

Tech, communications, community resilience innovations awarded at Gun Violence Prevention Hack-a-thon

BOSTON – April 15, 2018 – During the [Gun Violence Prevention Challenge Summit & Hack-a-thon](#), the [Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies](#) (CAMTech) at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) convened over 150 experts in public health, clinical medicine, engineering, design, business, government and community organizing to generate innovations to improve gun violence prevention. At the Edward M. Kennedy Institute on April 13, the Gun Violence Prevention Challenge Summit facilitated a discussion of challenges and provided critical insight into gun violence prevention. The Gun Violence Prevention Hack-a-thon on April 14 – 15 at the MGH Simches Research Center served as an open innovation platform for a diverse community to co-create solutions over a 48-hour period.

Through cross-disciplinary collaboration, mentorship and award incentives, teams fostered ideas into novel innovations with the potential to curb the epidemic of gun violence and improve the lives of survivors. Participants with diverse backgrounds and skill sets pitched over 34 challenges related to gun violence prevention, formed cross-disciplinary teams and presented 10 innovations. CAMTech awarded three \$1,000 prizes to teams in the following categories:

- **Tech Innovation Award:** [Team SCG](#) - an alcohol sensing firearm locking device that uses a breathalyzer and combination lock to replace the existing cable lock
- **Communications Strategy Award:** [Team Good Guys with a Gun](#) - an app-based educational tool that trains gun owners about safe firearm storage
- **Community Resilience Award:** [Team Dream Alive](#) - an online platform that links families and individuals affected by gun violence to mentors and social services

During the Gun Violence Prevention Demo Day on June 15, CAMTech will award \$10,000 and six months acceleration support through the [CAMTech Accelerator Program](#) to the team that makes the most progress 60 days after the Gun Violence Prevention Hack-a-thon.

The three-day-long event opened with the Gun Violence Prevention Challenge Summit. During a series of panel discussions on self-inflicted gun violence, unintentional shootings, gun assaults and mass shootings, 17 experts in public health, clinical medicine, business, government and community organizing provided insight into gun violence. The Gun Violence Prevention Challenge Summit also included keynotes from Police Commissioner William B. Evans and Mayor Martin J. Walsh.

“I hope that some of the information that comes out of this will be implemented in Boston,” Mayor Walsh said.

Dr. Joseph Sakran of Johns Hopkins University, Jody Marchand of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and Joshua McGill, a survivor of the Orlando Pulse Nightclub shooting, shared personal stories of surviving gun violence. Martin Henson of Black Lives Matter - Boston passionately shared how gun violence disproportionately affects communities of color.

Other speakers included Monica Valdes Lupi of the Boston Public Health Commission, Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, Rachel Rodrigues of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, Ruhi Bengali of Everytown for Gun Safety, Kristen Bauer of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, and Mike Weisser, a gun business owner and columnist at *The Huffington Post*.

Following the Challenge Summit, participants in the Gun Violence Prevention Hack-a-thon worked around the clock Saturday and Sunday to develop projects that ranged from gun buyback programs for safe firearm disposal to gun donor stickers on state-issued IDs. CAMTech awarded Christy Charlot, a 22 year old student from Fisher College, and Team Dream Alive the Community Resilience Award.

“The word violence just captured my attention because I’ve had a lot of violent incidents in my life,” Charlot said. “It’s not about winning. It’s about changing lives.”

CAMTech is employing its innovation methodology and public health approach to gun violence as it is a public health emergency. On an average day, [96 Americans are killed by guns](#), and [75 preschoolers are shot dead](#) each year in the United States. There are [22,000 gun suicides](#) each year in the United States.

“It’s a challenge,” Commissioner Evans said. “Every day, that’s how I judge how well I’m doing: by the number of kids who get shot in our city.”

Through the [Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies \(CAMTech\)](#), MGH brings important domain and innovation process expertise to gun violence prevention. CAMTech is known for its open innovation platform, including past initiatives to identify needs and source and accelerate solutions to address the [Opioid Epidemic](#), [Zika](#) and [Ebola](#) outbreaks and chronic illnesses like [diabetes](#) and [Global Cancer](#). CAMTech spurs sustainable solutions from ideation to patient impact.

“What really matters is the people in this room who start a conversation across disciplinary lines,” said Dr. Kristian Olson, Director of CAMTech. “We don’t want an echo chamber, but we want an action step.”

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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 existing [CAMTech Accelerator Program](#), help connect and support a global community of innovators working to improve health for vulnerable populations in low-resource settings.

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Media Contacts



Nicholas Diamond
Marketing & Communications Manager, CAMTech
O: 617.643.8753
M: 248-931-2115
ndiamond@mgh.harvard.edu