



[\(/News/February-2017/Meet-the-Hackers-Care-Crew-team.aspx\)](#)

Meet the Hackers: Care Crew team aims to keep seniors healthy at home

06/02/2017 9:00:00 AM | [0 comments \(/News/February-2017/Meet-the-Hackers-Care-Crew-team.aspx\)](#) |

1

What a weekend. Fuelled by collaboration and caffeine, brilliant minds came together January 21-22 at the Fraser Health Hackathon – a first for a B.C. health authority, held in partnership with Simon Fraser University, the City of Surrey and Innovation Boulevard with support from the Health Tech Innovation Foundation, UrbanLogiq, OpenDataBC and TELUS. More than 80 members of the local technology community gathered along with our own experts to find new solutions to some of health care’s biggest challenges.

After two intense days of planning and development, 16 teams presented their prototype solutions to one of nine challenges. Three teams were awarded prize packages for creating solutions focused on:

1. The overdose crisis, from Team First Responders.
2. Clinical decision making to help shift resources from the hospital to community care, from Team Spurious Correlations AI; and
3. Personal health records to help keep seniors healthy at home, from Team Care Crew.

Headed by UBC Master of Health Administration student Christina Chiu, Care Crew is a mobile app developed for families to help support seniors aging at home and help prevent caregiver burnout. It centralizes medication lists, dietary restrictions, symptom tracking and other health information so seniors and their families can easily share information with health care providers and all those involved in the senior's care.

After a medical mission to Liberia during the Ebola crisis in 2014, Christina realized her true passion was closer to home: in seniors care, particularly working with seniors with dementia. The concept for the app came out of last year's Hacking Health Design Challenge at the national e-Health Conference, where it won the People's Choice Award. Christina and her teammates further developed the concept through UBC's Accelerator Program, when they spoke to over 70 families, caregivers, seniors, and organizations to better understand home care.

Care Crew entered their solution into the X Factor category of the Fraser Health Hackathon in order to be in contention for that particular prize: dinner with Fraser Health President and CEO Michael Marchbank and Vice President Philip Barker, an opportunity Christina calls "priceless."

The Care Crew app and other potential solutions from the Fraser Health Hackathon will continue to be developed, and teams are being considered for an opportunity to collaborate further with Fraser Health and the Innovation Boulevard Health Tech Innovation Foundation. A 16-20 week incubator period will allow teams to engage with clinical and operational leadership to refine a solution before presenting it to Fraser Health's executive team.

"As a Master of Health Administration student, I find it so exciting that Fraser Health took the bold step of holding the first ever health authority hackathon and establishing a 20 week incubator program," said Chiu. "This is the direction health care needs to go, to courageously and boldly embrace innovation that is acceptable, appropriate, accessible, safe, and effective."



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[April 2018\(0\) \(/News/April-2018.aspx\)](/News/April-2018.aspx)

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[February 2018\(7\) \(/News/February-2018.aspx\)](/News/February-2018.aspx)

[January 2018\(23\) \(/News/January-2018.aspx\)](/News/January-2018.aspx)

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November 2017(11) (/News/November-2017.aspx)

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