MEDTECH INNOVATOR

2027 Applicant Info Session #3

Thursday, November 23, 2026 - 5 - 6 PM PT

📽️ Recording
💻 Presentation
📝 Application Link

Speakers

- **Nicole Black** | Program Director at MedTech Innovator | Email |LinkedIn
- **Tyson Jang**| Chief Strategy Officer at Tau Medical | LinkedIn
- **Kentaro Hayashi** | CEO at HICKY | LinkedIn

Key Takeaways

- **One global program this year.** MedTech Innovator's U.S. and APAC programs have merged into a single MedTech Innovator Accelerator with one application. Applicants who previously applied to either program should select "MedTech Innovator Accelerator" on the application page.
- **Applications are due December 1.** Starting an application now puts you on the reminder list and lets you preview every question and attachment, such as financials or letters of support.
- **Most of the program is virtual.** The only required in-person event is Innovator Summit (June 15–17, Los Angeles), where at least one person per company must attend. Pitching at Radar Forum in person is encouraged but optional, with an APAC-friendly virtual pitch event available.
- **Applying is valuable even if you don't get in.** Every application receives detailed expert feedback, and reapplying signals commitment and coachability to the selection team.

About MedTech Innovator

MedTech Innovator is the world's largest global accelerator for medical technologies, now entering its 14th year. CEO Paul Grand founded it based on his work as an investor at RCT Ventures, to give MedTech startups one ecosystem for support across regulatory, product design, reimbursement and more.

Impact to date

- 957 alumni companies across MedTech Innovator and its sister program, BioTools Innovator
- 60+ acquisitions and 600+ products on the market

- $12B+ in follow-on funding
- 90%+ of companies still in business or acquired

2026 cohort

- 1,800+ companies applied for 65 spots, so accepted companies represent roughly the top 3.5% of applicants.
- The cohort represented 18 countries, including companies from APAC, Europe, Israel and the Middle East, across early-stage, mid-stage, AHA and ASPS groups.

Who should apply

MedTech Innovator supports devices, diagnostics (especially patient-facing) and digital health. Strategic interest areas include innovative device designs, surgical and endoscopy tools, implantable devices, safety mechanisms, tissue grafts and adhesives, interventional tools, consumer healthcare, workflow optimization, imaging technologies, patient monitoring, patient-facing diagnostics and biometric measurements. The test is whether your technology improves the lives of patients, clinicians or hospitals. Browse MTI's full portfolio to see similar companies. *Life science tools companies whose customers are pharma or other life science companies should look at the sister program, BioTools Innovator.*

Sponsors

- **Founding:** Johnson & Johnson MedTech and RCT Ventures
- **Platinum:** Asahi Intecc, BD, Dexcom, Edwards Lifesciences, LivaNova, Olympus, Samsung, Solventum and Zimmer Biomet
- **Specialty Tracks:** American Heart Association and American Society of Plastic Surgeons
- **Vantage Hub:** ASPR and BARDA
- **Gold, Silver, Bronze and Ecosystem:** Service provider and ecosystem partners, including CBSET, Greenlight Guru, NAMSA, PDV, Prolucid, Proxima, RQM+, Stifel and others

Program Benefits

Expert Feedback

- Each application is reviewed by 4–8 experts, drawn from an ecosystem of more than 600 investors, strategics, clinicians and KOLs, regulatory and reimbursement experts, and subject matter experts.
- Feedback the reviewers allow MTI to share is sent back to every applicant in the spring, whether or not they are accepted.
- Roughly the top 10% of applicants (200 companies) are invited to pitch. Invitations go out from mid-February through mid-to-late March.
- At Radar Forum, more than 200 judges (investors, strategics, KOLs and SMEs) give in-person feedback. Companies pitch to 5–7 judges per round across multiple rounds. Kentaro received

feedback from about 30 judges, organized into detailed score charts, which revealed issues his team hadn't noticed and reshaped his program goals.
- Tyson's team pitched virtually from South Korea. The format mirrors the in-person rounds, and his team got feedback on slide layout and value proposition from relevant judges, including investors and Edwards Lifesciences.

Radar Forum

April 6–8, 2027 in Washington, D.C.

A full three-day conference, not just a pitch event: keynotes (last year included FDA CDRH Director Michelle Tarver), speakers from CMS, FDA's TAP program and the AMA, Ask the Experts sessions, receptions, and representatives from strategic partners such as J&J, Edwards and BD.

- Nicole recommends pairing the trip with other meetings in the area, such as hospitals, investors or board members.
- Companies that can't travel can opt into a virtual pitch event. An APAC-time-zone-friendly virtual session will be offered.
- No in-person APAC pitch events (like past Singapore and South Korea events) are planned at the moment, though that could change.

Mentorship

- Every early-stage company is matched with at least one strategic mentor from a Founding, Platinum or Specialty Track partner, such as J&J, Edwards Lifesciences or the American Heart Association for cardiology, LivaNova for neuro, Solventum (new) for dental and wound healing, Dexcom for monitoring, Olympus for urology and GI, Zimmer Biomet for ortho, and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons for surgical and regenerative technologies.
- Companies also get targeted introductions to subject matter experts matched to the regulatory, reimbursement, product design, manufacturing and quality milestones set during goals calls in May.
- Specialty track companies also receive track mentorship through ASPS, AHA and BARDA.
- Kentaro's team was matched with Asahi Intecc (strategic), RQM+ for regulatory, and PDV for product design and manufacturing. RQM+ helped them tackle regulatory and reimbursement together, saving significant cost and time compared with hiring consultants directly.

Value Program

- An intensive Value Workshop, including a mock Value Analysis Committee and breakout discussions, and worksheet covering stakeholders, clinical, economic and workflow value propositions, decision makers, evidence generation and competitive positioning.
- Each company then works with about two value coaches in personalized coaching sessions to address the gaps it identified, across value proposition, stakeholders, evidence generation, reimbursement and healthcare economics.

- Both alumni called it a highlight. Tyson's team had coaches in the U.S. and France, which helped them plan reimbursement for an upcoming European pivotal (CE Mark) study. Kentaro said many cohort members rated it the best part of the program and that its MedTech-specific focus sets MTI apart from other accelerators.

Educational Curriculum

- **MTI Live (Thursdays):** Panel-style webinars covering regulatory, reimbursement, fundraising (including SAFEs, notes, venture debt and non-dilutive funding such as BARDA, DARPA, NSF and NIH), global regulatory strategy, clinical study design, commercialization and more.
- **SPARK workshops (Tuesdays):** Interactive sessions led by partner experts, with breakout rooms. Many partners also offer the cohort discounts or free one-on-one sessions.
- **Office Hours:** Program focused sessions with the cohort.
- Sessions are generally 9–10:30 AM PT / 12–1:30 PM ET. Most are optional and all are recorded with summaries posted; only a few, such as the Value Workshop, are required. More sessions in APAC-friendly time slots are planned for next year, especially U.S. regulatory and reimbursement 101 topics.
- Tyson's favorite was "FDA Resources for your Regulatory Submission: TAP, BDD, and Beyond." Kentaro valued the fundraising sessions (such as "Capital Ready: Raising Money in a Selective Market" and "Structuring the Perfect MedTech Round") and "Lights, Camera, Traction! Turning Your Innovation into a 1-Minute Video," where past cohort members shared how they made their videos.
- Tyson's team met with many vetted service providers, including Prolucid, RQM+, NAMSA, Stifel, Greenlight Guru and CBSET, and went on to contract with RQM+.

Additional Resources

- PitchBook access for investor and valuation research
- OpenRounds Portal, MTI's platform for posting your raise and getting matched with interested investors
- Free trials of market research and payment analytics platforms
- Complimentary AdvaMed Accel membership
- Project support from MTI Fellows
- Partner perks such as AWS credits and a free year of MedTech Women membership, available to alumni too

Competitions & Visibility

- More than $700,000 in prize funding, with separate early-stage and mid-stage competitions. Tyson won $25,000 in the mid-stage grand prize competition and received personal pitch coaching from Paul Grand.
- Pitch and showcase slots at leading conferences, including The MedTech Conference.

- Social media amplification (including 1-minute videos), and a cohort graduation announcement on the Nasdaq Tower in Times Square (for the second year in a row).
- MTI pins at events help cohort members connect with alumni, partners and investors. Two companies met their first investors at Radar Forum this year.

Community & Leadership Pods

- Small leadership pods of 6–7 founders and leaders meet regularly to share wins, challenges and referrals. Kentaro's pod won the Most Valuable Pod (MVP) award and still meets every other week after the program.
- Tyson described his pod as a "safe space" for honest conversations that are hard to have inside your own company, with members spanning early-stage to commercial companies.
- This year's pods were featured on the Medtech Innovator Podcast Mini Series with Project Medtech. Listen here: Spotify | Apple Podcasts | YouTube | Project Medtech Website

2027 Timeline

- **December 1:** Applications due
- **December – April:** Diligence and review
- **Mid-February – late March:** Pitch invitations sent
- **April 6–8 – Radar Forum (Washington, D.C.):** In-person pitch event, with virtual options available
- **May:** Final cohort selected, followed by goals calls
- **June 15–17 – Innovator Summit (Los Angeles):** Required kickoff (at least one person per company). In 2026, 40 alumni led 24 C-Suite Circle topics, and 70 partners led 26 breakout discussions and 24 Peak Expert Chats.
- **June – October:** Virtual program
- **October 3–6 – The MedTech Conference (San Francisco):** Finals and showcase, hosted by AdvaMed

Eligibility & Program Fee

- **Early to mid-stage startups.** Early-stage companies are usually pre-revenue, preclinical or in early clinical trials, and have raised under $15M. Mid-stage companies have generally raised over $15M and are in later clinical trials, PMA, or commercial. MTI assigns your stage based on your application, so just be transparent about funding and revenue.
- **Funding:** Generally pre-seed to Series C. Past participants have raised as much as $250M or brought in $10–20M in annual revenue.
- **Incorporation:** Companies must be incorporated by the program start.
- **Runway:** Enough runway to execute on current milestones.
- **Evidence:** Prototypes and some proof of concept evidence, such as computational modeling, bench testing or preclinical work. Letters of support from hospitals or KOLs are encouraged.

- **Leadership:** A senior team member must lead participation. This does not have to be the CEO (Tyson, a CSO, led for Tau Medical), and other team members can join relevant sessions.
- **Program fee:** There is no fee to apply. The program fee is $15,000 if accepted, but every 2026 cohort company received a scholarship of at least $7,500. Payment options include cash upfront, two installments or a $50,000 SAFE, and deferral may be available case by case. The AHA and ASPS specialty tracks require a $50,000 SAFE, and Vantage is fully covered by a BARDA scholarship. See the Q&A for details.
- **When to apply:** Now. Partner interests change year to year, the feedback helps you improve, and reapplying shows the team you're serious and coachable.

Speaker Perspectives

Kentaro Hayashi, HICKY (Early Stage, MTI '26)

- Surgeon and CEO of Tokyo-based HICKY, which is developing a device to treat central sleep apnea in heart failure patients. The company grew out of the Japan Biodesign program.
- Got in on his fourth application. Still in R&D, with clinical trials planned in the next one to two years.
- Won the STAR Mentee award, and his leadership pod won MVP.
- Attended most webinars live despite the 1 AM start in Japan, noting that late-night sessions never conflicted with other meetings.

Tyson Jang, Tau Medical (Mid Stage, MTI '26)

- Chief Strategy Officer of Seoul-based Tau Medical, which is developing a Class III, PMA-track cardiac implant for tricuspid regurgitation.
- Clinical stage and pre-commercial when it applied. Got in on its first application after Glen Lim encouraged the team to apply at a conference in Seoul.
- Mid-stage finalist, and won $25,000 in the mid-stage grand prize competition.
- Called the program fee a small investment compared with what the company got out of it.

Q&A Highlights

- **Q: How does mentor interaction work if you're remote, especially in APAC?**
  - Almost everything is virtual, so location isn't a barrier. Kentaro said the only challenge is scheduling across time zones, and mentors were flexible, often meeting in your morning and their evening every two to three weeks.
- **Q: Can you explain the $15,000 program fee and the SAFE option?**
  - There is no fee to apply, and every applicant receives feedback from 4–8 reviewers. If accepted, the program fee is $15,000, but needs-based scholarships are available and the entire 2026 cohort received scholarships of at least $7,500. The fee can be paid in cash, upfront or in two equal installments, or through a $50,000 SAFE note with terms executed before acceptance. Deferral may be available case by case. The American Heart Association and American Society of Plastic Surgeons specialty tracks require a

$50,000 SAFE, and the Vantage program fee is covered by a 100% scholarship from BARDA. The fee covers the five-month curriculum, mentor matching, registration and presentations at Innovator Summit and The MedTech Conference, OpenRounds, the Innovator Portal and prize eligibility.

- **Q: Does my product need to be used by a large number of consumers before I apply?**
  - No. You can apply at a very early stage, before you're commercial. Most companies in the program are pre-commercial.
- **Q: What stage were the alumni's companies at when they applied?**
  - Tau Medical was clinical stage and pre-commercial, with no other products on the market but several products in its flagship platform. HICKY was still in R&D, with clinical trials planned in the next one to two years. Kentaro noted that some cohort members were only in their first or second year, so very early-stage companies are accepted.
- **Q: Should I attach my pitch deck or a general company introduction to the application?**
  - Submit your general company introduction deck. If you're selected for a 2027 pitch event, MTI will request a separate pitch deck.
- **Q: Will there be in-person pitch events in APAC, like the Singapore and South Korea events this year, or do I have to fly to the U.S.?**
  - No in-person APAC pitch events are planned at the moment, though that could change. Attending Radar Forum in person is encouraged, since it's a full three-day conference with panels, Ask the Experts sessions and receptions. If you can't travel, an APAC-time-zone-friendly virtual pitch event will be offered, and you'll meet most of the same people in person at Innovator Summit. Regional APAC meetups are also planned.
- **Q: If the U.S. market isn't an immediate priority, should I still apply or wait?**
  - Nicole recommended applying now. Unless a non-U.S. regulatory hurdle is your main focus, MTI can help with product design, manufacturing scale-up, reimbursement and regional strategy. Strategic mentors and value coaches are based around the world, and Glen added that former APAC program mentors are now part of the global program.
- **Q: Does participating in the co11ab program affect eligibility for the Accelerator, or vice versa?**
  - No. They are separate programs, and taking part in one doesn't affect eligibility for the other. co11ab is a Singapore market access program for later-stage companies, while the Accelerator provides growth support, partner access and mentorship. The next co11ab cycle runs in 2027, and there is a waitlist on the Innovator website.
- **Q: Are point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) training devices used by hospital workshop teams, rather than devices that touch patients, a good match?**
  - Yes. MTI sees many training tools. Check the portfolio for similar companies.
- **Q: Will webinars be on U.S. time zones?**
  - Generally 9–10:30 AM PT / 12–1:30 PM ET, but not all. MTI plans to schedule more sessions in APAC-friendly time slots next year, especially U.S. regulatory and reimbursement 101 topics. All sessions are recorded with summaries posted. Kentaro attended most of them live at around 1 AM in Japan.

- **Q: Now that the program is global, will webinars also cover APAC regulatory and market access?**
    - Yes, MTI plans to cover APAC more. This year included a global regulatory strategy webinar, and Glen said past APAC webinars on regulatory strategy across the U.S., China and APAC and on commercialization in APAC may be folded into the global program.
- **Q: Does an AI-powered workflow that speeds up regulatory submissions for MedTech products qualify?**
    - The criteria is technology that improves the lives of patients, clinicians or hospitals. If your customers are MedTech companies, you're probably not eligible, but you may be a fit as an MTI partner. If your product can work directly with hospitals, it could qualify as digital health.
- **Q: Can an Indonesia-based startup apply if it serves U.S.-headquartered companies' Indonesian operations, or must it plan to sell in the U.S.?**
    - Yes, you can apply. The U.S. should be somewhere on your roadmap, but it doesn't need to be your top priority right now.
- **Q: Will the deadline be extended?**
    - If you've started an application by December 1 but need a few more days to finish, the team will usually give you a short extension. This won't be announced publicly.
- **Q: How should we handle IP in the application, especially for patents not yet filed?**
    - Tyson's team focused the application on what was already filed. You can ask MTI not to pair you with a specific pod member or value coach if there's a foreseeable conflict. Many mentors, especially service providers, will sign NDAs. Both alumni said the program felt like a safe space for sharing.
- **Q: We've completed clinical trials, are running more paid trials and earn revenue from other industries. What stage should we classify ourselves as?**
    - You don't have to decide. MTI places companies in the early or mid-stage cohort based on funding raised, revenue, expected revenue and pathway stage, so be as transparent as possible in your application.
- **Q: Are there two different applications?**
    - No. There is one application this year: select "MedTech Innovator Accelerator."