

Neurovascular, Rehabilitation & Vision  
Strategic Clinical Network™

# 2023 Research Grant Competition:

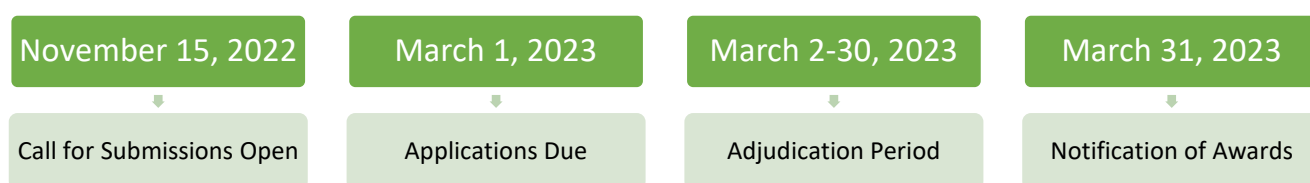
## Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease & Quality of Care in Alberta

### Call for Proposals

## Description and Timeline

The Neurosciences, Rehabilitation & Vision (NRV) Strategic Clinical Network™ (SCN) is pleased to announce this funding competition: the **2023 Research Grant – Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson’s Disease & Quality of Care in Alberta**. One (1) award of up to \$20,000 will be offered.

This funding opportunity supports research grants that generate evidence to advance the quality of care for persons with lived experience of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and/or Parkinson’s Disease (PD) in Alberta. It will support research that will promote the recognition of, or directly address, the gaps and challenges recognized by the patient, community, research, and clinical stakeholders who participated in the 2022 NRV SCN MS & PD Research Planning Summit (June 17, 2022).



## Objectives

The specific objectives of this funding opportunity are to:

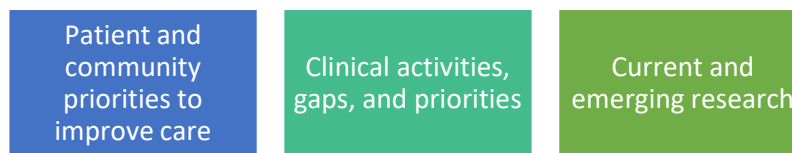
- **Support health services or policy research** on how changes to, or different approaches for, service delivery, organization, funding, governance, patient experience, models of care, system navigation, and/or patient outcomes can impact the quality of care for persons with lived experience of MS, PD or both in Alberta.
- **Ensure that the patient population** who benefits from this research funding includes (a) persons with lived experience of MS; (b) persons with PD; or (c) persons with either MS or PD.
- **Mobilize diverse methodologies, disciplines, perspectives, and knowledge mobilization** approaches to generate and share useful evidence relevant 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 the quality of care provision for persons with lived experience of MS, PD or both 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. The review committee for this grant competition may offer suggestions and support in the leveraging request, if feasible and appropriate. For example, research that includes advancement of trainee capacity may consider plans for MITACS (<https://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/accelerate>) for 1:1 matching funds.

## Context: 2022 NRV SCN MS & PD Research Planning Summit

On June 17, 2022, the Scientific Office of the NRV SCN hosted a Research Planning Summit (n=32 attendees representing patients, families, clinicians, researchers, and community organizations) to explore the following, related to the quality of care for Albertans living with MS or PD:



Through diverse panelist presentations and discussions, the NRV SCN sought to bring the MS and PD communities together to clarify areas of alignment and need for further innovation and research. The NRV SCN set aside \$20,000 CAD in research funding for 2022-2023 to advance an identified priority, with the release of funds contingent on a peer review process. This funding opportunity is the direct result of that discussion.



Significant provincial challenges relate to access, human resources, and system navigation (not mutually exclusive). Despite population diversity, similar challenges and barriers were noted in both the PD and MS communities. Current care challenges relate to inequitable, inaccessible, long-term management and preservation of function in MS and PD.

## Priority Research Areas

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

- Access to care

- Building an evidence base to demonstrate gaps in health system performance, capacity in the system
- Care integration across the care continuum
- Collaborative care models, including collaboration across Zones, professions, specialties
- Equity, including geographical inequities, inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable populations
- Improvements in clinical practice
- Development or study of models of care, clinical pathways, or care delivery systems
- Patient experience
- Patient outcomes, including quality of life, function, mental health, social isolation
- Professional training
- Resources and education (for patients, for providers)
- Sustainable health care systems, organizations, and service delivery models
- Transitions in care for patients and families

## Eligibility Criteria

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

1. Principal Investigator (PI) who 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. Project area of the research that includes one or more of the following themes of health research: clinical, health services, and/or population and public health.
4. PI who is not a member of the NRV SCN leadership.
5. PI who 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 included on the research team.

## 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) **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 (up to 3 pages maximum; 1-inch margins; 12-point font)
- 3) **Participant Table** (up to 2 pages; 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. Include those tentative team members with whom support is sought from the NRV SCN to engage
- 4) **Proposed Budget** including in-kind and other funding sources (including opportunities for leveraging) (1 page maximum; 1-inch margins; 12-point font)
- 5) **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)

## 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

## 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

## Evaluation Criteria & Review Process

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 MS, PD or both 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, books, 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 MS, PD, or both
- 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.

<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Range</b>
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

## 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.

## 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.

## 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](mailto: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

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Name (printed)	Signature	Date
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Co-Principal Investigator (if required)

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Name (printed)	Signature	Date
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Department Head (or Executive Director)

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Name (printed)	Signature	Date
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Signature from Research Office (or delegate)

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Name (printed)	Signature	Date
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