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At the 2011 Emerging Issues Forum on healthcare innovation, Clayton Christensen, Harvard Professor and author of *The Innovator’s Prescription: A Disruptive Solution for Health Care*, defined disruptive innovation as a way industries can transform to provide increasingly affordable and accessible products and services to consumers. These innovations allow a whole new group of people access to a product or service that was historically only accessible to consumers of a certain income or skill.

**Achieving Disruptive Innovation through Contests**

Last month I presented on a panel about Contest Philanthropy at the North Carolina Network of Grantmakers annual meeting. Along with representatives from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and Bull City Forward, I was able to share how IEI entered down the path of contest philanthropy, identifying new and promising ideas along the way.

In 2011, IEI held its first Emerging Issues Prize for Innovation, a program now in its third year. The competition was open to college students from across the state and topic was the prevention of childhood obesity. The winning idea was an accelerometer that allows children to track their activity and win points.
The winners created a company called **Sqord** and went on to win other state and national prize competitions and were recently one of ten companies out of over 900 accepted into last year’s Techstars program.

**Sqord, a game designed to encourage youth to be more active, is a company that started from IEI’s Emerging Issues Prize for Innovation.**

**Rural Focus**

With disparities in health status and access to health care between people living in rural areas and those in urban areas, cultivating and scaling smaller and simpler innovations can make all the difference in these communities.

Last year, the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust launched the New Rural: Innovations in Rural Health Awards. The winning idea, from a community-based mental health and substance abuse provider, was a mobile medication program designed to reduce hospitalization costs for seriously mentally ill individuals in rural Pennsylvania. Their skill-building program begins with an in-person visit to the patient for every dose of medication ordered, followed by a daily visit and finally scaling down to a weekly phone call before patients are discharged from the program. In its first year, the program helped reduce hospitalization costs in the area by more than $1.3 million. The Trust is working to implement this innovative mobile medication program in rural North Carolina this year.

Whether or not your organization has the capacity for contest philanthropy, we can all share the innovations
and ideas we come across. That is why IEI, in partnership with Duke University’s Sanford School and Center for Child and Family Policy, invites you to participate in our upcoming webinar, *Strengthening Health Systems in Resource-Limited Areas -- Lessons from rural South Africa and rural North Carolina*, on April 9 from 3 to 4 p.m. The webinar will highlight examples of rural health innovation and partnerships, featuring Dr. Mosa Moshabela (Rural Health at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa) and Dr. R.W. "Chip" Watkins (Community Care of NC, Asheville, NC). Dr. Watkins’ program is one of four finalists of the 2014 New Rural: Innovations in Rural Health Award. Click *here* to learn more.

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