

Weekly WHRI Community Update – May 15, 2020

Sent on behalf of Dr. Lori Brotto, Executive Director, WHRI

Dear WHRI community,

Today Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced federal support for research that will directly impact our WHRI community. Although the details are not yet fully available, we know that there will be \$450 Million available to provide wage support to retain research staff who are funded from industry or philanthropic sources and are unable to access some of the government's existing COVID-19 support measures. This support will also allow universities and health research institutes to maintain essential research-related activities during the crisis, and to ramp back up to full research operations once physical distancing measures are lifted.

As with other federal announcements, many details are yet to be determined. Additional information includes:

- There won't be a competition or adjudicated process to attain funding, it will be based on meeting eligibility criteria
- Applies to research in general, not just health research
- Appears TriCouncil will be funding vehicle but not clear if CIHR or perhaps SSHRC which may have a mechanism for faster implementation
- Retroactive to March 15

We will be sure to communicate updates as they come. See the full [HealthCareCAN media release](#) online or the [attached pdf](#).

All of us have been following closely the emerging details for [British Columbia's Restart Plan](#), which lays out a phased approach to services re-starting. As we head into the Victoria Day long-weekend, we are advised to continue to maintain social distancing, maintain our interactions to those within our inner "bubble", and to continue to practice regular and thorough hand washing. After the long-weekend, BC will move into Phase 2, which will see the gradual opening of childcare centres, medically related services, parks, beaches, and outdoor spaces, and other key services.

UBC has been following the province's guidance as it forms its own Restart plan informed by a series of town halls and input by over 950 faculty. On May 12, UBC announced its phased resumption of on-campus research from the beginning of June and a gradual approach over the summer. UBC has updated its operational and safety planning process ([see attached email](#)) which will also be slowly phased in following the guidance of the provincial government and approved by WorkSafe BC.

In my WHRI community update on [May 8, 2020](#), I notified you about a C&W site re-opening process, which is informed by UBC's plan and adapted to our academic health care environment in coordination with the Provincial Health Services Authority. This is a coordinated effort between the WHRI, the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, and the BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services Research Institute.

This group, with representation across these three research institutes, met for the first time this week to initiate planning for a phased increase of onsite research activities. I'm grateful to the leadership at BC Children's Hospital Research Institute (Dr. Wyeth Wasserman) for striking this committee, and all of the

C&W campus representatives who eagerly stepped forward to assist the working group. A special thanks to Dr. Wendy Robinson for chairing this working group.

I will continue to update the WHRI community on the directives laid out by this committee, but please know that this will be a thoughtful and phased process, and so we ask for your patience with any decisions. In the meantime, all of us, except those who have received research exemption, should continue to work remotely.

This working group will determine how we can increase onsite activities in way that is safe, systematic and complies with all policies and directives. Significant work must be done to put in place:

- Clear rules and guidelines for those working onsite
- Physical distancing measures, particularly in shared workspaces and high-traffic areas
- The safe and sustainable use of personal protective equipment
- A thoughtful prioritization of research activities for each phase of return and the creation of an online form to manage requests from our community
- A nimble and responsive approach that will enable us to rapidly reinstate curtailment if the need arises

It is important to note this process will not return us to the levels of onsite research activity we enjoyed prior to COVID-19. Through this process, we are working to bring back researchers, staff and trainees who cannot continue their vital work remotely.

Our community and of course our province have done exceptionally well in following the clear directives set out by our Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry. We must continue to heed those directives during this gradual phase back plan. And for those of us able to carry out our work remotely, we ask that you please continue to do so.

Last week we launched a trainee survey and have asked that any trainees working under the supervision of a WHRI member, or any trainee engaged in women's health research consider completing the survey. The responses will be important to help us understand the experiences and needs of our trainees especially as we gradually phase back to onsite work. Please encourage your trainees to [complete the SURVEY](#).

I wish each of you a restorative long weekend, and a chance to reflect on the resilience we've undoubtedly built over the past 9 weeks. Though the path ahead will be gradual and long, it is evident that we have the resolve to continue the good work as a united community.

Sincerely,

Lori A Brotto PHD, R PSYCH
Executive Director, WHRI
Professor | Department of OBGYN, UBC
Canada Research Chair | Women's Sexual Health

Updates from May 9th – May 15th

2020 WHRI Catalyst Grants – Application Deadline Change to July 15th

The Women's Health Research Institute, in partnership with the BC Women's Health Foundation, is pleased to announce the [2020 Catalyst Grant competition](#) for the advancement of knowledge in women's and newborn's health. A total of **six grants** will be awarded at **\$25,000 each**. Like last year's competition, there is a required **letter of intent which is due June 10, 2020**. Please note, **the full application deadline** has been moved to **July 15, 2020 at 11 pm PDT**.

These pilot grants are an open competition with respect to funding a project in women's and newborn's health. Awards are open to BC researchers at a university or research hospital setting, but candidates must be a member of the WHRI, and have not been a successful Principal Applicant in the previous three years of Catalyst Competitions. Eligible researchers include post-doctoral fellows, clinical fellows, research associates, clinician scientists and academic researchers.

New emerging teams, dedicated to women's and/or newborn's health, and investigators new to studying women's and newborn's health are encouraged to apply. As these funds are considered Catalyst Grants, the expectation is that these awards will provide pilot data to be used for future funding from provincial or federal sources. However, these funds cannot be used to subsidize an already-funded project.

IMPORTANT DATES

Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline:	June 10, 2020 11PM PDT
Application Deadline:	July 15, 2020 11PM PDT
Anticipated Notice of Decision:	October 1, 2020

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

For application details, please see the WHRI Catalyst Grant application instructions that are attached to this email.

FOR SUBMISSION

The LOI must be submitted using the following link:

<https://rc.bcchr.ca/redcap/surveys/?s=LEMTKKYMW7>

Please note you will not be able to save the LOI once it has been started so ensure you can complete the LOI in a single sitting.

CALLING ALL TRAINEES!

Dr. Lori Brotto and Dr. Angela Kaida have launched a survey to **understand the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on trainees** affiliated with the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI). We are offering TEN \$100 gift card random draw prizes to WHRI trainees who complete the survey. Only trainees who are members of WHRI or whose supervisors/primary mentors are members of WHRI are eligible for this prize.

Please share this link with students and trainees on your teams:

<https://rc.bcchr.ca/redcap/surveys/?s=NMC4P4WCCF>

UBC Webinar: Connect your Research in COVID Times

On, June 3rd from 1:30 to 3:00 pm, the [UBC Knowledge Exchange Unit](#) in collaboration with [UBC Media Relations](#) are hosting a webinar who aim to share impactful knowledge on the broad range of societal issues that the COVID-19 pandemic has uncovered.

For registration and additional information: <https://innovation.ubc.ca/connect-webinar>

FUNDING AGENCY UPDATES and OPPORTUNITIES

New and updated COVID-19 WHRI Funding Updates

Follow our webpage for all the latest news, COVID-19 funding opportunities, latest updates for deadlines and official statements from funding agencies regarding grant programs.

For updated list of funding opportunities and deadline changes, click [here](#)

For any questions regarding grant applications or grant writing assistance, reach out to Eric Lussier, eric.ducharmelussier@cw.bc.ca.

NEWS

[UBC Announces UBC Research Staff and Trainee Emergency Fund \(CWL Req.\)](#)

The UBC Research Staff and Trainee Emergency Fund is offered to mitigate salary shortfalls for UBC graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and research staff at UBC and our Affiliated Hospitals where project funding from industry and foundations has been lost or interrupted as a result of COVID-19.

[Canadian Cancer Society Announces Changes to Research Programs](#)

CSS recognizes the COVID-19 pandemic has jeopardized the conduct of research. To balance the necessity of fiscal restraint, due to declining donor revenue, with CSS' ongoing commitment to funded researchers, CSS has made a number of modifications to program delivery.

COVID-19 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- MSFHR – [COVID-19 Research Response Fund](#) – Ongoing 5/19
- Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute – [COVID-19 Targeted PFA](#) – 5/26
- Peter Wall Institute – [COVID-19 Wall Solutions program](#) – 6/1
- NSERC – [NSERC Alliance COVID-19 grants](#) – Ongoing 6/1
- NSERC – [College and Community Innovation Program – Applied Research Rapid Response to COVID-19](#) – Ongoing until 6/1
- Emergency Medicine Foundation – [COVID-19 Research Grant](#) – 6/5
- UBC FoM – [COVID-19 Strategic Investment Fund](#) – 6/7
- Microsoft – [AI for Health COVID-19 Grant](#) – 6/15
- SSHRC – [Partnership Engage Grants COVID-19 Special Initiative](#) – 6/15
- Amazon Web Services – [Diagnostic Development Initiative](#) – Ongoing 6/30
- SSHRC – [Partnership Engage Grants COVID-19 Special Initiative](#) – 9/15
- Ferring Pharmaceuticals – [COVID-19 Investigational Grants in Reproductive Medicine and Maternal Health](#) – Ongoing 10/31
- Genome Canada – [COVID-19 Regional Genomics Initiative](#) – TBA

- Canada Digital Technology Supercluster – [Call for COVID-19 Solutions](#) – Ongoing

UPDATES (5/9 - 5/15) TO COMPETITION DEADLINES

- Canadian Cancer Society – [2020 TRAVEL AWARDS](#) – Suspended
- Canadian Cancer Society – [Impact Grants](#) – TBA

HAVE A FEW MINUTES?

Introducing CANCOVID-Preg – a national, [COVID-19 in pregnancy surveillance program](#), led by Dr. Deborah Money. The program grew out of the shared aim to provide Canadian data on COVID-19 in pregnancy for optimal clinical care and public policy.

For regular updates and to connect with the team, visit their [website](#) and follow them on Twitter: [@CANCOVID-Preg](#)

Genome BC Launches a Podcast

Check out their first episode, [How Genomics Helped Crack the Code of COVID-19](#).

Have some news of your own to share? [Email whri.communications@cw.bc.ca](mailto:whri.communications@cw.bc.ca)

STAFF RESOURCES

Stay up-to-date on **PHSA staff updates** via their staff resources page: <http://www.phsa.ca/staff-resources/covid-19-resources-for-staff>

UBC offers Fundamentals Training to protect the privacy & information security of the UBC community.

CWL required: <https://privacymatters.ubc.ca/fundamentals-training>

PHSA has highlighted some important resources and strategies for staff:

See [PHSA's latest COVID-19 support resources](#) for temporary accommodation resources, toolkits for staff and leaders, and checklists to plan a smooth transition back to work for staff and managers

Lunch Hour Yoga is a virtual 20 minute yoga session. No equipment needed. No need to change your clothes or footwear. Please be mindful of your personal physical limitations while participating.

Tuesdays & Thursday from 12:00pm-12:20pm via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/115502129>

Homewood Health [Pandemic Toolkit](#)

If you would like to speak to a trained professional, there are a number of no-cost resources currently available to you: [Homewood Health](#) Employee & Family Assistance Program

PHSA Confidential Staff Psychosocial Support email workplacewellness@cw.bc.ca or call **604-875-2982**
