndrome (FBSS), a condition resulting in significant, lingering neuropathic pain, costing the U.S. healthcare system \$20B per year and significantly affecting the quality of life of patients³.

About SynerFuse

SynerFuse is a Delaware corporation based in Minnesota—the heart of Medical Alley and the cradle of neuromodulation and medical device innovation. SynerFuse believes that individuals with cLBP/FBSS and their providers deserve an alternative option than spinal fusion alone. Even when spinal fusion is successful, it can often result in residual chronic neuropathic pain and use of addictive opioids. The company is working to create a non-narcotic pain management for chronic low back pain with a patented therapy that integrates spinal fusion hardware and an active neuromodulation system. For more information on the company, please visit www.synerfuse.com.

This communication contains information about an investigational product. This product is limited by Federal (U.S.) law to investigational use only. SynerFuse makes no claims regarding the safety or effectiveness of the unapproved investigational product. The intent of providing this information is to convey research and development initiatives underway at SynerFuse.

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¹ See “Low Back Pain Fact Sheet.” National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/low-back-pain-fact-sheet#:~:text=Chronic%20back%20pain%20is%20defined,back%20pain%20has%20been%20treated>, accessed October 17, 2022.

² Karen L. Saban et al., “Health-Related Quality of Life of Patients Following Selected Types of Lumbar Spinal Surgery: A Pilot Study,” *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes* 5 (2007), <https://doi.org/10.1186/1477-7525-5-71>.

³ Farber SH, Han JL, Elsamadicy AA, Hussaini Q, Yang S, Pagadala P, Parente B, Xie J, Lad SP. Long-term Cost Utility of Spinal Cord Stimulation in Patients with Failed Back Surgery Syndrome. *Pain Physician*. 2017 Sep;20(6):E797-E805. PMID: 28934786; PMCID: PMC8358894.