Dear Partners in Innovation:

Today’s graduate students aren’t just studying in classrooms, they’re out in the real world, solving real problems. That requires bold thinking, intense dedication, and – frankly – a lot of help along the way. That’s why we launched the *Innovation in Action: Solutions to Public Health Challenges* competition (IIA): to “bring innovation and entrepreneurship to public health.”

*Innovation in Action* provides hands-on entrepreneurial coaching to University of Michigan students, who use these skills to develop innovations for improving the public’s health. Teams are trained in startup skills that aid idea development, from design thinking to prototyping to pitching. The competition culminates in a final pitch showcasing the teams’ innovations – solutions designed for a direct impact on the world.

Over the last 2 years:
- 37 teams completed the 6-month experience and 25 competed for cash prizes.
- 17 U-M schools and colleges were represented.
- 4 new LLCs were formed.
- 1 patent application was filed.

Each year, the competition finale was dramatic, but the true benefits emerged during the period of creative collaboration that preceded it. Every team rose to the occasion, struggled, grew, and learned beyond expectation. Our students are developing exciting real-world solutions. That’s because IIA provided a safe environment where students could take risks without fear of judgment. Sometimes innovations fail – and that’s an important part of learning, too.

Innovation in Action is not the only social innovation and entrepreneurship competition at U-M and beyond, but it is unique. We are —

- **Transdisciplinary**, engaging students across U-M schools and colleges;
- **Immersive**, giving students six months to experience the peaks and valleys of innovation;
- **Educational**, providing ten learning modules taught by experts in fields varying from prototyping to pitching to patents. And . . .
- **Exciting!** The spirit of friendly but intense competition brought out the best from each team, inspiring them to reach new heights.

We invite you to join us in supporting this extraordinary program that inspires the best thinking, creativity and dedication of our students in a real-world setting to create real solutions to public health challenges. There are many levels of support, all of which allow you to be actively involved.

**Victor J. Strecher, PhD**  
Director, Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship  
Professor, Health Behavior and Health Education  
University of Michigan, School of Public Health

**Ann Verhey-Henke**  
Managing Director, Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship  
University of Michigan, School of Public Health
Our professionally led workshops are part of a new experiential learning framework — modules. These modules provide students with content and structure while deepening each team’s hands-on experience. Learning modules build on each other as students develop skills such as team formation, team cohesion, leadership, prototype development, business planning, and idea pitching. This content is open source and will be available to the U-M community and beyond.

Module 1: Enabling social innovation using design thinking.
Module 2: Putting people at the center of social innovation.
Module 3: Discovering the problem.
Module 4: Creating the solution.
Module 5: Measuring your social impact.
Module 6: Telling a meaningful story.
Module 7: Validating the solution.
Module 8: I think I’m on to something!
Module 9: Startup basics - do I need a lawyer?
Module 10: Looking back and moving forward.
We invite you to sponsor Innovation in Action! IIA is a University of Michigan-wide experience for both graduate and undergraduate students. It is designed to immerse students in a safe, creative environment where they will learn the skills required to solve some of the world’s most complex public health challenges. Through your sponsorship, these students gain a chance to bring these solutions to market. Your investment will advance this trailblazing competition’s capacity to reach and teach U-M’s most innovative students.

Your sponsorship will finance the annual prize pool, cover the development of new learning modules, offset administrative costs, provide seed funding, create internships to give teams protected and funded time over the summer to develop their projects, and extend the competition’s impact by sending active teams to South by Southwest (SXSW), an international gathering of thousands of creatives and entrepreneurs in Austin, TX.

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<th>SPONSOR LEVEL</th>
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CONNECT WITH US

PLEASE CONTACT US TO DISCUSS YOUR ORGANIZATION’S PARTNERSHIP WITH IIA TODAY!

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A look at where our participants go after Innovation in Action: