

# Health Outcomes Improvement Fund

**Goal:** Envisioned as a way to enhance innovative approaches to reduce variation and improve clinical and population outcomes for mothers, newborns, children and youth in Alberta.

Since 2016, the Maternal Newborn Child & Youth (MNCY) Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) has funded 40 research and quality improvement projects in two funding calls totaling almost 5 million dollars with the Health Outcomes Improvement Fund (HOIF). HOIF has been a significant partnership with AHS' Nutrition & Food Services Department to direct funding to strategic priorities benefiting maternal, newborn, child and youth populations in Alberta. The research institutes at the Universities of Calgary (Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute; ACHRI) and Alberta (Women & Children's Health Research Institute; WCHRI) have been key partners in its success.

There is no provincial program for maternal child health in AHS. The MNCY SCN has been working hard to bring together the clinicians, operational leaders and researchers working with this population to facilitate innovation, reduce variation in practice and improve outcomes. The HOIF funding provided an opportunity to do this on a larger scale.

Small (\$50,000) and large awards (up to \$375,000) were awarded to projects that addressed identified priorities, spanning topics from virtual support of pregnant mothers with anxiety and depression to supporting the successful transition of youth with chronic conditions to adult care using a patient navigator model.

**HOIF I** was launched in mid-2016 with \$2.1 million awarded to 19 projects and funds starting to flow in late spring of 2017. 75 per cent of the projects have been completed with the remainder completing by mid 2023.

A few highlights, as of July 2022:

- 47 scientific papers were published
- funding was leveraged bringing in an additional \$4.1 million dollars; so for every \$1 awarded an additional \$2.06 was raised.
- numerous trainees were supported from summer students to postdoctoral fellows



## Provincial Impact

- Alberta has an e-platform that is available 24/7 to help pregnant women track their feelings of anxiety and depression, screen and refer to services and provide e-therapy
- Alberta now has electronic dashboards providing near real time data to inform and monitor quality initiatives in the care of select pediatric conditions
- Alberta now has tools to aid communication and goal setting for adolescents who are experiencing weight and health issues
- Alberta now has parent identified priorities for health research evidence to support their information needs
- We now have Alberta outcomes data on types of ventilator support devices that has informed local initiatives as well as contributing to national and international initiatives.

**HOIF II** was launched in late 2018 with 2.8 million awarded to 21 projects and funds starting to flow in early summer 2019. With significant COVID-19 delays, about 35% of HOIF II projects have been completed as of July 2022.

HOIFII focused intentionally on supporting quality improvement projects in AHS sites and some of the projects that demonstrate the potential provincial impact include:

- Collaboration to improve health of first nation pregnant women using a community designed approach
- Improving post- partum hemorrhage measurement and care - this is a pilot at one site that will be scaled and spread across the province
- Implementation of Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) Guideline in perioperative care in neonatal abdominal surgery at one site with the potential for broader application and provincial scale and spread
- Implementation of an assessment app for early diagnosis of cerebral palsy
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of child-oriented goal setting in pediatric rehabilitation

HOIF project funding has been used to develop and evaluate implementation of care pathways, checklists, patient and family information supports (i.e., websites, pamphlets, videos, stories, infographics, apps, etc.). Some project improvements have become the standard of care (quantitative blood loss measurement during labour & delivery) or have been integrated into Connect Care (pediatric nutrition screening).

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The HOIF program successfully demonstrates how directing funding to strategic priorities can lead to overall improvement in the health outcomes of the MNCY SCN's important populations.

There are very few opportunities for grant funding for the types of projects that HOIF funded. Without access to funding, many of these projects would not have moved forward.

The HOIF program has also improved the culture for research and quality improvement within AHS sites, which has led to improved patient and system outcomes

Please click this [link](#) to learn more about individual HOIF Projects.

For more information, please email [maternalnewbornchildyouth.scn@ahs.ca](mailto:maternalnewbornchildyouth.scn@ahs.ca).