

GE Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital, in partnership with the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to Host Hack-a-thon to Combat Opioid Epidemic

- September 9-11, 2016 at District Hall, Boston
- 250 innovators across public health, engineering, business, and design to catalyze disruptive innovations addressing the opioid crisis
- Prizes for the five most promising innovations, including a grand prize to accelerate implementation
- Event and implementation is supported by GE's five-year, \$50 million philanthropic commitment to the Greater Boston community

BOSTON, MA-- June 28, 2016 – GE Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), in conjunction with the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, announced a joint effort to combat Massachusetts's opioid addiction epidemic with a hack-a-thon scheduled for September 9-11, 2016 at District Hall in Boston. GE Foundation's sponsorship of this event is part of its five-year, \$50 million philanthropic commitment to the Boston community, \$15 million of which will be dedicated to health efforts such as the hack-a-thon, increasing access to health for the underserved, particularly those patients requiring care for addictions and behavioral health, and increasing training for specialty care.

During the hack-a-thon, GE Foundation and MGH and will bring together a far-reaching and diverse group of 250 innovators across public health, engineering, business, and design to develop solutions to the opioid epidemic. The event will open with an Opioid Challenge Summit on Friday, September 9, providing a forum for clinical experts, thought leaders, policy makers, patients, families, and law enforcement to identify the greatest unmet needs and challenges in addiction and prevention. On Saturday, September 10, cross-disciplinary teams will rally around these challenges to create disruptive innovations in opioid addiction prevention, treatment and recovery. On Sunday, September 11, teams will make their final presentations to an expert panel of judges, who will give awards to the five most promising innovations. Teams will be supported for 90 days after the event, and, at the conclusion, the single most promising innovation will receive a grand prize to accelerate implementation.

There is an urgent need to address opioid addiction across the country. The United States is experiencing an unprecedented epidemic of drug overdose and poisoning deaths. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the rate of deaths from drug overdoses has increased 137% since 2000, including a 200% increase in the rate of overdose deaths involving opioids such as pain relievers and heroin. The CDC also reports that approximately 78 people in the U.S. die from an opioid overdose each day.

Heroin and fentanyl trade and trafficking across New England is a serious and growing issue. According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 1,379 Massachusetts deaths in 2015 were attributable to a fatal dose of heroin or an opioid-based painkiller – nearly four people per day statewide.

“Open source innovation is an efficient way to focus a lot of brain power and creative thinking around very difficult challenges,” said Dr. David Barash, executive director of Global Health Programs at GE Foundation. “The key to success is not just gathering innovative ideas, but putting the right resources around them to ensure that the best ideas are implemented effectively.”

The hack-a-thon directly aligns with priorities around the opioid crisis and addiction medicine for both Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker and Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh. “We appreciate the efforts of GE Foundation and MGH to tackle this public health crisis and are hopeful that the innovations that come out of the hack-a-thon will make a significant impact and contribute to our fight to combat the opioid epidemic in our communities,” said Governor Baker. Mayor Walsh added, “Addiction is a devastating disease that impacts individuals, families and communities throughout Boston and the Commonwealth. To end this crisis, and the stigma of addiction, it is important that we work together to tackle the crisis on all fronts. GE Foundation is a welcome ally in combating the opioid crisis, and I believe together we can prevent suffering and save lives.”

Key stakeholders in the addiction medicine ecosystem will participate in the event, including representatives from national agencies as well as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Boston Public Health Commission, the MA League of Community Health Centers, along with health providers, educators, law enforcement, families, users, and advocacy groups.

MGH – through CAMTech (Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies) and Global Medicine – brings important domain and innovation process expertise to the opioid addiction space. CAMTech is known for its open innovation programs and most recently held a [Zika hack-a-thon](#) in April, sponsored by GE Foundation and others. During the Zika hack-a-thon, more than 150 global health experts and innovators came together to develop new solutions to address the spread of the Zika virus and related outbreaks.

Applications are now open to participate in the opioid hack-a-thon. To learn more, please visit: <http://www.massgeneralcenterforglobalhealth.org/camtech/opioid-addiction-hack-a-thon/>

About MGH CAMTech and Global Medicine:

The Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies (CAMTech) has a mission to build entrepreneurial capacity and accelerate medical technology innovation to improve health outcomes. 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 [CAMTech Innovation Platform](#) and [CAMTech Accelerator Program](#), help connect and support a global community of health innovators.

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 and on Twitter at [@GE_Foundation](#).

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