Interior Universities Research Coalition (IURC) BC Interior Region Seed Grant Research Fund Call for Proposals: Long-Term Health Care Issues

The Opportunity

The Interior Universities Research Coalition (IURC) and the BC Ministry of Health (MoH) have established a *BC Interior Region Seed Grant Research Fund* that aims to encourage inter-institutional research, in health-related areas, between researchers at Thompson Rivers University, the University of Northern British Columbia, and the University of British Columbia (Okanagan).

This call for proposals is focused on research relating to the following themes in long-term care (LTC):

1. **Health and human resource impact**

   (Evaluation of programmes, evaluation of health services, impact of disease, treatment, and control measures, analysis of vulnerabilities and resiliencies and structural issues contributing to these)

Emerging questions:

- What is the impact on individuals working in this sector; for example, their experience of moral distress?
- Given pre-pandemic staffing shortages, what strategies are required to effectively recruit sufficient, qualified staff?
- Given the grim picture painted of LTC homes in the public eye regarding quality of care and service, and quality of life, how has that impacted staff recruitment? Waitlists for long-term care? Public opinion about LTC? Staff's perspective of the importance of their work? Staff commitment to continuing to work in LTC?
- Do the staffing models in BC achieve evidence-based best practises that have been identified for the current LTC populations and subpopulations?
- Given the varied models of medical care in LTC settings, were outcomes and experiences during the pandemic influenced by the configuration of medical care (nurse practitioner, dedicated medical staffing, care by community-based physicians)? What were the patterns (numbers, frequency, appropriateness) of direct medical care services (for both COVID-19 related and unrelated issues) provided to residents in facilities experiencing outbreaks and those that did not?
- How have outbreaks/infection control protocols and changes in policies affected staff and volunteer retention, access to personal protective equipment (PPE), education and awareness of infection control measures?

2. **Implementing, evaluating, and monitoring best practice: scaling up local innovation**
   (Evaluation of programmes; evaluation of health services; analysis of vulnerabilities and resiliencies and structural issues contributing to these)

Emerging questions:

- The pandemic has prompted localized innovations (e.g., front-door ambassadors, connecting with family via Zoom). What can be learned from these practices? Are they sustainable? Can they help prepare LTC for future crises?
- How has technology mitigated the challenges with COVID-19? For example, how has the addition of technology for family visits impacted resident wellbeing? How has this impacted care staff? Are

other care duties being missed to accommodate linking residents and families? Which technology introduction is identified as the most acceptable – to staff? To families? To residents?

- Simultaneously, while best practices in infection control may be identified, what happens when facilities are challenged to communicate and/or maintain best practices? What are the most effective mechanisms by which residents and family can raise their concerns and avoid being labelled as troublemakers? What policy or processes need to be refined? In what way? Why?

Important Dates
Submission Deadline: March 1, 2021
Funding Start Date: Upon IURC receipt of funds from MoH
Interim report: October 31, 2021
Final Report: April 30, 2022

Value and Duration
Proposals must involve two or more of the participating IURC universities. Funding is available for one year, to a maximum of $50,000 per project.

Adjudication
Funds are awarded on the basis of merit of the proposal, team members' research excellence and Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) training. The funds will be adjudicated by an IURC adjudication committee, with representation from MoH, a representative from Northern Health, and a representative from the Interior Academic Health Science Consortium.

Eligibility
Full-time faculty with ongoing or tenure-track appointments are eligible to apply. Those holding sessional or term appointments may contribute to and receive funding from an approved project, but they are not eligible to apply as Principal Applicants.

Joint research proposals can originate from any one of the three IURC institutions, and must be led/co-led by IURC researchers. Proposals must include researchers from at least two of the three IURC institutions but can also include researchers from non-IURC institutions. Teams representing early career researchers[1], and members of the four federally designated equity seeking groups are encouraged to apply. Joint research proposals across all disciplines demonstrating engagement with and/or plans to develop respectful Indigenous partnerships, and addressing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)[2] are encouraged. Collaboration with regional health authorities and other partners is strongly encouraged, as well as alignment with (and ability to leverage) other funding opportunities through the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) and/or other research funding support.

Awarded projects will have a single administrative lead Principal Applicant who will be responsible for managing all aspects of the project, including financial oversight, and will provide mid-term and final reports that describes progress to the Director of the IURC Partnership Office.

Reporting
All successful applicants are required to share their research with the MoH, and with the Tri-University Partnership Office according to the above-noted reporting schedule.

Proposal Submission Requirements
A full application as a single PDF document must be prepared according the following guidelines and must be submitted electronically to Janice.Larson@ubc.ca by 4:00 pm Pacific Time on **March 1st, 2021**.

Applications will include the followings (in order):

1. Cover page with Principal Applicant and co-applicant(s) signatures
2. Project Description (minimum two pages plus one page for bibliography).
   Project description should include:
   - A descriptive title
   - Abstract of proposed collaborative project (100 words)
   - A free-form detailed proposal addressing the evaluation criteria such that reviewers can evaluate the goals and approach of your proposed research. The description should address the mandate of this call, make a case for the uniqueness, value and impact of the proposed research and include a clear rationale for the collaborative and interdisciplinary approach, methodology employed, a work plan including timelines, knowledge mobilization plan, the anticipated research contributions and impacts.
3. Itemized budget and justification (maximum one page): Budgets may be supplemented through cash and in-kind support from participating faculties and partners, but this is not a requirement for the application.
4. Project Team
   - Full names, current positions, and role of each team member in the proposed research activity by stating what is to be done, by whom, how and when (maximum one page); and
   - Current 2-page CV(s): listing each team member's education, recent relevant publications, prior scholarly activity and any long-term research collaborations. (*CVs not complying the page limit will not be reviewed*)

Eligible Expenses

All expenses must be in compliance with the [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](). Expenses directly related to the research are eligible. Funding may be used to pay for research assistants, direct cost of the research including data procurement and analysis, travel (or virtual technology) for field work, research team activities such as meetings and workshops for the development of the partnerships, knowledge mobilization activities (cannot exceed 20% of the overall budget), and other items necessary for completion of the project (e.g., research supplies directly required for completion of the project, transcription services, technical services, etc.).

Ineligible expenses

Release time for faculty; salary and benefits for a Post-Doctoral Researcher; direct support to Graduate student research that fulfils degree requirements; funding for publication; office supplies; equipment purchases; retroactive expenses and overhead costs. (For this call, the IURC universities will waive overhead costs, ensuring that all funds received are applied to the direct costs of research).

Evaluation Criteria
- Degree to which research project aligns with the above-noted LTC health research themes
- Degree to which proposals clearly address issues of importance in British Columbia's non-metropolitan regions
- Feasibility, given the scope, timelines and the research track record of the applicants
- Quality of HQP research training, including principles of EDI
- Quality of knowledge mobilization activities
- Ability to produce tangible/recognised research impact

- Potential to secure external funding within two years from the start of the Grant
- Development of new collaborative and interdisciplinary teams. Strong applications will involve the promise of significant and potential long-term collaboration and sharing of resources among faculty members from TRU, UNBC and UBCO
- Ability to develop and enhance the applicants' research and scholarly profile
- Development and enhancement of IURC research capacity by including, where appropriate, early career researchers, women, and Indigenous faculty as part of the collaboration and an emphasis on including EDI in the research design and team composition

[1.] An ECR is defined as individuals who have five years or less experience since their first academic appointment as of May 1, 2021, with the exception of career interruptions (e.g., maternity or parental leave, extended sick leave, clinical training and family care) that occurred after their appointment. Part-time positions are also taken into consideration.

[2.] Please see NSERC statement on Equity Diversity and Inclusion for reference: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/Wpolicy-Fpolitique_eng.asp