2019 Systematic Review Grant Competition
Call for Proposals

August 2019
Scientific Office
Critical Care Strategic Clinical Network
2019 Systematic Review Grant Competition

BACKGROUND

The Critical Care Strategic Clinical Network (CC SCN) Scientific Office was created to lead Alberta Health Services (AHS) in the promotion, adoption and diffusion of innovation as well as the creation and use of evidence to drive decision-making in critical care medicine. The SCN Scientific Offices pursue six pillars of activity:

1. Advancing Research Knowledge
2. Knowledge Translation
3. Research Facilitation
4. Engaging and Building Partnerships for Research and Innovation
5. Research Capacity Building and Training
6. Research Prioritization

The CC SCN Scientific Office has identified several key activities that may support these pillars. One such activity includes the provision of research funding to support the completion of high quality systematic literature reviews which address issues in critical care medicine.

Systematic reviews of primary research are considered to be the highest standard in evidence-based health care. The purpose of this funding call is to offer timely, relevant and scientifically rigorous evidence to critical care medicine decision-makers and knowledge-users in Alberta. In addition to achieving the goal of Building Research Capacity, this funding opportunity also serves to engage and collaborate with the network of academic researchers established by the CC SCN Scientific Office. Further, this funding call supports the AHS Strategy for Clinical Health Research Innovation and Analytics, which endorses partnerships with academic researchers at Alberta universities.

This Systematic Review Grant competition will encourage the development of implementable and scalable ideas that will improve the quality of critical care medicine care delivery within the Health Quality Council of Alberta’s six domains of quality: appropriateness, accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency, safety, and acceptability. This competition will advance the CC SCN Scientific Office’s long-term research goals, which are aligned with the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences’ performance indicators: (1) advancing knowledge; (2) capacity building; (3) informing decision making; (4) health impacts; and (5) broad economic and social impacts.

ELIGIBILITY

The review process will consider the following criteria:

- Principal investigator (PI) must have a university appointment at one of Alberta’s academic institutions (e.g., clinical faculty or academic faculty such as adjunct/assistant/associate/full professors).
  - The money must be held in a research account under the PI’s name at the academic institution.
- The review team must be comprised of more than one individual and include a medical librarian and/or information specialist;
The review team must be comprised of at least one member with an MD or a PhD in a discipline relevant to critical care medicine (i.e., content knowledge);
Past experience in conducting research relevant to critical care medicine;
Past experience in conducting systematic literature reviews is essential;
Priority will be given to proposals that align with CC SCN Priority Areas as per the CC SCN Transformational Roadmap.

Principal Investigators (PIs) may only hold one CC SCN Systematic Review award at a time; however, PIs may be co-investigators on multiple applications. PIs who received a CC SCN systematic review grant in the previous year may not be funded as PIs this year, however they may be Co-Investigators.

**TASKS TO BE PERFORMED**

1) Clearly define the research question that is relevant to critical care medicine in Alberta;
2) Prepare a protocol and register the protocol on PROSPERO;
3) Conduct a systematic search of the literature where information sources and search strategies are clearly described (including the grey literature) with the assistance of a trained medical librarian;
4) Employ strategies to mitigate publication and selection bias;
5) Describe and utilize a method to assess risk of bias of individual studies;
6) Describe and utilize a formal methodology for analyzing and summarizing the results;
7) Employ an accepted methodology for grading the level of evidence and the strength of recommendations of the findings;
8) Prepare a written report for the CC SCN Scientific Office which documents the literature review and analysis including the research question, methodology and conclusions; provide a short presentation at a CC SCN Core Committee meeting following completion of the project.

**FUNDING**

The maximum amount of a single award is $10,000; however, lesser amounts and co-funding projects are encouraged. The maximum amount of funds available in this competition is $20,000.

**Funds must be expended within one year** from the time they are made available and projects should be completed within this year.

The time frame and associated expenses must be clearly justified in the budget. The grant is **non-renewable**.

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 and software;
- Other expenses will be considered, but must be justified.
Funding will NOT be provided for:
- Travel to conferences, meetings, symposia or presentations;
- Expenses incurred prior to implementation of the grant;
- Computer & equipment purchases;
- Principal Investigator salaries;
- Legal or patent fees, membership fees, academic fees, secretarial support.

**Budget Review**
The CC SCN Scientific Director and Assistant Scientific Director will review the budget section of those proposals selected by the Review Panel to receive funding. Applicants may be asked to revise their proposed budgets at the discretion of the CC SCN Scientific Director and / or Assistant Scientific Director in order to comply with funding program policies.

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Investigators will be required to keep separate, accurate, and up-to-date accounts and records of the receipt and expenditure of the funding monies received, as well as all invoices, receipts and accounts and any other relevant documents relating to the expenditure of the funding. The CC SCN Scientific Office will retain the right to review, at reasonable request, the accounts and records that relate to the expenditure of the funding and will have the right to hold copies of such accounts and records.

Investigators will be required to closely monitor the delivery and success of the project throughout the funding period to ensure that milestones are being met and deliverables are being provided. Investigators will provide the CC SCN Scientific Office with a final report on completion of the funding period which will confirm whether the project has been successfully and properly completed.

Successful investigators will be invited to present their findings to the CC SCN™ Core Committee. This is an opportunity for dissemination and knowledge translation of findings to key health system decision makers and provides an opportunity to identify potential future collaborations.

All publications, including public messages, arising from this grant will acknowledge the support of the CC SCN. The following statement should be included in the Acknowledgements section of the publication:

"Research reported in this publication was supported by the Alberta Health Services Critical Care Strategic Clinical Network (CC SCN). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the views of the CC SCN Scientific Office or Alberta Health Services”.

**TIMELINES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>August 1, 2019</td>
<td>Call for Systematic Review Grant Applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 18, 2019</td>
<td>Applications Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 15, 2019</td>
<td>Notification of Awards</td>
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PROGRAM POLICIES

1. Applicants may only apply once to the Systematic Review Grant Competitions as a Principal Applicant but may be a Co-Applicant on multiple applications.
2. PIs who received an CC SCN systematic review grant in the previous year may not be funded as PIs this year; however, they may be Co-Investigators.
3. PIs must be affiliated with an Alberta-based academic institution.
4. **Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
5. Any unused funds at the end of the award term must be returned to the CC SCN Scientific Office for use towards future research funding opportunities.
6. Failure to submit a final report within 2 months of completing the systematic review will disqualify the PI from future funding. A template will be provided for the final report.
7. Important changes to the proposed study protocol must be reported to the CC SCN Scientific Office immediately. If changes are deemed to be substantial departures from the original application, the grant may be closed and in this case the funds must be returned.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

All submitted proposals will first be reviewed by the CC SCN Scientific Office to determine the eligibility of the proposed research given the funding program policies.

Those applications which pass through this first evaluative step will then be reviewed and scored by members of an independent academic Review Panel according to 3 major criteria using a 5-point scale:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expertise of the Investigative Team</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic track record and historical research productivity of the principal applicant.</td>
<td>/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills and experience of the investigative team to conduct a systematic review.</td>
<td>/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate content knowledge of the topic to be reviewed by members of the investigative team.</td>
<td>/5</td>
</tr>
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| **Quality of the Proposed Methods** |       |
| Background evidence to justify the review/demonstrate significance of the problem. | /5 |
| Clarity of the research question. | /5 |
| Systematic review is an appropriate way to address the research question. | /5 |
| Appropriateness of inclusion criteria, search strategies, critical appraisal methodology, and data collection/synthesis. | /5 |
| Feasibility of the project (e.g. proposed work is accomplishable in the timeline given, literature exists on the subject to support a systematic review) | /5 |

| **Potential Impact for Critical Care Medicine** |       |
| Alignment of proposed research with CC SCN priority areas. | /5 |
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| Results could be published in a peer-reviewed journal | /5 |
| Potential to inform improvement in patient outcomes/policy development/health services delivery (as applicable) for critical care within Alberta and beyond, considering the size and healthcare needs of the patient population to be impacted. | /5 |

**Total** /55

**Scoring:** 5 = Outstanding  4 = Very Good  3 = Good  2 = Fair  1 = Poor  NP = Not Provided

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**HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING**

1. Systematic review proposals will be limited to a **maximum of 5 pages** using the template provided below. **Extra pages beyond the 5-page limit will be discarded.** References, Research Services Office (RSO) Signature page, and the Principal Investigator Bio Sketch are NOT included in the 5 page limit.
2. Appendices of up to 2 pages are allowed (including references).
3. The Principal Investigator must submit a Bio Sketch using the templates provided (**no other Bio Sketches will be reviewed**). 
4. Complete budget details and justification must be included.
5. Please compile your application (**5 pages maximum**), references, and RSO signature page(s) into a single PDF document. **Keep the Principal Investigator’s BioSketch as a separate PDF document.**

Email the PDF application and the Principal Investigator’s BioSketch to: samantha.bowker@ahs.ca with the subject line “**Principal Investigator Name 2019 CC SCN SR Grant Application**” by **Friday, OCTOBER 18, 2018 16:00 (MST).** Late applications will **NOT be accepted.**

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**FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS**

1. Type application on letter-sized (8.5” x 11”) paper.
2. Use Times New Roman font, 12 point size, black type only
3. Single line spacing. No condensing of text, vertically or horizontally.
4. Minimum 1” margins (top, bottom and sides) on all pages, including attachments.
5. Indicate the page number clearly at the bottom, right hand corner of each page.
6. Include Principal Investigator name in the header of each page.
Title of Proposed Review:

Review Team Members
(Please list the names of all review team members, their roles, tasks, current job title and employer using the table provided below.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Current Job Title &amp; Employer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr./Ms/Mr. Xxx</td>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. Principal Investigator, Research Assistant, Librarian, Reviewer, Etc.</td>
<td>e.g. Leading review, research design, study review and appraisal, etc.</td>
<td>e.g. Professor, University of Alberta</td>
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Definitions:
Principal Applicant: the individual responsible for the direction of the research project
Co-investigator: an individual who contributes to and participates in the proposed research project activities
Collaborator: an individual whose role in the proposed activities is to provide a specific service (e.g., access to equipment, training or education, statistical analysis, access to a patient population, etc.)

**NOTE: At least one study team member must have Alberta Health Services (AHS) affiliation.**

Experience of the Review Team
(Please provide a brief summary of the experience your team has in conducting the proposed study. The review team should be comprised of members with sector experience in critical care medicine, members with experience/knowledge in conducting systematic literature reviews, an experienced librarian to supervise the search strategy and members with appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods knowledge to interpret analyses in the literature and perform any proposed meta-analysis.)

Background
(Please provide a brief outline of the issue that this systematic review will address. Indicate the current state of existing evidence.)

Research Question
(Please state the research question that is relevant to critical care medicine in Alberta)

Review Methods
(Please indicate how you will conduct the review using the following headings.)

Inclusion Criteria
Population
Intervention
Comparisons
Outcome(s)
Study designs to be included

Detailed Search Methodology

Study Selection and Quality Assessment

Data Extraction/Analysis

Subgroups and Sensitivity Analyses

Potential Impact for Critical Care Medicine in Alberta
(Please describe how the results from this review will impact health services delivery or policy creation/implementation for critical care medicine in Alberta.)

Timeline
(It is important that the review team has dedicated time to complete the proposed work. Please provide a timetable/schedule for all tasks included in the proposed study.)

Budget
(Please list and justify all requested funds (up to a maximum of $10,000) to complete this proposed study.)

References (not included in 5-page limit)

Signature Page(s) (not included in 5-page limit)
A complete, signed signature page from the Research Services Office (or equivalent) of the Principal Investigator’s academic institution (i.e., the institution that will administer the research funds) must be attached.

- Processes and forms vary by institution. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that all institutional requirements have been met prior to submitting the application to the CC SCN™.
- Please note that the institutional deadlines for approvals may be several days earlier than the CC SCN™ deadline. Be sure to allow sufficient time to obtain all required signatures.
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**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR BIO SKETCH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION TITLE</th>
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**EDUCATION/TRAINING** *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, and include postdoctoral training.)*

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<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION AND LOCATION</th>
<th>DEGREE (if applicable)</th>
<th>YEAR(s)</th>
<th>FIELD OF STUDY</th>
</tr>
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**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE/EMPLOYMENT** *(list past 15 years)*

**SELECTED PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS** *(list 10 maximum)*

**PUBLISHED ABSTRACTS** *(list 10 maximum)*

**CURRENT FUNDING:** *(list)*
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Signature Page

PrincipaI Investigator:

________________________________________________________

Signature Date

University Department Head:

________________________________________________________

Signature Date

University Associate Dean:

________________________________________________________

Signature Date

University Research Office:

________________________________________________________

Signature Date