HEALTHCARE DISPARITIES
PRIZES

We are dedicating special awards, one $2000 prize for each of the four sub-tracks, to the team whose solution is the most promising in addressing healthcare disparities.

Despite major advances in medicine and public health over the past few decades, healthcare disparities are ever-present throughout our society. BIPOC in the United States continue to face tremendous inequities in health and healthcare; they are disproportionately uninsured, they have less access to healthcare, and they receive lower quality healthcare as a result of structural racism. It is also known that patients with intersecting identities (i.e., a trans woman of color) face additional struggles and difficulties in accessing culturally responsive healthcare. Those living in rural and frontier communities also face vast health disparities due to geographic isolation, limited job opportunities and lower socioeconomic status.

Accordingly, minority, LGBTQ and rural populations have a shorter life expectancy, poorer outcomes with treatable diseases, and a higher susceptibility to the preventable ones. Moreover, COVID-19 has exposed a hard-economic and social truth that drives these outcomes: these populations are more likely to work in jobs that expose them to disease, and at less stable jobs with lower pay and poorer or no health coverage. Thus, they are not only more susceptible to contract the virus, but have less access to the care and time off needed to properly treat it.

This persistent inequity stands on its own as worthy of urgent attention, and we find time and again that when we focus our innovation on those impacted by health care inequities, everyone wins from the resulting improvements. At the OHSU Invent-a-thon, we’re dedicated to improving issues in disparity—not just because it’s the morally right thing to do, but because we know that it will result in a healthier and more innovative world for us all.