

BCNRI Investigative Team Program Guidelines and Application Procedures

BC Nursing Research Initiative (BCNRI)

Vision

Better health outcomes for British Columbians and a high quality work life for nurses achieved through excellent, practice-relevant health services research focused on the roles of nurses within the context of the broad health services practice community.

INTRODUCTION

*Funded by the BC Ministry of Health Services through the BC Nursing Research Initiative (BCNRI), the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) **announces a new competition that will provide infrastructure support for one investigative team to undertake practice-relevant nursing health services research in the area of Care Delivery.***

This program was developed with the advice of the Nursing Research Advisory Council (NRAC). It is one of several programs funded through this initiative to build capacity for and to support practice-relevant health services research focused on the roles of nurses within the context of the broad health services practice community.

For more information on the BC Nursing Research Initiative: http://www.msfhr.org/special_initiatives/nursing_research_initiative

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- *To provide financial support for one team of researchers and practitioners to plan, develop and implement a program of research in the BCNRI priority area of Care Delivery.*
- *Funding will be available to cover the costs of research infrastructure and associated capacity building and knowledge exchange activities.*
- *The award will be up to \$200,000 per year for four years - \$50,000 of the first-year funds may be used as seed research operating funds.*
- *The team must consist of a **minimum** of six members, three BC researchers and three BC practitioners, working together in a clearly demonstrated and meaningful partnership.*
- *The team must be co-led by two individuals based in BC – one a representative of the academic community and one from the practice community. At least one co-leader should be a nurse or nurse researcher.*
- *The team must include representation from more than one BC health authority and one BC post-secondary institution.*

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 4:30 P.M. April 28, 2010

I. Program Description

The Investigative Team Program will provide funding to support a research team focused on **practice-relevant nursing health services research** in the following BCNRI priority research area:

- Care Delivery: exploring innovations in health service delivery to better meet the needs of clients, nurses and the health system across the full spectrum of health services, with a focus on
 - New models of health service delivery
 - New models of staffing: defining the skill mix of nurses, or nurses working with other health professionals, for achieving optimum team composition in the delivery of safe, efficient and effective services.

The research program undertaken within the context of this priority area may include research that addresses other BCNRI research priorities as appropriate (see Appendix A for full description of all BCNRI research priorities).

The primary use of the funding will be to cover the costs of research infrastructure to implement a program of research and to cover the associated knowledge exchange and capacity building activities. A limited amount of funding is available through this program for use only in the first year of the award as seed funding to assist with preliminary data collection and associated research activities (see IV. Amount and Term of Award for details). Teams are expected to apply to other sources such as provincial and national granting agencies, health authorities and industry to support their research operating expenses. They may also apply to the other research funding programs offered by the BCNRI.

Specific Program Objectives

1. Support an investigative team to plan and implement a program of practice-relevant nursing health services research that explores new models of staffing and service delivery, with a focus on optimal team composition of nurses and/or nurses working with other health professionals, in the delivery of safe, efficient and effective health services. The program of research should be provincial in scope. It should include provision for synthesizing and disseminating current research knowledge, developing and prioritizing research questions, and conducting research (both short and longer term projects) to address knowledge gaps in the priority area.
2. Build substantial partnerships between researchers and practitioners across BC to:
 - identify and address research questions that will produce practical and relevant results; and
 - develop, implement and evaluate strategies to support knowledge exchange activities designed to support the dissemination and uptake of research findings by the target audience(s) and for the target audience(s) to inform the development of research questions.
3. Develop and sustain nursing health services research capacity in BC's practice, policy and academic communities through team interactions (internally and externally with the broader practice and research community) and through training strategies.

4. Leverage additional peer reviewed and other funding from other regional, provincial, national and international sources to support the team to undertake research projects and associated knowledge brokering activities.

II. Definitions

Within the context of this program, MSFHR and the BCNRI employ the following definitions:

Health services research: (source: CIHR Grants and Awards Guide – 2008-2009):

“Research with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health care system, through changes to practice and policy. Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies and personal behaviours affect access to health care, the quality and cost of health care, and ultimately, Canadians’ health and well-being.”

Practice-relevant research: (source: King G, Currie M, Smith L, Servais M, McDougall J. A framework of operating models for interdisciplinary research programs in clinical service organizations. *Eval Program Plann* 2008; 31(2):160-173)

Research that is done in partnership and is informed by different perspectives; respects the content and procedural knowledge (i.e., “know how”) of practitioners and decision makers; and addresses the reality of client- or family-centered practice.

Practitioner: An individual directly involved in the development and implementation of health policy within BC at a provincial or regional level and/or the delivery of publicly funded health services offered in BC.

Researcher: A researcher is an individual who holds or has recently held research operating funds as either a principal or co-investigator at the time this competition closes. Such funding must be from an organization that uses a peer-review process for making funding decisions and is open to all researchers in BC.

Nurse: Refers to the full range of regulated nursing roles within the health services practice community.

III. Eligibility

1. An Investigative Team must be a partnership comprised of BC researchers and practitioners. Team members must demonstrate a commitment to work together to identify and conduct research to answer practice-relevant nursing health services research questions in the priority area. The research should lead to new knowledge that would be relevant and useful to practitioners in BC health authorities and the Ministry of Health Services. Team members must also work together to develop, implement and evaluate strategies to support the dissemination and uptake of research results by the target audience(s) and to ensure that the practice community has opportunities to inform the current and future research directions of the team.

2. The Investigative Team must have a **minimum** of six BC participants, comprised of three researchers and three practitioners. The team must be able to demonstrate its ability to be responsive to provincial research needs by the inclusion of representation from more than one BC health authority and more than one BC post-secondary institution.
3. The team must be co-led by two individuals who are based in BC; one representing the academic community and one representing the practice community. At least one of the co-leaders should be a nurse or nurse researcher. There should also be strong representation of nurses on the team and representation from other health professions as appropriate to the research focus.
4. A team with more than the minimum six members will be expected to maintain a meaningful balance of representation from both the academic and practice communities. Teams are cautioned against getting too large to be able to function effectively.
5. Teams are encouraged to include members from less traditional health research areas (e.g., business, education) to capitalize on the expertise they offer.
6. Teams may include members from outside of BC when they bring expertise or experience that is not available in BC. These individuals are not to be counted as meeting the minimum number of team members required for this application.
7. Teams must be sponsored by the organization of one of the co-leaders. That organization must have signed a memorandum of understanding with MSFHR for the administration of grant funds (for a list of eligible organizations please go to http://www.msfhr.org/resources/public/Funding/MOU_List_of_Institutions.pdf).
8. All team members must have the support of their organizations to participate in the team and its activities. This includes a commitment from the organization to work with the team co-leads to replace a practitioner who must leave the team due to a change in job responsibilities or other reason.

IV. Amount and Term of Award

An award of up to \$200,000 per year for a maximum of four years is available to support the research infrastructure to facilitate the development and implementation of the research program, and to support the associated knowledge exchange and capacity-building activities. During the first year **only**, up to \$50,000 of the grant may be used as seed research project funding.

At the end of the second year, the team's performance will be externally reviewed to determine their eligibility and the funding level for the next two years. The Foundation reserves the right to terminate an award for lack of progress.

Start-up Funding

If no team meets the qualifications for full funding in the priority area, a team start-up grant of up to \$100,000 for up to one year may be considered to enable a team with demonstrated potential to complete further development while initiating planning, research, capacity-building and knowledge exchange activities. The team is expected to re-apply to the program for full funding

within one year of receiving the start-up grant. If the team is not successful in this second application, no further funding will be awarded. At its discretion and depending upon the availability of funding, BCNRI may call for a new round of applications to the Investigative Team Program.

Renewal Funding

For a team that is awarded full funding, there may be provision for the team to apply for a second award term at the end of its first four-year term (length and funding level to be determined), provided the area is deemed a priority for funding and funds are available. Eligibility to apply will be based on the team's demonstrated success in achieving research outcomes, capacity building and knowledge exchange outcomes and leveraging of external funding.

V. Reporting Requirements

The team will be required to submit yearly progress reports that outline the progress it has made in research, as well as the capacity building and knowledge exchange activities undertaken in the previous year. The team will also be asked to outline its plans for such activities in the upcoming year. A more comprehensive report will be required in the second and fourth years than that required in year one and year three as these reports will be externally reviewed.

VI. How to Apply

There is a two stage application process.

- Stage I – Preliminary Application
- Stage II – Full Proposal

Stage I – Preliminary Application

The Stage I Preliminary Application must be submitted by April 28, 2010 and consists of:

- Preliminary Application Cover Form (available on the MSFHR website); and
- Project Summary:
 - The Summary should not exceed nine pages.
 - References should be attached as an additional page (maximum one page)
 - Letters of support for the research direction of the team may also be attached as additional pages. These should not be form letters signed by multiple individuals; they should be individualized, clearly articulating why they support the research program. Letters of support from team members will not be accepted.

To be eligible for review, all submissions must adhere to the following instructions for presentation:

- All materials, except appendices, must be a minimum 11 point size, Arial (regular), single-spaced, on one side of a letter size (21.25 x 27.5 cm / 8.5" x 11") page, with a one-inch margin on all sides of the page.
- All print must be black, of letter quality and easy to read.
- Do not exceed the nine page limit for the Project Summary.

The **Summary** must include the following, labelled accordingly and in the sequence described below. (Suggested page lengths for each section are provided to assist preparation.)

1. Research Focus (1 page)

Describe the research focus of the team, and how it will address practice-relevant nursing health services and policy research issues within the priority area. Teams must clearly demonstrate that the issues the team will address are a priority for more than one health authority or are a priority for one health authority and the MOHS. Existing teams must demonstrate how their current and past activities fit with the priority area or how they will expand their team and activities to address the priority area.

2. Team Structure and Accountability (1-2 pages)

- The name, position and affiliation of each team member; how s/he qualifies as a researcher or practitioner; role in and expected contributions to the team and the amount of time s/he will commit to the team's activities related to the priority topic.
- How the team will function to ensure inclusion and active participation of all members and ensure regular sharing of issues, planning, decisions and results among members of the investigative team.
- A description of the team's accountability and governance mechanisms, i.e. the person(s) and pathway(s) that will be accountable for ensuring that the funds will be used for the purposes outlined in the application and that appropriate mechanisms are in place for the team to function in accordance with program objectives and guidelines.

3. Research Plan (1-2 pages)

It is anticipated that only a **preliminary** research plan will be developed at the preliminary application stage. However, the plan should outline how the team will identify and prioritize the research questions, some of the anticipated types of questions, the possible methodological approaches to be employed, the likely generalizability of the results and a proposed research timeline. The plan should take into consideration both short and longer term projects to address the identified research needs within the priority area. A more detailed research plan will be required for the submission of the full proposal for Stage II.

4. Capacity-Building (1/2 to 1 page)

Briefly outline how the team's activities will build capacity for practice-relevant nursing health services research (in academia, health authorities and/or MOHS), describing who will benefit and how they will benefit from the capacity building activities. Capacity building can be accomplished through team interactions (internally and externally with the broader practice and research community) and through other training strategies. Involvement of students is strongly encouraged.

5. Knowledge Exchange (1/2 to 1 page)

Outline the strategies the team will use to plan for and facilitate knowledge exchange with relevant target groups and stakeholders. Consideration should be given to how the team will ensure its visibility within the practice setting.

6. Four-year Projected Budget (1 page)

Describe the funds to be used for personnel support (including, if necessary, the potential buy-out of time for members of the investigative team), research operating costs (maximum \$50,000 in year one only), travel, knowledge exchange activities, and other

research-related expenses. Please refer to the list of Eligible and Ineligible Expenses (Appendix B). Other points to be included in this section are:

- A brief description and justification of the main budget expenditures;
- Sufficient detail to allow for an assessment of the eligibility of these contributions; and
- A proposed total budget, specifying the contributions of each potential co-sponsor (if applicable), and the nature of the contribution.

Existing research groups must indicate what funding they currently have and how the requested funds will supplement, not replace, current funding.

7. Plan for Leveraging Additional Funding (1/3 to 1/2 page)

Describe the team's plan for leveraging additional funding for support of research operating expenses and other team activities, indicating the anticipated timeline for receipt of such funding.

Evaluation of the Preliminary Application

MSFHR staff will conduct an initial review of the preliminary application for eligibility. Those that do not meet the program guidelines will not be eligible for further consideration. The criteria to be used for the preliminary review are:

- Team composition meets the requirements (at least six members, including a minimum of three researchers and three practitioners (as described in [III. Eligibility](#)).
- The research addresses the priority area.
- The application is complete and presented in the manner requested.

An external merit review panel will assess eligible preliminary applications based on the following criteria:

- Quality of the Investigative Team
 - The experience and skills of the researchers on the team as these relate to the team focus and research plan
 - Appropriateness and expertise of those representing the practitioners on the team as these relate to the team focus and research plan
 - The nature and extent of the involvement of all members of the Investigative Team
 - Potential value-added by the team approach
 - Structure and accountability mechanisms in place to support activities of the team as defined within the context of this program
- Potential impact
 - Significance of the proposed research for advancing knowledge within the priority area of care delivery
 - Process and rationale for the selection of the research questions
 - Potential for the team's knowledge exchange activities to bring research into practice and for the practice community to influence research directions
 - Potential impact of the proposed research on patient/client health outcomes and/or the health system
 - Potential for improving the quality of work life for nurses
 - Potential for building and sustaining practice relevant nursing health services research capacity among all stakeholders (academia and practice)
 - Potential for increasing the visibility of BC nursing health services research

Stage II – Full Proposal

A select number of highly rated Stage I applicants will be invited to submit full proposals for Stage II of the application process. Application forms and guidelines will be provided at that time. All applicants will be notified of the status of their preliminary application by June 18, 2010.

VII. Timelines

Deadline for Stage I Preliminary Applications: **4:30 p.m., April 28, 2010**

Invitation to submit a Stage II Full Proposal: **June 18, 2010**

Deadline for Stage II Full Proposals: **September 21, 2010**

Anticipated implementation (release of funding): **December 1, 2010**

VIII. Inquiries/Submissions

For inquiries please contact Valerie To, Program Coordinator, Special Initiatives, phone: 604-714-2783 or vto@msfhr.org

One hard copy (with original signatures) and one electronic copy of the completed Stage I Preliminary Application (with cover form) must be submitted to:

Nancy Mathias, Senior Director, Special Initiatives
Health Services and Policy Research Support Network
Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research
200 – 1285 W. Broadway
Vancouver, BC, V6H 3X8
Email: nmathias@msfhr.org

Deadline for the receipt of completed Stage I applications is 4:30 p.m. April 28, 2010.

If only the electronic copy is received by the deadline, the hard copy must be couriered to MSFHR on the day of the competition deadline and received within 48 hours to be considered eligible.

All applications received will be acknowledged by email within 48 hours following receipt.

BCNRI Investigative Team Program

Appendix A – BC Nursing Research Initiative Research Priority Areas

Health Services Research

1. Care Delivery

Exploring innovations in health service delivery to better meet the needs of clients, nurses and the health system across a full spectrum of services from health promotion, prevention, treatment, and care management, to palliative and end-of-life care.

- New models of health service delivery.
- New models of staffing: defining the skill mix of nurses or nurses working with other health professionals for achieving optimum team composition in the delivery of safe, efficient and effective services.

2. Nursing Health Human Resources

- Exploring innovations that enhance recruitment and retention of the nursing workforce.

3. Practice-Relevant Education

- Under-graduate, graduate and specialty education related to clinical judgment and skills.
- Education for nursing practice; supporting nurses to adapt to and implement changes in health services delivery to meet the needs and improve health outcomes of diverse populations.
- Best practice for orienting and mentoring newly recruited nurses.

4. Impact of Policy Decisions on the Quality and Safety of the Practice (Work) Environment

- Research that evaluates the impact (intended and unintended) on the practice environment resulting from the implementation of policy change.

5. Proactive Approaches to Enhancing Quality and Safety of the Practice Environment

- Innovative promotion and prevention strategies that enhance the quality and safety of the work environment for nurses.

BCNRI Investigative Team Program

Appendix B - Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

I. General Principles

BCNRI Investigative Team Program funds must be used for shared infrastructure that supports the planning and implementation of health services research, its facilitation and support, and the team's knowledge exchange and capacity-building activities.

Funds should be used to support shared resources that benefit multiple team members rather than individuals. Funds should be used effectively and efficiently, and should not be used to fund items that would normally be funded by a host institution.

Award recipients may seek approval to fund items not included on this list of eligible and ineligible expenses, and/or items not included in the original funding proposal, so long as those items comply with the principles above. In such cases, approval must be obtained from MSFHR prior to making any expenditures.

MSFHR reserves the right to withhold approval of expenses that do not satisfy the principles above, and to seek reimbursement of funds used for ineligible expense items.

Expenses have been categorized into four broad groups:

- Human Resources
- Services and Supplies
- Travel
- Other

II. Human Resources

Eligible expenses

- Salaries and benefits for administrative and coordinating staff
- Severance for staff paid by the BCNRI Investigative Team Program funds with the following caveats:
 - (a) That the amount to be paid must be related to the length of time the person has been employed on the Investigative Team grant (not total length of service with the employer); and
 - (b) That these payments are only eligible in cases where the employee's salary is paid by the grant (i.e. not paid by the institution); and
 - (c) That these payments should be in proportion to the percentage of the employee's salary that is paid by the grant.

- Buy-out/release time from work, teaching or clinical activities, capped to a combined maximum of \$25,000 CDN per year for either of the co-leaders (recognizing the amount of administrative time required), and any team members who do not have “conducting research” as part of their job description.
 - Buy-out/release time must be justified, must be used exclusively for replacement cost of the co-leader/team member at his/her institution/organization, and must be accompanied by a letter of support from the co-leader’s/team member’s institution/organization.

Non-eligible expenses

- Salaries and benefits for researchers and other team members (with the exception described in point three, Human Resources Eligible expenses).
- Other fees and/or honoraria for university employees.
- Stipends and salaries for students and trainees (including post-doctoral fellows).

III. Services and Supplies

Eligible expenses

- Fees for consultants (other than team members) providing administrative, technical or other research support services.
- Costs for personal computers for staff supported by the BCNRI Investigative Team infrastructure funds to a maximum of \$1,800 CDN per computer.
- Costs for printers/faxes for staff supported by BCNRI Investigative Team infrastructure funds up to a total combined maximum of \$750 CDN.
- Costs for office support, including supplies, telecommunications, stationery, photocopying, and network or internet access (including webcams but not including the purchase or maintenance of network/computer servers or photocopiers).
- Shared resources such as shared research-related software (e.g., statistical packages).

Non-eligible expenses

- Office and equipment costs associated with purchase, leasing, warranty, maintenance and service (with the exception of the specific equipment items listed in the eligible expenses list).
- Capital costs, including costs associated with construction, renovation or rental of offices, laboratories or other supporting facilities.
- Costs of purchasing and maintaining research animals.
- Purchase of alcohol.

IV. Travel

Eligible expenses

- Travel to attend workshops and meetings for the purpose of supporting research and collaborations.
- Travel for speakers and other invited guests.

Non-eligible expenses

- Travel for candidates under recruitment consideration, or for relocation purposes.

V. Other

Eligible expenses

- Costs associated with bringing researchers, practitioners and policy makers together for the purpose of networking and the development of research collaborations.
- Costs associated with the planning and implementation of knowledge exchange activities.
- Honoraria or gifts for speakers and other invited guests to a maximum value of \$500 CDN per person.
- **Only during Year 1**, a maximum of \$50,000 CDN of the award may be used to support direct research costs, including seed and pilot funding and fees paid to research subjects for research projects that have met the organization's ethics approval requirements.

Non-eligible expenses

- Direct research costs, including seed and pilot funding and fees paid to research subjects (with the exception described in point four, Other Eligible Expenses)
- Secondary grants and awards issued by, or on behalf of, the award recipient.
- Cash contribution for the purpose of matching funds.
- Costs associated with fee submissions to Ethics Review Boards or other regulatory bodies, or the operations of such entities.
- Patent-related expenses.
- Facility operating costs such as:
 - general research administration (human resources, finances, purchasing, etc),
 - overhead charges,
 - recruitment,
 - library holdings and library operations,
 - facilities (offices, laboratories, space rental, furniture, utilities),
 - facilities maintenance, cleaning and renovation,
 - security and insurances.

All items not otherwise specified should be deemed non-eligible expenses unless prior approval from MSFHR is received.