Entrepreneurship and Preventive Medicine in Global Health

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Purpose
What if there were a way to make public health profitable? What if we could get some of the world’s richest companies and venture capitalists to invest in public health outcomes? One of the largest issues affecting public health practice in a global context is the lack of economic profitability. Unlike traditional medicine, in which investment in research of drug targets for a disease can yield billions of dollars for a private company, a similar investment in public health would not yield as high of a return. Private investors, who currently are driving growth in fields such as medicine and technology, ignore public health, forcing us to rely on governments and philanthropists as benefactors. While this model has worked for the past decades, such a system is not sustainable, however there is hope. With the new wave of entrepreneurship and technology currently spreading across the United States, entrepreneurs are consistently inventing new ways of delivering public health measures to thousands of people worldwide. As leaders in the global health field, we need to be aware of these technological improvements and see how we can leverage and encourage entrepreneurs to focus their interventions on improving health on a global scale.

Meeting Structure
We will meet once a month with experts in the field of business, economics, global health and entrepreneurship. In addition, we hope to invite people currently working in the burgeoning biotechnology scene in the Triangle Area to discuss their innovations and potentially think and learn about how we can apply this in a global or public health context. In addition, we will have teams of attendees partner up and in our final session pitch their ideas to entrepreneurs and investors which may spawn actual public health driven enterprises and encourage others to follow suit. Currently we have interest from faculty and students in Ethics, Medicine, Global Health, Business, and Law, which will allow us to have a wide amount of backgrounds and encourage meaningful interdisciplinary conversations. Furthermore, I believe having such proactive dialogue with tangible outcomes at the end will allow for more students to become knowledgeable about global health and participate on an individual level of making health more equitable for all.

Names of Departments and Students
The Duke University School of Medicine, Duke University Department of Science and Society, Duke Global Health Institute, and the Duke University Fuqua School of Business have all shown interest in working towards making this working group a reality. Students interested in leading this project include: Pratik Doshi, Kunal Shah, Disha Subramaniam, and Janice Wong. Both Pratik and Janice hold Master of Science degrees in Global Medicine and Health Care Management from the University of Southern California and will be the main points of contact as well as the organizers for the working group.

Additional Funding
We would like to apply for additional funding from the Duke India Initiative because one of our goals for this working group was to focus on a specific country and work on public health interventions and entrepreneurial solutions in that country. With such a diverse range of public
health issues facing India such as access to sanitation or limited health education, we believe that the focus of the working group can be tied to developing concrete solutions to some of these issues and having experts in Global Health in India come to speak to us and work with us to develop solutions to these issues.