

## **Cancer Strategic Clinical Network, Alberta Health Services**

### **Call for Expressions of Interest**

### **Streamlining and facilitating cancer diagnosis in Alberta: Call for research proposals to explore perceptions of healthcare providers**

#### **Sponsor**

Cancer Strategic Clinical Network, Alberta Health Services

#### **Research initiative**

Early Cancer Diagnosis: Perspectives of healthcare providers

#### **Description**

The Cancer Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) brings together stakeholders from across the province to lead and support evidence-informed improvements and bring innovation to health care related to cancer. The Cancer SCN is spear-heading a new provincial priority program focused on developing strategies to optimize pathways to cancer diagnosis in Alberta.

The purpose of the research to be funded under this priority program is to gather the scientific evidence required to understand the perspectives of Alberta healthcare providers and help identify areas of focus to work towards streamlining the diagnosis of cancer in the province. Particular questions of interest include (but are not restricted to): how do healthcare providers respond to patients who present with symptoms potentially related to cancer?; what do healthcare providers identify as elements influencing the time elapsed between the patient's identification of symptoms and their cancer diagnosis?; do healthcare providers identify particular contributors to delays in cancer diagnosis for less advantaged and vulnerable populations?; what do healthcare providers perceive as enablers, obstacles and opportunities for improvement in the diagnostic period?; what types of services or systems do health care providers believe would help streamline pathways from first suspicion of cancer to diagnosis?

#### **Approach and expectations**

- Only one project will be supported through this competition.
- The application process is two-staged: 1) expression of interest (EOI), 2) full research proposal.
- Only one applicant will be selected to develop a full research proposal. The successful applicant will collaborate with the Cancer SCN in designing a full research proposal.
- The successful applicant will submit proof of relevant ethics and operational approvals for the study to the Cancer SCN before using funds awarded by the Cancer SCN to conduct the approved study.
- Throughout the execution of the study, the successful applicant will report regularly on progress to the Cancer SCN, and will share preliminary findings with the Cancer SCN upon request.
- The successful applicant will submit a final project report to the Cancer SCN at the end of the study, and will acknowledge the support of the Cancer SCN in any presentations or publications that may result as a consequence of the funding provided by the Cancer SCN.

### **Project cost**

A maximum of \$25,000 will be awarded to conduct the study.

### **Project duration**

Funds must be expended within **12 months** of the date they are received, and the study must be completed within this timeframe.

### **Eligible applicants**

Applicants must:

- Be based in Alberta;
- Have demonstrated experience and expertise in generating and interpreting results from qualitative and/or mixed methods studies related to healthcare;
- Have demonstrated experience and expertise in conducting studies with physicians and other healthcare providers in Alberta;
- Have recognized advanced training in the field, ideally at the Masters or PhD level.
- Be committed to the highest professional and social responsibility standards.

An academic appointment at a post-secondary institution in Alberta is not a requirement, but is preferred. Applicants affiliated with a post-secondary institution or a research institute/entity in Alberta must be able to hold funds in their institution.

Applicants with current or past Cancer SCN funding who have any outstanding reports related to those funds at the time of application are **not** eligible to apply to this competition.

### **Application**

This is a two stage application process:

1. Expression of interest
  - Complete a letter no longer than 5 pages (excluding references) that includes:
    - the research question to be addressed;
    - objectives of the proposed study;
    - a brief description of the proposed methods;
    - a brief description of the proposed outputs;
    - the composition of the study team, and a description of the expertise and experience of each team member as it relates to the proposed study;
    - the proposed timeline for the study, including milestones;
    - facilities and resources available to the study team that will support execution of the proposed study;
    - a statement concerning feasibility of the proposed study in the Alberta context; and,
    - a statement of why the applicant (and team) is suitable to lead the study, as per the eligibility criteria.
  - Attach the CV of the principal applicant to the letter (limit to 10 pages).
  - Applicants affiliated with a post-secondary institution are not required by the Cancer SCN to submit their EOI to the Research Service Office (or equivalent) of their academic institution for approval before submission to the Cancer SCN. However, if RSO

submission is required by the applicant's post-secondary institution, applicants are strongly advised to comply. Researchers will be notified by the Cancer SCN if they have been invited to submit a full research proposal.

2. Full research proposal

- Work with the Cancer SCN to create a full research proposal that includes detailed budget, methodology, description of the team, and firm commitments from partners (if applicable). Detailed requirements will be communicated to the prospective applicant at this stage.
- Applicants affiliated with a post-secondary institution invited to submit a full research proposal must include a complete, signed signature page from the Research Services Office (or equivalent) of their academic institution. Processes and forms vary by institution. It is responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all institutional requirements have been met prior to submission. Be sure to allow sufficient time to obtain all required signatures.

### **Submission**

Documents must be sent in MS Word (except the Research Services Office (or equivalent) form) to Dr. Anna Pujadas Botey (Assistant Scientific Director, Cancer SCN) by the deadline, via email to:

[Anna.PujadasBotey@ahs](mailto:Anna.PujadasBotey@ahs).

### **Review process**

EOIs meeting the basic eligibility criteria will be assessed based on the applicant's demonstration of a sound understanding of the issue, the feasibility of their proposed approach, and the suitability of the applicant to undertake the project. Independent experts, as well as external technical advisors, may be consulted as required.

### **Timelines**

December 3, 2018. Call for EOIs launched

December 21, 2018, at 4 pm MDT- EOI due

January 10, 2018. The successful applicant will be notified and invited to submit the full research proposal.

The deadline for submission of the full research proposal will be discussed with the successful applicant but will not be more than two months after the invitation to submit full research proposal.

### **For more information**

Dr. Anna Pujadas Botey

Assistant Scientific Director, Cancer SCN

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