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## O'Brien Institute hosts teams from across the globe for innovative health-care competition

Top six teams competed for \$48,000 in cash prizes

August 31, 2016



Over 200 attendees came to watch the 14 international health innovators in this scientific and business pitch competition hosted by the W21C Program in the University of Calgary's O'Brien Institute for Public Health. *Photo by Chris Gee*

Fourteen inspiring innovators and startup entrepreneurs from across the globe completed the biggest "pitch" of their careers to over 200 attendees in hopes of winning a portion of \$48,000 in cash prizes, at this year's Global Healthcare Innovation Academy (GHIA 2016). This year's event was hosted by the Ward of the 21st Century (W21C) Program in the University of Calgary's O'Brien Institute for Public Health at the TELUS Spark Science Centre.

After each of the 14 teams presented an eight-minute scientific pitch on their health innovation, the top six teams — as determined by a diverse portfolio of international experts from research and innovation agencies, to respected entrepreneurs and industry leaders — moved on to present a five-minute business pitch on the second day.

"Each of these teams is working to create profound changes to health and health care around the world," says Dr. John Conly, professor of medicine at the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine and medical director for the university's O'Brien Institute for Public Health's W21C Program. "GHIA provides a launchpad for these incredible innovators to access and connect with expertise in both health care and business, in the hopes of providing better care or services within their respective communities."

The winner of the \$25,000 Grand Prize — the Ward of the 21st Century (Unit 36) Award of Excellence — was a 3D printed vest called Life Vest from St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, by doctors Jennifer Beck and Douglas Campbell. Life Vest is designed to help premature and newborn babies breathe without using ventilation tubes, allowing them to be held by their mothers, and not a ventilation mask, which can cause facial deformities.

Second place was awarded to Switzerland's Amal Therapeutics, which is developing a vaccine to improve the immune response against cancer cells, and third prize went to the Swiss-based Mintaka Medical Research Foundation for their disposable, injectable, heat-stable oxytocin to prevent the death of mothers in developing countries from blood loss during childbirth.

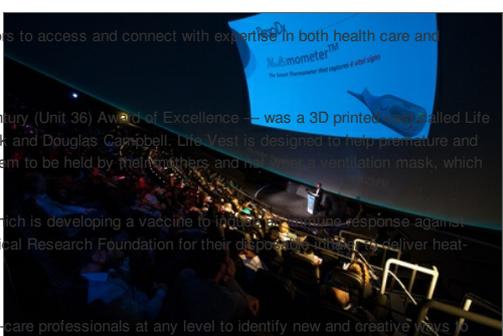
The goal of GHIA is to allow entrepreneurs, researchers and health-care professionals at any level to identify new and creative ways to stimulate change in health-care and health systems delivery. Initially developed by leading health-care organizations in Geneva, Switzerland, the Global Healthcare Innovation Academy has grown into an international collaboration between Switzerland, Canada and Hong Kong.

"GHIA fosters local and international partnerships with the power to spark an exciting new generation of health-care innovation," says Dr. John Reynolds, acting vice-president (research) at the University of Calgary. "We look forward to the advancements that will emerge from the teams' hard work and commitment to the future of health and health care."

All of the 14 scientific pitches, top six business pitches and the keynote presentations from Nicole Verkindt and Suzanne West can be viewed by visiting [www.ghiaevent.com](http://www.ghiaevent.com). A new set of health innovations will be selected at competitions around the world throughout 2017 to participate in the next Global Healthcare Innovation Academy taking place August 2018 in Hong Kong.



The winner of the \$25,000 Ward of the 21st Century (Unit 36) Award of Excellence was Life Vest, a 3D printed vest to help newborn babies breathe, by Drs. Jennifer Beck and Douglas Campbell from St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto. *Photo by Chris Gee*



All 14 competitors presented an eight-minute scientific pitch on the first day of the competition. The top six selected by the jury moved on to present a five-minute business pitch on the second day. *Photo by Chris Gee*





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University of Calgary  
2500 University Dr. NW  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
T2N 1N4

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