



## Mobile treatment and alerts, anti-stigma innovations among top winners at Opioid Epidemic Hack-a-thon

**BOSTON – September 13, 2016** – As the opioid addiction crisis continues to escalate across Massachusetts and the U.S., the [GE Foundation](#) and [Massachusetts General Hospital \(MGH\) Global Health](#) convened over 220 global health innovators and experts at District Hall in Boston at the [Opioid Epidemic Challenge Summit Hack-a-thon](#). The event, held September 9-11<sup>th</sup>, challenged participants to create health innovations that can address the prevention, treatment and recovery of opioid addiction.

Participants from a wide variety of backgrounds and skill sets pitched over 70 problems from the field, formed cross-disciplinary teams and presented 18 innovations. A total of five \$1,000 prizes were given to winning teams in the following categories:

- **The Innovation Award:** [Team RxReturn](#) – a notification system that reminds patients to dispose of expired medications through label, light, and text messages.
- **The Anti-Stigma Award:** [Team Ally](#) – a social innovation that de-stigmatizes opioid use and enables community responders to make naloxone quickly available when and where it is needed.
- **The Tech Solution Award:** [Team ReadyACCESSviaSMS](#) – an anonymous, SMS-based system that increases access to life-saving resources and information.
- **The Treatment On-Demand Award:** [Team MATmobile](#) – a mobile van with treatment-on-demand for those struggling with opioid use disorder.
- **The Community Building Award:** [Team The 3<sup>rd</sup> Place](#) – a meeting and activity space that acts as a “hub” for those in recovery and offers a safe, welcoming environment.

In addition, the GE Foundation will award \$10,000 to the team that makes the most progress 90 days after the hack-a-thon, along with business acceleration support through the [CAMTech Innovation Platform](#).

The event opened with an Opioid Epidemic Challenge Summit, a series of panel discussions and keynote speeches from 25 distinguished speakers from clinical, government, law enforcement and public policy sectors.

“The stigma associated with opioid misuse is a major hurdle to clear in the fight against the epidemic,” said Governor Charlie Baker, who gave one of the morning’s opening remarks. “The more we can do to treat and react to addiction for what it is, a disease, the better this fight will be for everyone involved.”

To reinforce this notion, hack-a-thon participants heard personal accounts from family members of those with substance use disorder and several individuals in recovery, including former NBA and Boston Celtics player Chris Herren, who shared his own personal story of addiction and recovery.

Other speakers included Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, Michael Botticelli, United States Chief Technology Officer, Megan Smith, and Massachusetts Secretary of Health and Human Services, Marylou Sudders.

Over the next 48 hours, hack-a-thon participants worked around the clock to develop projects that ranged from mobile apps that help improve access to treatment to wearables that can monitor and detect overdoses and automatically dispense appropriate naloxone dosages.

“This was my first hack-a-thon and I really didn’t know what to expect,” said Jessica Moreno, a member of the winning Team Ally. “I originally signed up to be a mentor, but I was so inspired and encouraged by everyone and all of the hacking and innovating, that I joined a team. This was truly a fulfilling weekend and a wonderful experience that I am so glad to have been a part of.”

The opioid epidemic has hit particularly hard in the state of Massachusetts, where 1,379 deaths in 2015 were attributable to a fatal dose of heroin or prescription opioid overdose. That reflects nearly four people per day statewide.

This event is part of GE Foundation’s five-year, \$50 million philanthropic commitment to the Greater Boston community, \$15 million of which will be dedicated to health efforts, increasing access to health for the underserved, particularly those patients requiring care for addictions and behavioral health, and increasing training for specialty care.

“I anticipated this weekend being an energetic and innovative event focused on data-driven solutions, but I quickly learned it was more personal than that,” said David Barash, Executive Director of the Global Health Portfolio and Chief Medical Officer at the GE Foundation “The stories and innovations that came out of this weekend highlighted access to treatment on demand, community connections and obliteration of stigma.”

MGH – through the [Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies \(CAMTech\)](#) and [Global Medicine](#) – brings important domain and innovation process expertise to the opioid addiction space. CAMTech is known for its open innovation programs, including the past partnership with GE Foundation on a [Zika hack-a-thon](#) focused on finding quick and actionable solutions to address that pressing public health crisis and related outbreaks.

“The whole goal of this weekend was to develop innovations that will save lives,” said Elizabeth Bailey, Director of CAMTech at MGH. “The response we saw from participants was inspiring. The diverse composition of teams from various backgrounds really showed the power of cross-disciplinary minds coming together to take meaningful action.”

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[The Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies \(CAMTech\)](#) has a mission to build entrepreneurial capacity and accelerate medical technology innovation to improve health outcomes in low- and

middle-income countries. CAMTech's approach enables co-creation, where innovators across public health, engineering, and business engage with end-users to develop disruptive medical technologies to achieve widespread public health impact. CAMTech's initiatives, including its newly launched [CAMTech Innovation Platform](#) and [CAMTech Accelerator Program](#), help connect and support a global community of innovators working to improve health in developing and emerging markets.

[The Global Medicine Program at Massachusetts General Hospital](#) is an initiative of the Department of Medicine and MGH Global Health that integrates the principles and practice of global health and care for vulnerable populations in order to develop future leaders to advance health equity and strengthen health systems in the United States and around the world. Global Medicine invests in innovative curricula and mutually rewarding partnerships in urban Boston and rural Uganda to create a continuum of service, teaching and research opportunities with a specific focus on underserved populations around the world.

**About GE Foundation:**

The GE Foundation, the philanthropic organization of GE (NYSE:GE), is committed to building a world that works better. We empower people by helping them build the skills they need to succeed in a global economy. We equip communities with the technology and capacity to improve access to better health and education. We elevate ideas that are tackling the world's toughest challenges to advance economic development and improve lives. The GE Foundation is powered by the generosity and talent of our employees, who have a strong commitment to their communities. We are at work making the world work better. Follow the GE Foundation at [www.gefoundation.com](http://www.gefoundation.com) and on Twitter at @GE\_Foundation.

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**Media Contacts**

**GE:**

Sue Bishop

O: 617-443-2991

M: 203-253-2735

[susan.bishop@ge.com](mailto:susan.bishop@ge.com)

**CAMTech**

Amy Wachler, 248-763-1038

[awachler@partners.org](mailto:awachler@partners.org)