

Marijuana Investors Weigh Pot Pitches at Las Vegas Conference

By Alison Vekshin Jan 23, 2014 11:01 PM

Daniel Yazbeck stepped to the podium before about 140 investors in a Las Vegas conference room with 15 minutes to persuade them to bankroll a handheld testing device that helps pot users evaluate marijuana.

Yazbeck, a lead investor in the product called MyDx, part of La Jolla, California-based CDx Inc., told the group he was seeking \$1.25 million in exchange for a 20 percent stake in the analyzer company. He was the first of 12 entrepreneurs invited to pitch at a conference organized by ArcView Group, a San Francisco-based firm of angel investors.

“It’s a tool that will not only educate but will also empower people with healthier lives by knowing what’s in everything they eat, drink and inhale,” Yazbeck, 36, said yesterday before showing a video on the tester, which also will be able to detect pesticides in food and contaminants in water.

The meeting coincides with the start of legal marijuana sales in Colorado, where retail shops opened Jan. 1 to long lines of consumers. Investor interest has surged since voters in Colorado and Washington state became the first to legalize recreational marijuana use in 2012. Stores are

expected to open in Washington later this year. “Welcome to the golden age of cannabis investing,” Steve DeAngelo, ArcView’s president, said at the start of the meeting.

“There will never, ever be another time when the deals for investors will be as good as they will be over the course of the next couple of years,” said DeAngelo, co-founder of Harborside Health Center, a medical-marijuana dispensary in Oakland and San Jose, California. “So be cautious, do your due diligence, be deliberate, be wise. But have your checkbooks ready. The time is now.”

