




# Recovery Alberta

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES



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# Navigating Research at Recovery Alberta: Evolving Supports and Processes



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# Navigating Research at Recovery Alberta: Evolving Supports and Processes

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**Knowledge Bites Lunch 'n' Learn  
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# Research at Recovery Alberta

- Research is highly valued by Recovery Alberta, and we are committed to supporting investigators
- Receive ~80 research requests related to mental health and addiction per year (Health Systems Access [HSA] data)
- With changes in the health system, our role in facilitating research is evolving
  - Working closely with HSA as some activities shift
  - Working with the Centre of Recovery Excellence (CoRE) in the research space
- Opportunity to develop an integrated organizational research process



# Research Services Team

- Who we are: small team with a provincial scope
- Our role: to operate as a central point of access for all matters related to conducting research with Recovery Alberta



# Research Facilitation Functions

- Establish and maintain research submission and review processes
  - Maintain collaboration with Health Systems Access to provide approvals
- Consultations on research-related inquiries
- Help navigate the research environment in Recovery Alberta
  - Support external and internal researchers
- Facilitate sharing of research findings with Recovery Alberta staff, leaders, and physicians



# Fundamental Goals of Review Process

## 1. Assess the impact of the project on organizational resources

- Feasibility of request within context of staff capacity and workflow
- Availability and quality of data for research purposes

## 2. Determine any risk to staff or patients

- Ensure issues such as maintaining confidentiality and upholding separation between research and clinical care are appropriately addressed and risks mitigated
- Confirm legislative compliance and security of data release
- Identify and address organizational risk

## 3. Act as a liaison to help research team navigate Recovery Alberta environment

- Connect team with appropriate clinical/operational leads to ensure clear communication and facilitate implementation, knowledge exchange, and knowledge translation

**\*\*NOT intended to replace other mechanisms and review processes already in place\*\***



# Structure of Review Process

- Intake: 1) through HSA/NACTRC; 2) direct connection with Research Services Team
- Two-stage approach:
  - **Expedited review** for studies with minimal impact, as determined by RA (e.g., most data requests, recruitment posters)
  - **Full committee review** for studies with higher levels of RA involvement (e.g., clinical trials)
- Aim for ~5-10 committee members:
  - Representatives to cover expertise in data, navigation of system and research processes, service/care environments, and leadership
  - Ad hoc support, e.g., other program areas, analytic decision support teams, privacy, medical leadership
- Proposed representation:
  - Director, Knowledge, Evidence & Innovation
  - Program Lead, Applied Research & Innovation
  - Mental Health – Inpatient
  - Mental Health – Outpatient
  - Addiction
  - Correctional Health Services
  - Operational Support Services
  - Senior Medical Advisors

# Review Panel Criteria

## Expedited Review

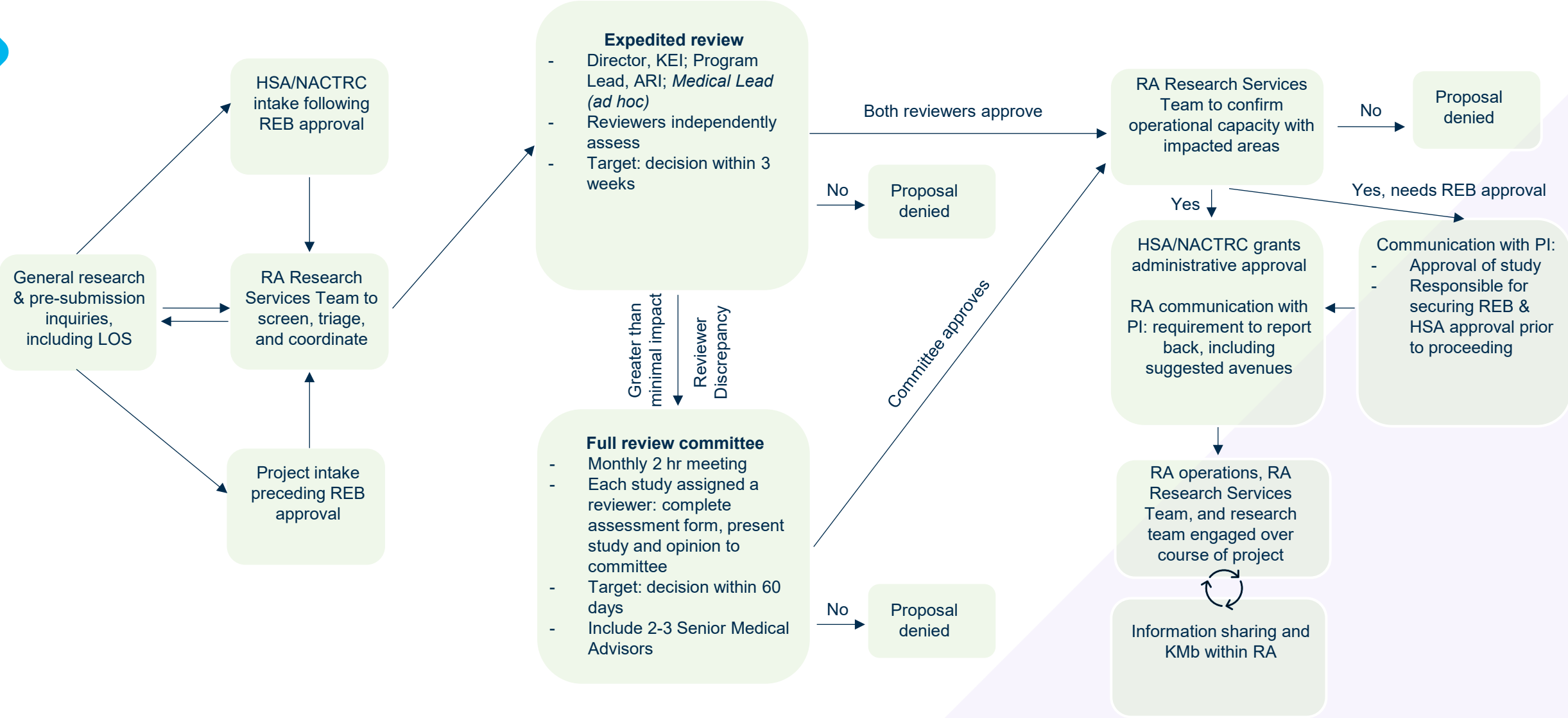
- **Not patient-facing**
  - e.g., secondary use of data (chart reviews, population health studies), interviews with staff
- **Minimal operational impact**
  - e.g., recruitment posters
- **Non-invasive health research**
  - e.g., surveys or qualitative research with participants capable of consent, educational intervention studies

\* The Research Services Team will work with impacted operational areas to confirm capacity and feasibility.

## Full Committee

- **Invasive health research: clinical intervention studies, including clinical trials**
  - e.g., administration of drugs, devices, procedures, collection of blood or other specimens
- **Research connected to anyone on review panel/COI**
- **Larger impact to specialized populations**
  - e.g., settings such as psychiatric ICU, forensics

# Proposed Review Workflow



# Intake Form



## Study Summary

*Please provide an overview of your research question(s) and proposed project plan.*

## Study Population

*Participants to be recruited.*

## Operational Impacts

*Please list all planned activities that impact Recovery Alberta, including details related to sites, staff, and patients or clients, and implications for service delivery. Estimated time commitment will be captured in the next section. If you have already had discussions with anyone at Recovery Alberta about the project, please also list their name and contact information.*

## Expected Time Commitment

*Please provide a description and estimate of the time commitment required from Recovery Alberta staff and patients.*

## Data Impacts

*If requesting data, indicate the required database/system/repository.*

## Knowledge Mobilization Plans

*Please indicate any planned outputs and potential channels to disseminate findings within the health system.*

- Will evolve with time and experience
- Tip: really estimate the time and resources required from Recovery Alberta – who is involved and in what capacity
- Currently can be requested from:  
[RecoveryAB.Research@recoveryalberta.ca](mailto:RecoveryAB.Research@recoveryalberta.ca)



# Requests for Data

- Data disclosure agreements continue to be facilitated through HSA
  - When HSA receives requests for data extracts involving Recovery Alberta sites, programs, or patients, they will be routed to us for operational approval; HSA will continue to issue agreements.
- Data extracts and linkages
  - Once approvals are in place, projects will be assigned and managed through the analytics and reporting team



# Tips for Researchers

- Reach out early – the sooner, the better!
  - Particularly important with increasing impact on Recovery Alberta resources: let's work together to ensure feasibility upfront to help the operational approval process run smoothly
  - Please allow 4-6 weeks lead time for letters of support
- Clearly identify operational impacts
  - Sites, staff, patients or clients, implications for service delivery
  - Estimate of time commitment from Recovery Alberta staff and patients
  - Data required and source
- REB-approved studies still follow the existing pathway, but if coming to RA directly, fill out intake form
  - Will be online; for now, please reach out to [RecoveryAB.Research@recoveryalberta.ca](mailto:RecoveryAB.Research@recoveryalberta.ca)



# Research Consultations and Navigation

- Point of contact for general research questions originating from researchers either internal or external to Recovery Alberta
- Aim to provide guidance on research administration, data holdings, and letters of support
- Help navigate research opportunities
- Act as a networking hub
  - Connect researchers with appropriate subject matter experts and clinical/operational leads, facilitate connections between investigators with similar interests, identify those with required methodological expertise, and link to patient and family advisors
- Help facilitate clear communication, implementation, and knowledge exchange



# Knowledge Mobilization

- Significant opportunity to increase knowledge mobilization
- Establishing and maintaining forums for investigators to share research findings with Recovery Alberta staff, leaders, and physicians
- Expectation to bring results back
- Aim to build in dissemination plans with review process
  - Ensuring connections between researchers and operations
  - Planning for appropriate dissemination channels upfront
  - Dedicated staff role to facilitate knowledge exchange



# Research Supports Summary

## What's changing?

- Better integration of research and operations, from project design through to knowledge exchange
- Centralized point of contact for research support within Recovery Alberta
- Intake form available for requests for support
- Internal processes for operational approval are more centrally coordinated

## What's staying the same?

- REB approval will continue to trigger intake through HSA/NACTRC, who will then route studies to Recovery Alberta Research Services Team – this applies to requests for data and other types of research.
- We want to help!



# Thank you!

[RecoveryAB.Research@recoveryalberta.ca](mailto:RecoveryAB.Research@recoveryalberta.ca)

[RecoveryAlberta.ca](http://RecoveryAlberta.ca)