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# Immigrant-founded Keriton raised \$1 million to help keep premature babies on breast milk

*The funding round, led by BioAdvance, will allow Vidur Bhatnagar's breast milk management startup to deploy five pilots in 2017.*

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*Keriton founder Vidur Bhatnagar (Courtesy photo)*

**Vidur Bhatnagar** wants you to know that, had his startup been around in 1950, **Stevie Wonder** might still have his eyesight.

See, studies have suggested that access to breast milk can stave off diseases like retinopathy of prematurity, a malady that afflicts more than half of premature babies, stunting the growth of their eyes. It's the same condition that took Wonder's eyesight when he was a child.

And that's precisely **Keriton's** main pitch: An in-hospital solution for breast milk management in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs). To start deploying their technology, the Philly-based company just closed a \$1 million seed round led by **BioAdvance** — with participation from a rather impressive lineup of backers, including **Ben Franklin Technology Partners, Dreamit Ventures, Penn Medicine, Amerihealth, Wharton, Dorm Room Fund** and investor **Steve Barsh**. Bhatnagar was born in Roorkee, a small city in northern India near the Ganges River. An engineer by trade, in 2015 he left a cushy job at **SAP** India (he was the youngest employee ever to hold the title of Product Owner) and pursued a master's degree in robotics at **Penn**. By the second semester, he took a leave of absence from the program to pursue **Keriton** full-time.

“The idea for the startup came by way of Penn nurses themselves,” Bhatnagar said. “They mentioned about how much time and energy was spent manually labeling and tracking the path of pumped breast milk from the mother to the baby in the NICU.” An initial solution was found in RFI-branded bottles, which would allow each bottle to be tracked and identified, but at a steep cost for the hospital. A cheaper solution was then found in barcode-printed bottles which, coupled with a suite of mobile apps, would make the tracking process go smoothly.

We first met Keriton as part of the 2016 Dreamit Health cohort. The company now has a team of six: Four working from Dreamit's space at IC@3401 and two developers in India. This year, the company plans to deploy beta tests in five hospitals before entering the market.

“Nothing is more important to premature babies than mom's breast milk,” Bhatnagar said. “And we want to make sure babies keep breastfeeding.”

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Roberto Torres became Technical.ly Lead Philly Reporter in May 2016. Prior, he was a freelance contributor to Technical.ly and Al Dia News. The native Venezuelan moved to Philadelphia in 2015 after reporting on research at his alma mater, the University of Zulia. Whenever he's not fending deadlines, he can be found standing in line at Overbrook Pizza in West Philly, running Netflix/Hulu marathons with his wife or reading news from Venezuela.