



MARTY TAM, MD

COHORT 1



Dr. Marty Tam is a Clinical Associate Professor and Associate Fellowship Director for the Internal Medicine Cardiovascular Disease program at MM. He reflected on how the IDP transformed his mindset and professional growth:

“Through the Innovator Development Program, I began with an intervention focused on supporting the transition from internal medicine residency to cardiology fellowship. While the intervention evolved over time, the deeper impact of the IDP was on me personally. Medical training often emphasizes achievement and measurable success, but RISE challenged me to see innovation as an iterative process where learning from failure is just as important as reaching milestones. That mindset shift, moving from a focus on outcomes to a focus on growth, has been transformative for how I now approach my work as both a clinician and an educator.”

“The program created an environment that encouraged risk-taking and adaptation, and it provided a community of peers who brought diverse perspectives. I found great value in stepping outside my own bubble and learning from colleagues who were tackling entirely different problems yet facing many of the same challenges in implementation and leadership. These exchanges broadened how I think about problem-solving and gave me a stronger appreciation for collaboration across disciplines.”

“The IDP also gave me practical tools for leading innovation: how to frame goals, seek feedback, and translate ideas into systems that can be tested and improved. But perhaps most importantly, it reshaped my professional identity. I now see myself not just as someone who develops projects, but as an innovator who can guide teams, embrace uncertainty, and lead change in education and healthcare.”



HYEON JOO, PHD

COHORT 2



Dr. Hyeon Joo was a graduate (PhD) student in the Department of Learning Health Sciences and a software developer in the Department of Anesthesiology. He is currently a cloud consulting director at Oracle. He highlighted the value of the IDP's mentorship and connections:

“Through the Innovator Development Program, I had the opportunity to explore how technology can meaningfully enhance medical education. What began as a machine learning tool for predicting heart failure evolved into a web-based educational platform to help clinicians and learners strengthen heart failure recognition. While building technology was exciting, the most transformative part of the IDP was how it shaped my growth as an innovator and educator.

What made the program truly impactful was the connections it fostered. Through mentorship and collaboration with educational experts, I learned how to turn a technical prototype into a tool grounded in learning principles. Their guidance pushed me to think critically about outcomes, usability, and real-world impact. Working with the diverse cohort also exposed me to new perspectives and creative problem-solving. These relationships created a supportive network that continues to influence how I innovate, collaborate, and lead today.

The IDP program also gave me the mindset and skills to guide complex projects—from setting clear goals to balancing technical possibilities with educational value. The combination of mentorship, peer collaboration, and structured support gave me the confidence to grow as both an educator and a technological innovator. Even now, the lessons and relationships from IDP continue to shape the way I approach my work and future interventions.”



ALTON JOHNSON JR., DPM

COHORT 3

Dr. Alton Johnson Jr. is a Clinical Assistant Professor, Podiatrist, Podiatric surgeon and Wound Care Specialist in the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at the University of Michigan Medical School. He described how the IDP sharpened his adaptability and propelled his intervention's scalability:

“The Innovator Development Program (IDP) profoundly shaped my professional growth, broadening my approach to innovation and equipping me with practical skills that reach well beyond my original intervention. Being part of a diverse, interdisciplinary cohort encouraged me to examine my ideas from perspectives outside my own specialty. The feedback, which was often constructive and unexpected, helped me transform my diabetic foot examination training tool into MiVEST (Michigan Virtual Examination for Skills Training), which eventually evolved into a surgical-focused virtual reality tool with applications across multiple specialties. This journey directly led to securing a \$100,000 GME Innovation Fund grant, a milestone that traces back to my experience with RISE.”

“The IDP offered far more than just intervention development assistance; they provided an invaluable network of peers and mentors who guided me through the realities of implementing change within a healthcare system. Through the program, I honed essential skills in pitching ideas, effective networking, building collaborative teams, and defining clear value propositions. Importantly, the IDP also shifted my mindset: I learned that innovation requires adaptability, continuous stakeholder engagement, and a focus on user experience—principles that differ fundamentally from clinical research. The program’s unique environment fostered creativity and risk-taking, and the six-month check-in offered a pivotal chance to reassess, pivot, and receive targeted multidisciplinary feedback.”

“The ripple effects of my intervention extended beyond my own career, as fellows, medical students, and colleagues began using my approaches in their own teaching. Feedback from non-healthcare professionals—ranging from branding suggestions to interface design tips—made my innovation more scalable and accessible. Ultimately, the IDP gave me the confidence, strategy, and supportive community to lead new initiatives on a larger scale and inspired me to pursue further studies in health professions education.”



ANDREW WONG, MD

COHORT 3



Dr. Andrew Wong was an Internal Medicine Chief Resident at MM and currently is a Clinical Instructor and National Clinical Scholars Program Fellow at UM. He credited the IDP with catalyzing his scholarship and broadening his national impact:

“I participated in the Innovator Development Program as a resident, and it was truly a turning point in how I thought about myself as both an innovator and an educator. Receiving feedback from faculty and peers across career stages was particularly meaningful—it validated that my intervention had real impact, and it offered fresh perspectives on how to refine and advance my work. Learning from prior cohorts’ interventions and seeing how they leveraged the program also helped me understand how to navigate the network and maximize opportunities.”

“One of the most impactful areas for me was learning how to translate ideas into scholarship. While I was already experienced in implementing interventions, the IDP helped me take the crucial next step, transforming those ideas into high-quality manuscripts that could advance the field of medical education. Through tailored mentorship in statistical analysis and strategies for publication, I developed the confidence to disseminate my work broadly. Those skills became foundational and continue to underpin my daily research and teaching efforts.”

“The program also expanded the visibility of my work beyond Michigan. I am actively working to scale my RISE intervention (which was initially piloted at UM only) nationally at 4 different partner institutions across the nation (e.g., UCLA, UT Austin, WashU, Western Michigan University) in the 2025-2026 academic year.”

“In addition, after experiencing increased exposure of my intervention on LinkedIn, the HonorHealth team in Phoenix invited me to serve as a visiting scholar focused on AI in medical education. I was also invited to speak at the Michigan Medicine Global Executive Education Program. These opportunities fostered professional connections—including a grant-writing collaboration with fellow cohort member Vitaliy Popov—that would not have been possible without the IDP. This year, I also received funding from the Center for Academic Innovation for a related project using AI to detect bias in medical trainee evaluations.”

“Looking back, the IDP stands out as a pivotal force in my career, equipping me with practical skills, mentorship, and a supportive community that has challenged and propelled me further as a medical educator and innovator.”



KATIE GRZYB, MHA

COHORT 4



Ms. Katie Grzyb is the Continuous Improvement Specialist Lead in the Department of Internal Medicine at MM. She emphasized how the IDP strengthened her collaboration skills and expanded her leadership development:

“The Innovator Development Program (IDP) gave me the perspective, structure, and mentorship to think differently—especially in connecting equity and patient safety in new ways. It pushed me to imagine what it would look like if every resident at our institution approached patient safety and quality improvement (QI) through an equity lens. Framing my work in this way directly aligns with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) requirement that residents demonstrate competence in using QI methods, including those focused on reducing health disparities and improving care.”

“Equally powerful was the collaborative environment. The IDP created space for creativity, visioning, and honest exchange. Being surrounded by other innovators tackling their own challenges pushed me to think bigger about scaling my idea. Conversations with peers sparked fresh perspectives, and the one-on-one mentorship from the IDP Leadership team helped me sharpen my ideas and gain practical tools to move them forward. The collective energy made it easier to take risks, refine my work, and make progress that would not have been possible on my own.”

“Looking back, I see the IDP as pivotal to my growth as both an educator and an innovator. It gave me confidence, skills, and a lasting community that continues to support me. My work is already gaining recognition across Michigan Medicine, but the deeper impact has been on how I think and lead. The IDP is a place where creativity and collaboration thrive, and the lessons I learned will continue to guide me throughout my career.”



RACHEL GOTTLIEB-SMITH, MD

COHORT 4

Dr. Rachel Gottlieb-Smith is a Clinical Associate Professor and Director of Education for the Pediatric Neurology Division in the Department of Pediatrics at MM. She expressed that the IDP advanced her leadership skills and supported program expansion:

“The most significant personal growth I experienced was in learning how to lead an innovation. Previously, my leadership skills were rooted in roles as an educator—directing programs, classrooms, and curricula—and as a manager. Through the IDP, I gained a new skillset for developing and leading an innovation: PLAN-R (Precision Learning Across Neurology – Resident Education), my IDP intervention, with a particular emphasis on change management. The program taught me how to create a vision for change and share it effectively through concise elevator pitches, impactful presentations, and thoughtful stakeholder engagement that built buy-in and momentum for the work.

A keen strength of the IDP is its leadership team, whose mentorship, support, and guidance were invaluable. They also facilitated critical connections with the Data Office and the Learning Health Sciences team—collaborations that proved essential for advancing this work.

The IDP further provided dedicated time to collaborate with learners and colleagues across disciplines, including child neurology (with resident involvement), adult neurology, pediatrics (Intensive Care), and Information Technology. Together, we are now expanding PLAN-R to four additional institutions: Boston Children’s Hospital, the University of Rochester, the University of Virginia, and Colorado Children’s Hospital. This expansion will broaden the intervention’s impact on trainee education. I also recently received a grant from the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) to support this work.”

These personal accounts illustrate the lasting influence of the program on participants’ growth, perspectives, and professional trajectories. Building on these stories of individual development, we next highlight the tangible scholarly outputs and academic achievements that further demonstrate the impact of RISE IDP participation.