

Weekly WHRI Community Update – May 29, 2020

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

Dear WHRI community,

This week saw some much anticipated and very welcome relief to our academic community. [Dr. Michael Strong, President of CIHR, announced](#) yesterday that the Spring 2020 competition, which had been cancelled 6 weeks ago, will proceed this summer! With a highly ambitious timeline and online peer review, the original budget envelope earmarked for this competition will remain (minus any funds going to applicants of the Spring competition who opted for bridge funding or one year extension funding) at approximately \$245M. Researchers across our campus and across our country are sighing a collective sigh of relief.

In other promising news, some research institutions have begun to roll out their protocols for how researchers should apply to resume onsite research activities. The BC Cancer Research Institute and UBC Point Grey campus have begun to review applications that fulfil criteria that include: research that cannot be done remotely; non-COVID research that is time sensitive; student research needed to complete a degree; equity considerations of the PI and/or research member(s); among other criteria. The C&W Return to Onsite Research Working Group is finalizing a REDCap submission form to collect and address PI requests to resume onsite work.

During the month of June, BC Women's and Children's Hospital's will be undertaking clinical services restoration planning. This will involve each program and clinic onsite carrying out a risk assessment for phased service resumption. In this process, research will be given special consideration and C&W hospital leadership have indicated that they will work directly with leaders from our three onsite research institutes to create a process for the gradual return of research embedded within the clinical services at both BC Women's and Children's Hospitals. The return-to-work directives will be informed by careful workplace assessments as per the outlined [WorkSafeBC](#) process to ensure risk reduction of COVID-19 transmission.

We hope to update the WHRI community with specific information on Stage 1 of this research resumption plan by next week. In the meantime, we encourage all of you who are able to continue your work remotely to keep doing so. As a reminder, research resumption will occur in stages over the coming weeks and months. We commit to providing these weekly updates throughout the Summer.

Amidst prolonged periods of uncertainty and stress for many, I feel it is imperative to celebrate these successes.

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 22<sup>nd</sup> – May 29<sup>th</sup>**

## Return to Onsite Research Working Group: Week 1 & 2 FAQs

The Return to Onsite Research Working Group has released an update from Dr. Wendy Robinson (email attached). For ongoing, up-to-date information released by the working group, please access via the [BCCHR Hub](#) (accessible using BCCHR, PHSA, and UBC accounts).

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## 2020 WHRI Catalyst Grants

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

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline:</b> | <b>June 10, 2020 11PM PDT</b> |
| <b>Application Deadline:</b>            | <b>July 15, 2020 11PM PDT</b> |
| <b>Anticipated Notice of Decision:</b>  | <b>October 1, 2020</b>        |

### 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.\*

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**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=NMCFP4WCCF>

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### **Interim Order Respecting Clinical Trials for Medical Devices and Drugs Relating to COVID-19**

On May 23, 2020, the Minister of Health approved an Interim Order (IO) in response to the need for urgent COVID-19 diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention options. The IO introduces an alternate pathway to facilitate clinical trials for potential COVID-19 drugs and medical devices, while upholding strong patient safety requirements and validity of trial data. The IO does not apply to radiopharmaceutical drugs, natural health products and Class I medical devices.

**More Here:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/interim-order-respecting-clinical-trials-medical-devices-drugs/notice-interim-order.html>

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### **UBC Webinar: Connect your Research in COVID Times**

On, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:eric.ducharmelussier@cw.bc.ca).

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## **NEWS**

### **Update on the Spring 2020 Project Grant competition**

The CIHR announces that the review of the Spring 2020 Grant competition applications will proceed this summer. As promised, with the exception of those funds used to provide bridge funding or extensions, we have preserved the funding envelope designated for the Spring 2020 competition. Spring 2020

applications submitted by Nominated Principal Applicants (NPAs) who did not receive a financial extension will be reviewed, unless specifically withdrawn by the NPAs. The Fall 2020 Project Grant competition remains on track to be delivered. However, the timelines for this competition may be adjusted. We expect that the peer review process will be delivered with videoconference panels from late June through August.

### **MSFHR Announces Ongoing Support for Awardees**

Research activities have either been disrupted or put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To support you during this time, MSFHR will:

- Continue all salary payments and allow all regular eligible expenses as outlined in your program's guidelines. However, if your research activities are paused, we would expect there would be no expenses over and above salary, with the exception of any previously agreed-to ongoing monthly fees.
- Allow Research Trainees to use their research and travel allowance for furniture to improve working conditions in their home environment. Research Trainees will still need to follow their host institution's policies on furniture purchases.
- Relax policies on Conditions of Award (COA) requirements. Specifically, including more flexibility on our deadlines for reporting requirements and relax the requirements to apply for external salary awards from major national or international funding agencies, and hold in-person meeting(s).
- Approve no-cost award extensions upon request.

These changes will be in effect until August 31, 2020. As the COVID-19 situation evolves, we will reassess and provide updates accordingly. For more information please contact Kate Wilczak, Manager, Research Competitions, at [kate.wilczak@msfhr.org](mailto:kate.wilczak@msfhr.org) to arrange any change requests for your award.

### **CFI Announces Exceptional Opportunities Fund Competition, then Suspends the Program**

Please note that we have temporarily suspended our Exceptional Opportunities Fund – COVID-19. We have received a number of questions from the community and appreciate your feedback. We are taking extra time to consult, evaluate and adjust the call for proposals as necessary. We are dedicated to ensuring this opportunity for funding meets the most urgent needs of Canada's researchers in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will update this page as soon as possible.

### **COVID-19 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

- 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 \(5/23 - 5/29\) TO COMPETITION DEADLINES](#)**

- [N/A](#)

#### **HAVE A FEW MINUTES?**

#### **DIGITAL HEALTH INTERPROFESSIONAL GRAND ROUNDS – June 4<sup>th</sup>**

On **Thursday June 4<sup>th</sup> BC Women’s Hospital Interprofessional Grand Rounds** (8:00 – 9:00 AM Pacific) (CME Accredited) will be on the theme of **Digital Health** and will feature presentations from, Ciana Maher, Dr. Sarai Racey, WHRI and Michele Fryer and Dominik Stoll, PHSA Office of Virtual Health.

Presentations: 1. Results of the BCWH\WHRI Digital Health Scan 2 Introduction to digital health research project: Cervix Check 3. Virtual health response to COVID-19 in BC.

Calendar information and zoom link:

<https://www.calendarwiz.com/calendars/popup.php?op=view&id=135194867&crd=brounds&https://obgyn.ubc.ca/faculty-resources/rounds/>

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#### **BC’s COVID-19 SURVEY**

In an [opinion-editorial](#), **Dr. Bonnie Henry and Health Minister Adrian Dix reiterate the importance of the province-wide survey**, which seeks to gather feedback from British Columbians on experiences and actions taken so far in the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey is a collaboration with PHSA/BCCDC and public health experts, the health authorities’ medical health officers and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer.

To date, almost 300,000 British Columbians have completed the survey. We encourage you to share the [survey link](#) with your friends and family to help us gather a broad range of data from B.C.’s population.

**Survey Link:** <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-survey>

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>

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**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](mailto:workplacewellness@cw.bc.ca) or call **604-875-2982**

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