

ABOUT US

SakuraMed offers a patient-centric imaging device for vaginal exams to improve the clinician workflow and patient experience by replacing the outdated, duckbill-shaped speculum with a self-insertable, tampon-shaped device. Our mission is to increase accessibility and efficiency in gynecology so that vaginal exams prioritize the patient experience, empowering people with dignity, equal access, and quality care.



Priya Kumar
CEO & Founder

Welcome to our inaugural newsletter!

In this first update, we will introduce who we are and what we do. We have some exciting developments and things on the horizon, so we hope you follow along on our journey and share our newsletter with those who are interested and want to improve women's health!

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The Clinical Opportunity

The Problem: Vaginal exams are crucial for routine preventative care and medical symptom evaluation in patients with female reproductive anatomy. Our research study shows that 57% of patients in the US and 75% in India skip/postpone these examinations. More than half (51%; US and 75%; India) of patients skipped/postponed due to discomfort.

For medical providers, the duck-bill shaped speculum is *over 150 years old* and does not adapt well to diverse patient bodies and results in inefficiencies that require the patient to undergo repeat examinations, and lost revenue due to high rates of last minute cancellations.

SakuraMed's 2025 USA patient research study with over 500 responses shows that in the US...

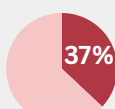


3 in 4 prefer our prototype over the speculum.

49% are more likely to be seen with our device.

Speculum SakuraMed +49%

37% actively search for speculum alternatives.



Our Solution: SakuraMed is developing an imaging device with advanced AI features. Our advantages include the following:

- Increased data collection & working to achieve better than current standard of care & reduce false negatives
- Centers on diverse bodies for ease of use by providers
- Eliminates redundant procedures
- Preferred by patients & increases patient autonomy

Meet Our Leadership



Priya

Priya Kumar, CEO & Founder

leads the company with a strong business, bioengineering, and technology acumen. Priya founded SakuraMed in 2023 after realizing that she and many others were avoiding the pap smear due discomfort, anxiety, and fear. She has since led the team to win multiple awards and funding, while providing strategic direction for the company. Priya is a University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign alumna.



Samantha

Samantha (Sam) Yee, Ph.D, Chief Scientific Officer

holds a PhD in Integrated Biomedical Sciences and conducts research focused on women's cancers. She is a former National Cancer Institute K00 fellow at the University of Chicago and current postdoc, and has a multitude of leadership and volunteer experience in the women's health space. She is a high-achieving leader who offers her scientific background and expansive network in the women's health space.



Pavan

Srinivasa Pavan Kancharla, Product Development Engineer

comes with a M.S. in Data Science from UW Seattle and Bachelors in mechanical engineering from IIT Hyderabad with research experience in ML for medical imaging applications. He leverages this technical expertise to deliver robust software architecture, computer vision models and intelligent AI systems for medical imaging applications.

Advisory Board



Asha Kirchoff
Med device commercialization
S10K Expert



Craig Scherer
Med device development
MedTech Investor/Advisor



Mary Burton
UI/UX Leader
Former GE Healthcare



Dave Hampton, PhD
Serial Medtech Entrepreneur, Program Director @Bioscience Enterprise



Karan Jain
Former SakuraMed CTO
Design for manufacturing & assembly

A Deeper Look

Remembering the Mothers of Gynecology

The speculum is a standard tool in modern pelvic exams, including Pap smears; however, its origins are rooted in painful history.

In 1845, Dr. J. Marion Sims, often called the "Father of Gynecology," developed the precursor to the modern speculum, but his medical advancements came at a horrifying human cost. For 5 years, Sims performed non-consensual, experimental surgeries on enslaved Black women. Among them were Anarcha, Lucy, and Betsey, who endured agonizing procedures with no anesthesia or pain relief. Sims documented that he operated on Anarcha alone as a test subject over 30 times.

Today, the core design of the speculum remains largely unchanged. Over a century later, the systemic healthcare disparities still persist. Honoring the "Mothers of Gynecology" and acknowledging this history is a reminder that patient advocacy, informed consent, and systemic equity must be actively protected today to create healthcare environments where every patient feels safe, respected, and heard by medical providers.

To see how modern medicine is evolving toward a better future, read our [first blog article](#) on the most recent changes to cervical cancer screening guidelines by our medical writing intern, Katiannah Moise, PhD.

TIMELINE

Idea Generation

JAN 2023

Customer discovery interviews with clinicians to validate the problem

Cozad Challenge

APRIL 2023

2nd place in UIUC Cozad New Venture Challenge out of 300 startups and won the Dr. Paul Magelli Innovation Prize from Illinois Ventures

Incorporation

SEPT 2023

Sakura MedTech, Inc is incorporated in Delaware as a C-Corp

In-Person Competitions

NOV'23 - APR'24

Late round competitors at ASU Innovation Open, Baylor NVC, UW Dempsey Startup Competition & Hollomon Health Innovation Challenge, UArk Heartland Challenge

Functional Device

JUNE 2024

Developed our first in-house software prototype and began iterative development of the integrated device

Nucleate Chicago

DEC 2024

Selected for Nucleate Chicago's six month Activator program

AI Development

JULY/AUG 2025

Developed a preliminary model for advanced AI features

AI Accuracy

APRIL 2026

Achieved AI accuracy with sensitivity on par and specificity better than human specialists

AWS Startups

JUNE 2026

Accepted into AWS Activate startup program

HISTORY OF SAKURAMED

First Funding

FEB 2023

2nd place in UChicago College New Venture Challenge

Accelerator

MAY 2023

Joined UIUC's iVenture Accelerator's 9th cohort

Hardware Development

OCT 2023

Developed our first functional hardware prototype

Functional Device

MAY 2024

Joined iVenture Accelerator's 10th cohort as an Alum Fellow

Marketing Push

NOV 2024

Produced a company overview video to kick off marketing

Patient Research

JUNE 2025

Completed two patient facing research surveys in the USA and India to better understand and collect data from the patient's perspective

ACOG Research Poster

SEPT 2025

Presented unmet patient need for change in vaginal exams at the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Annual District VI & VII Meeting

Provider Research

MAY 2026

Launched a research study for prototype testing with OB/GYNs, family medicine, and emergency room providers

What's Next for SakuraMed?

This quarter is targeting community engagement and rigorous product refinement. We will be attending numerous events, including those at Seattle Tech Week (July).

Parallel to these events, we are continuously improving our device as we work towards our next major milestone: *a second study to evaluate usability with healthcare providers. We are looking for providers interested in hands-on prototype testing.*

