[Promising medical innovation teams win $2,000 prizes](#)

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Back row, from left: Open MIC Night organizers and judges included Kimberly Gramm, the David and Marion Mussafer Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer of the Tulane Innovation Institute, Jeff Myers, Dr. Jay Kolls, John Foster, Carolyn Bayer, Austin Reeves, Noel Wang, Shelby Sanderford, Aron Culotta, and Dr. Nassir Marrouche. Front row, from left: Open MIC Night Challenge participants Ryan Reynolds, Leo Williams, Talia Daneshrad, Kalen Hall, Dr. Ala' Assaf, Rishawn Dindial, Kemdi Okafor Alex Suh and Ramesess Akamefula. (Photo provided by Tulane Innovation Institute)

Three promising medical innovation teams got a financial boost as the final winners of the first Open MIC (Medical Innovation Challenge) Night. A partnership between

The Tulane University Innovation Institute, the Office of the Dean of the School of Medicine, and the Deming Department of Medicine, Open MIC Night is an ideation program for medical and healthcare solutions.

First-round winners of the live three-minute pitch contest that was held in March were mentored by expert judges over several weeks. They eventually presented longer pitches for a chance to win an additional $2,000 for the development of their technology.

The three winning teams included:

- **Informuta** (Kalen Hall and Leo Williams) Empowering medical professions with a precision diagnostic using next generation sequencing (NGS) technology and machine learning to make informed decisions, save lives, and pave the way for a future where antimicrobial resistance would be conquered.
- **Diaryz** (Rishawn Dindial) A testament to the power of compassion, technology, and community, Diaryz, the first vertical social network for unpaid family caregivers.
- **Sano Health** (Ryan Reynolds and Talia Daneshrad) An artificial intelligence driven platform empowering healthcare professionals to generate captivating research-based nutrition and social media content.

Held virtually in May, Open MIC Night Round I winners presented their longer, more refined pitches after receiving guidance from mentors, startup training, feedback on their ideas and professional connections. Each team not only showcased their technology— each one tackling complex medical and healthcare problems — but also presented their detailed business model and plans to commercialize their technology during a 15-minute pitch. Teams were judged on six categories including customer discovery, market opportunity and strategy, business model, scalability, investment potential, and overall probability of success.

"We are incredibly grateful for the Innovation Institute for providing us with a valuable opportunity to further develop and refine our groundbreaking idea, bringing it closer to realization," said Kalen Hall and Leo Williams in a statement.

"We were blown away by the caliber of pitches at the competition," said Kimberly Gramm, David and Marion Mussafer Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer at the Tulane Innovation Institute. "Our student entrepreneurs were incredibly prepared and poised, sharing inspiring business ideas. It was fantastic to see the

progress between Round I and Round II that these teams were able to make thanks to TUII programming and expert mentoring."

"These are exciting times. We can't wait to see what these students do next! We may have helped start three major, game-changing ventures," said Dr. Nassir Marrouche, director of the TRIAD Center and professor of medicine at the School of Medicine.

The competition, to be held once per semester going forward, is open to Tulane faculty, staff, and trainees (including PhD students, MD students, residents, fellows, and postdocs) with ideas for audacious, innovative solutions to complex and engaging medical challenges. For more information about future Open MIC Night sessions, contact innovation@tulane.edu.

PhD students Kalen Hall and Leo Williams of Informuta make their pitch at Open MIC Night. Informuta was one of five finalists that were selected to present at Round II.