

1. Description and Timeline

The Neurosciences, Rehabilitation & Vision (NRV) Strategic Clinical Network™ (SCN) is pleased to announce this funding competition: the **2024 NRV Research Grant – Addressing Care Challenges & Opportunities in Chronic Neurological Conditions in Alberta**. One (1) award of up to \$20,000 will be offered.

This funding opportunity supports research grants that generate evidence to address care challenges or leverage opportunities in the care for persons with lived experience of chronic neurological conditions. Such conditions include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alzheimer’s Disease • Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis • Cerebral Palsy • Dementias excluding Alzheimer’s Disease • Headache & Migraine • Multiple Sclerosis/Demyelinating Disorders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuromuscular Disorders (e.g., Myasthenia Gravis) • Parkinson’s Disease • Post-Concussion Syndrome • Seizure/Epilepsy |
|--|--|

The funding seeks to overcome identified challenges and/or leverage discussed opportunities that both arose from the 2023 NRV Research Summit: Care Challenges & Innovations in Chronic Neurological Conditions (December 8, 2023).

Timelines:



2. Objectives

The specific objectives of this funding opportunity are to:

- **Support health services or policy research** that will impact the quality of care for persons with lived experience of a chronic neurological condition in Alberta.
- **Ensure that the patient population** benefiting from this research includes persons with lived experience of any of the above-listed chronic neurological conditions.
- **Mobilize diverse methodologies, disciplines, perspectives, and knowledge mobilization** approaches to generate useful evidence for learning health systems.
- **Foster the creation of new, or strengthen existing, partnerships and collaborations** between researchers, clinicians, operational leaders, policymakers, funders and/or knowledge users with lived experience to align research with recognized gaps in quality of care to identify evidence-informed opportunities and options to advance care quality, and
- **Create momentum, direction and advancement in technological innovation and quality of care provision for persons with lived experience of chronic neurological conditions in Alberta**, recognizing that large-scale system change is not feasible in one grant competition but that incremental progress is possible.

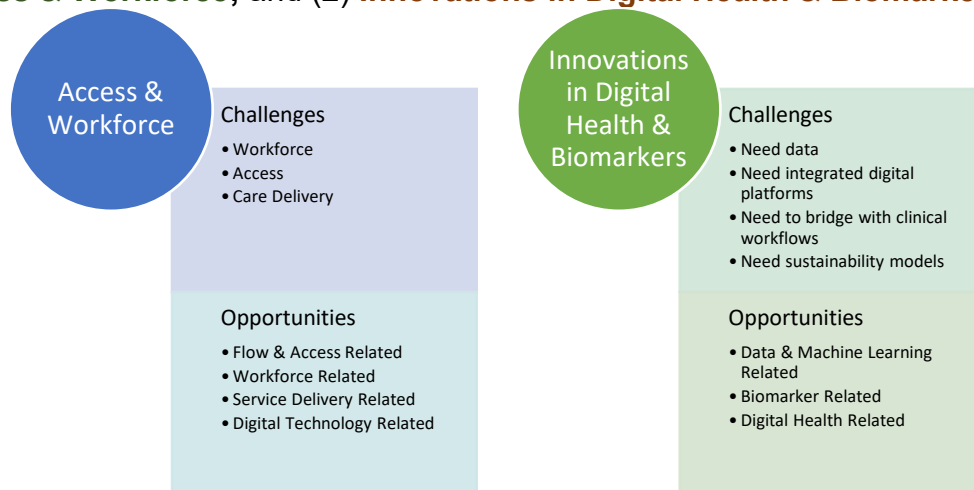
While it is not required, this funding opportunity may prioritize research that seeks to, or is able to, **leverage in-kind and monetary supports** from other institutions, organizations and funders to promote broader impact and enable researchers to do more.

3. Context: 2023 NRV Research Summit

On December 8, 2023, the Scientific Office of the NRV SCN hosted a virtual Research Summit (n=73 attendees including 17 panelists) focused on care challenges and innovations in chronic neurological conditions. The Summit objectives included:

- (1) Explore current issues and innovations related to Access, Quality of Life, and Technology (digital health) applications for individuals affected by chronic neurological conditions in Alberta.
- (2) Identify the potential impact, feasibility and fit of research projects relative to community needs.
- (3) Identify potential synergies for future work and care quality advancement.

Across the three thematic panels, two categories of challenges and opportunities arose: (1) **Access & Workforce**; and (2) **Innovations in Digital Health & Biomarkers**.



4. Priority Research Areas

This funding opportunity will support a submission relevant to the above-stated objectives and **ANY of the following research** areas for any of the above-stated patient populations:

- Improving wait-times and access to case management and/or multidisciplinary care
- Establishing standards of care for chronic neurological conditions in Alberta
- Improving timely, accurate diagnosis
- Developing or implementing workforce-specific strategies in the neurosciences professions

- Development and support of providers (including allied health professionals), especially in non-urban areas
- Collaborative care models, including collaboration across Zones, professions, specialties
- Equity, including geographical inequities, inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable populations
- Patient outcomes, including quality of life, function, mental health, social isolation
- Resources and education (for patients, for providers)
- Transitions in care for patients and families
- Data strategies to improve data collection and mobilization for care
- Exploring virtual modalities for neurorehabilitation delivery
- Understanding leveraging opportunities with virtual care and digital health (including telehealth, remote monitoring, electronic health records)

5. Eligibility Criteria

For an application to be eligible, it **must** include, at a minimum:

1. The Principal Investigator (PI) must be an independent researcher, affiliated with an Albertan postsecondary, academic institution and/or its affiliated institutions (including hospitals, research institutes and other non-profit organizations with a mandate for health research and/or knowledge translation).
2. Front-line clinicians are welcome and encouraged to act as co-investigators but can only be the PI if they meet eligibility criteria #1.
3. The project area of the research includes one or more of the following themes of health research: clinical, health services, and/or population and public health.
4. The PI is not a member of the NRV SCN leadership.
5. The PI is not actively holding a seed grant from the NRV SCN. The PI can only submit one application as PI, but could be a co-investigator or Co-PI on another application.
6. At least one knowledge user from Alberta Health Services is included on the research team.

6. Application Requirements

The intention of this funding application is to balance the need for rigour and detail to fairly review individual applications with the strong intention to make this application process as minimally onerous on applicants.

As such, a Full Application to this funding opportunity must include the following:

- 1) A **Proposal** (2-page maximum; 1-inch margins; 12-point font), which describes the following:

- a. Rationale for research, and alignment with the objective and research priority areas of the funding call
 - b. Proposed research aims and methods
 - c. Plan for knowledge translation
 - d. Expected impact or implications
- 2) **Appendix** including references (3-page maximum; 1-inch margins; 12-point font)
 - 3) A **Participant Table** (2-page maximum; 1-inch margins; 12-point font), which details the confirmed and tentative team members, their professional roles and expertise, their expected responsibilities in this research, and whether they are confirmed or tentative.
 - a. Include those tentative team members with whom support is sought from the NRV SCN to engage
 - 4) A **Proposed Budget**, including in-kind and other funding sources (including opportunities for leveraging) (1 page maximum; 1-inch margins; 12-point font)
 - 5) A **Curriculum Vitae** of the Principal Investigator (CIHR Biosketch)
 - 6) **Signed Approval of Research Proposal Page** (1-page) (last page of this document for template) (signed by postsecondary institution that will administer funds)

7. Funding Criteria

The funds available are for direct costs up to \$20,000.

Funding may be requested for:

- Stipend support for trainees or salary support for research associates and technical/professional assistants
- Research operating expenses, including general office supplies, as relating to data collection, data analysis, meetings
- Expenses for provincial travel that is essential for the conduct of the study (e.g., data collection, knowledge translation, or to attend study training).
- Travel to conferences, symposiums, presentations, or meetings
- Other expenses will be considered (i.e., equipment, expendables), but must be justified and meet AHS guidelines.

Funding will NOT be provided for:

- Previously incurred expenses: funding will not be provided for expenses incurred prior to implementation of the grant.
- Any investigator salaries
- Indirect costs
- Legal or patent fees, membership fees, academic fees, secretarial support
- Other expenses deemed ineligible by the institution holding funds or the Canadian Institutes of Health Research

8. Budget

Please include one-page budget that describes total proposal budget amount up to \$20,000, which could include the allowable expenses listed above.

Please provide justification and relevant budgetary details for requested amounts:

- In-kind Contributions: describe in-kind support
- Indicate if this proposal has received other funding support (Other SCNs, external, Tri Council etc.)
- Indicate opportunities for leveraging funds

9. Evaluation Criteria & Review Process

Evaluation Criteria

To support the strategic objectives of this funding opportunity, the following evaluation criteria will be used.

A) Importance & Alignment of the Research

- Research proposal addresses a significant need or gap in the quality of care for persons with lived experience of a chronic neurological condition in Alberta
- Research project has the potential to improve quality of care in Alberta
- Clear articulation of the alignment between the proposed project, the funding call objectives, and at least one priority research areas

B) Scientific Merit the Proposal

- Potential for the creation of new knowledge
- Originality of the proposed research, in terms of the hypotheses/research questions addressed, novel technology/methodology, and/or novel applications of current technology/methodology.
- Clear description of project, objective, main activities and expected deliverables
- Appropriate connection between objective and proposed methods
- Scientific rigour evident in proposed methods and activities
- Feasible timeline that aligns with proposed activities
- If appropriate, equity considerations elaborated effectively

C) Applicant(s) & Environment

- Qualifications of the PI, including training, experience, and independence (relative to career stage)
- Expertise of the PI, as demonstrated by scientific productivity over the past five years (e.g., publications, grants held, etc.)
- Ability to successfully and appropriately disseminate research findings, as demonstrated by knowledge mobilization activities (e.g., publications, conference presentations, briefings, media engagements, etc.)
- Suitability of the environment to conduct the proposed research, including

- personnel, facilities, and infrastructure
- Capacity and skill set of the proposed research team to carry out the research
- Capacity and suitability of the included knowledge users to support integrated knowledge mobilization and patient-centred care
- Appropriateness of the proposed role of community associations and persons with lived experience

D) Expected Impact & Knowledge Translation Plan

- A clearly articulated plan to leverage data from this project to Tri-Council or PRIHS funding competitions is an advantage
- Ability, or proposed plan, to leverage funding from this research grant in this, or a future, project
- Clear articulation of potential impact of research
- Projected data sources and outcome measures are feasible, appropriate, and impactful for the organization (amidst micro, meso or macro level)
- Clear description of how findings of this research will be mobilized
- Clear description of potential next steps for the team and/or NRV SCN upon project completion
- Potential next steps would advance strategic directions or priorities of the NRV SCN, AHS and/or operations in the care of persons with lived experience of chronic neurological conditions
- Potential of the project to contribute to training of Highly Qualified People

The review committee will be using the following rating rubric for evaluation based on the above criteria.

| Descriptor | Range |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Outstanding | 4.5-5.0 |
| Excellent | 4.0-4.4 |
| Very Good | 3.5-3.9 |
| Acceptable | 3.0-3.4 |
| Needs Revision | 2.5-2.9 |
| Needs Major Revision | 2.0-2.4 |
| Seriously Flawed | 1.0-1.9 |
| Fatally Flawed | 0.0-0.9 |

10. Reporting & Deliverables

The PI will submit one interim (12 months) and one final (24 months) report to the NRV SCN Scientific within 24 months of receipt of funding. This report will include a summary of the research team and affiliates, research activities performed and key findings, dissemination activities (e.g., presentations, manuscripts etc.), and how the results of the Funding grant could, have or will be leveraged for future research funding initiatives and ongoing research projects. Copies of any abstracts, presentations and publications

arising from the grants will be sent to the Scientific Office of the NRV SCN. We may invite the PI(s) to present their findings to the NRV SCN Core Committee approximately 12 months after receiving the funding. This will provide an opportunity for dissemination of findings and identification/development of future research collaborations within the NRV SCN.

11. Program Policies

- The Principal Investigator may only hold a single active research grant from the NRV SCN, but may be a collaborator on other proposals.
- One PI from the Co-PI team will hold the funds. Research grants will not be awarded to the same project more than once.
- All unused funds at the end award term (2 years) must be returned to the NRV SCN.
- The grant is non-renewable.
- All publications and presentations, including public messages, arising from the NRV SCN 2023 Research Grant program must acknowledge the support of Alberta Health Services and the NRV SCN.
- Late or incomplete applications will be returned to the candidates.

12. Application Instructions

Please submit all documents as a single PDF to the NRV SCN Assistant Scientific Director by no later than 23:59 MST on the application deadline.

- Research proposal (2 pages)
- Appendix (schematic diagrams, figures, charts) including references (3 pages).
- Participant Table (2 pages)
- Complete budget details and justification (1 page)
- PI Curriculum vitae (CIHR Biosketch, or Education/Publications/Grants/Trainees/Evidence of Knowledge Translation over last 5 years)
- Signed Approval of Research Proposal Page (1-page) (last page of this document for template)

If you have any questions about this competition, please contact:

Dr. Kiran Pohar Manhas, Assistant Scientific Director, NRV SCN

Phone: 587-774-7734 Email: kiran.poharmanhas@ahs.ca



Approval of Research Proposal - Signatures

Required for the NRV SCN 2023 Research Grant – Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson’s Disease & Quality of Care Competition

Principal Investigator

Name (printed) Signature Date

Co-Principal Investigator (if required)

Name (printed) Signature Date

Department Head (or Executive Director)

Name (printed) Signature Date

Signature from Research Office (or delegate)

Name (printed) Signature Date