MOHCCN PATIENT VOICES IN RESEARCH AWARD REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS 2027

Purpose

This funding opportunity from the Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network (MOHCCN) will provide funding to research teams to address themes identified by the MOHCCN Patient Working Group (PWG) (see Research Themes section). Projects should explore solutions and approaches for overcoming barriers to accessing precision oncology research and care. Applicants should make it clear how their research will advance the implementation of precision oncology in Canada and be applicable to MOHCCN activities. The Patient Voices in Research award will prioritize project proposals that focus on solutions and implementation rather than exploratory research, proof of concept, or literature reviews.

Successful applicants will commit to presenting their findings and recommendations for future research, particularly within the context of the MOHCCN and future growth of the Network, to the MOHCCN PWG following the award period (2-years). We encourage collaboration among research groups and highly encourage a Pan-Canadian approach to research groups; however, a single host institution must be identified by applicants for award administration purposes.

Background

The vision of the Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network (MOHCCN) is to bring together leading cancer centres across Canada to collaborate on precision medicine developments to benefit cancer patients and drive innovation. Although precision medicine is a promising framework for cancer care, presently it only benefits a fraction of cancer patients in Canada; the Network is therefore uniting researchers, clinicians, patients, administrators, funders, and other parties across the country to close the gap between research and clinical care and accelerate precision medicine for cancer and make it a reality for all Canadians.

This funding opportunity aims to support research studies that centre patients, caregivers, and survivors and their needs as they relate to precision cancer research and care. It is driven by research themes identified by the Patient Working Group and has a goal of amplifying patient voices and priorities to elevate the quality and impact of cancer research in Canada.

For more information about MOHCCN, please visit our website, including the following reports and news releases:

- MOHCCN Phase 1 Innovation Report

- Patient Voices in Research initiative recipients (Phase 1) share their results with the Network
- MOHCCN Phase 2 Funding Announcement

Scope & Eligibility

Support under this Request for Applications (RFA) is targeted at high-quality research teams at Canadian institutions working on innovative cancer research, including various aspects of prevention, detection and diagnosis, treatment, socioeconomic and psychosocial factors surrounding cancer, health technology assessment, and learning healthcare systems. Applicants are not required to be currently affiliated with MOHCCN. Successful applicants will need to work with their institutions to sign the Network Joinder Agreement before funding can be awarded.

Applicants must include a minimum of 2 people with living/lived experience with cancer (PWLLE) on their research teams. Researchers should describe in detail how these PWLLE will be meaningfully included as collaborators on the research team at all stages of the research process. Please refer to the MOHCCN PWLLE Partnership Guideline for guidance and see the application template for this funding opportunity.

Collaboration across multiple Canadian cancer centres is encouraged, though not required. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to begin work in April 2027 and to complete work within the timeframes (see Support Offered and Conditions of Funding).

Applications should be presented in plain language as PWG members will be reviewing all applications. Scientific reviews will also be conducted. Applications must clearly respond to at least one of the research themes identified in this RFA.

Awardees from the first round of the Patient Voices in Research competition are eligible to apply to this second round. New proposed projects are expected to be distinct from the previously awarded projects; they may expand on something that was learned from the previous award but not repeat or continue research.

Lead Investigator Eligibility: For the role of lead investigator on applications, MOHCCN will be following CIHR Applicant Eligibility criteria for Principal Applicants.

- Eligible individuals include researchers, knowledge users, scholars, health professionals, undergraduates, graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.
- Individuals must be affiliated with a Canadian postsecondary institution and/or their affiliated institutions.

Research Themes

1. *Implementation and equitable access to precision oncology*

Research related to solutions and approaches for overcoming existing intersectional disparities in access to and implementation of precision oncology. Topics may include but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- Interprovincial and territorial disparities in access to services and drug coverage
- Improved access to early detection and screening
- Equitable access to precision oncology across all regions (including health authorities, smaller centres, community hospitals, and rural, remote areas)
- Equitable access to precision oncology research and care for underrepresented and underserved groups

2. *Patient centred clinical trials*
   Research related to improving the accessibility of clinical trials for patients and the promotion of patient-centric trial design in precision oncology. Topics may include but are not limited to one or more of the following:
   - Improving equitable access to clinical trials across all regions (bringing more trials to patients instead of patients to trials)
   - Designing trials that are responsive to patient identified needs and priorities including treatments to improve quality of life
   - Increasing diversity and representation in clinical trials across the age spectrum
   - Cancer agnostic trial design focusing on mutation rather than tumour site

3. *Navigational support through cancer*
   Research related to guiding patients, health care providers, caregivers, and families across the complex health care system as it relates to precision oncology. Topics may include but are not limited to one or more of the following:
   - Targeted educational resources, including cancer care navigators, to improve awareness and understanding of precision oncology in screening, diagnosis, treatment options and/or survivorship
   - Education for healthcare providers on precision oncology and clinical trials with strategies for effective and trauma-informed communication with patients
   - Guidance and solutions to reduce delays and improve coordination in precision oncology
   - Family and caregiver education, social work guidance and peer supports

4. *Comprehensive care continuum*
   Research related to enhancing quality of life for precision oncology patients related to care plans, supports and survivorship (which extends from the moment of diagnosis through the rest of the person's life). Topics may include but are not limited to one or more of the following:
   - Improving physical functioning, mental health, and emotional well-being
   - Understanding and managing long-term side effects and symptoms
   - Follow up care, transitions (e.g. moving from pediatric to adult care), on-going monitoring and palliative care plans

- Access to lifestyle interventions and complementary therapies such as physiotherapy, chiropody, acupuncture etc. and the incorporation of these into standard precision oncology care plans

5. *Rare and under-researched cancers across the age spectrum*
   Research related to accelerating progress for rare cancers, and cancers under-represented in the current research relative to their clinical needs. Topics may include but are not limited to one or more of the following:
   - Rare cancers
   - Addressing research gaps for pediatric and AYA cancers
   - Precision oncology approaches for cancers with limited treatment options including access to drugs beyond standard of care

Support Offered and Conditions of Funding

MOHCCN funding will begin April 1, 2027, and be available for a project term of up to two (2) years. Projects may apply for up to $250,000. The total envelope available for this initiative is $2,000,000 and the number of awards will be dependent on the sizes of the proposed projects (minimum 8 awards).

Through the generous support of the Terry Fox Foundation for this funding opportunity, applicants are not required to provide any matching funds for these projects. Please consult the following guidelines regarding eligible expenses and the recent Buy Canadian policy that applies to all MOHCCN funded projects:

- MOHCCN Eligible Expenditures
- Buy Canadian Guidance

Successful applications will receive their funds after execution of a standard MOHCCN Research Project Grant Agreement (RPGA), which details the funding, terms and conditions, and reporting schedules. Agreements and funds for the projects will be provided by TFRI directly to the project host institution. Only one institution per award will receive funds; as secondary or sub-granting from MOHCCN funds is not allowed, the choice of host institution should be considered carefully and collaborators (if any) who incur expenses should seek reimbursement from the host institution likely through an invoicing process.

As a pre-condition of receiving funding, the project's lead investigator (lead applicant) must be from an institution who is, or agrees to become, a member of the MOHCCN Network (see MOHCCN Membership Prerequisite below).

Timeline

1. MOHCCN Patient Voices in Research 2027 Launch: **November 19, 2026**
2. Deadline for Letters of Intent: **December 14th, 2026 (11:59pm British Columbia Time)**
   - All application materials must be submitted to MOH@TFRI.ca

3. Invitations to submit Full Applications will be sent out **by December 23rd, 2026**
4. Deadline for MOHCCN Patient Voices in Research Initiative Applications: **Monday February 1st, 2027 (11:59 p.m. Pacific Time)**
    - All application materials must be submitted to MOH@TFRI.ca
5. Review Period: **February and March 2027**
6. Award Announcement to Applicants: **April 2027**
7. Funding Start Date: **April 1, 2027**

Review Criteria

Reviewers will assess the following criteria:

- Relevance to research themes, potential for impact, innovation/originality
- PWLLE Partnership: meaningful involvement of PWLLE as partners on the research team across the full process of research development, execution, final reporting and knowledge translation. Please refer to the MOHCCN PWLLE Partnership Guideline for guidance on the expectations for this collaboration.
- Feasibility: research team readiness, assessment of the budget, investigators' qualifications
- Applicability to MOHCCN activities, advancement of precision oncology, and the future of the Network
- Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA): incorporation of EDIA principles in the development and execution of the project, potential for project to benefit diverse cancer patients including equity-deserving groups

MOHCCN Membership Prerequisite

A prerequisite to receiving MOHCCN funds through an RPGA is that the host institution in the project must first be an MOHCCN Member by agreeing to the terms of the MOHCCN Network Master Agreement though signing of a Joinder Letter. The MOHCCN Network Master Agreement and Joinder letters will be made available to any applying institution if they are not already a Network Member. Requests for these documents should be made to Jessie Micholuk (moh@tfri.ca). A membership process is a one-time event and once a Member, project funds can be provided by TFRI to the institution through one or more RPGA(s) over time. Applicants and sponsoring Institutions are expected to observe TFRI's Research Administration Policy. This includes:

a. Certificates

Before TFRI funding is made available by institutions to their respective researchers, the Applicants must first obtain from the sponsoring Institution all applicable safety certificates, including:

1. *Biohazards*. For projects involving use of biological material, a certificate guaranteeing that the project will be conducted under conditions which satisfy the Canadian Biosafety Standard (CBS) 2nd edition (2015) and the Canadian Biosafety Handbook (CBH), 2nd edition (2015). (http://canadianbiosafetystandards.collaboration.gc.ca/)

2. *Animal Care*. For projects involving use of experimental animals, a certificate guaranteeing that all animals will be cared for and studied under conditions meeting the standards set forth in the Canadian Council on Animal Care's "Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals" Vol 1 (1993). (https://www.ccac.ca/)
3. *Human Studies.* For projects involving human subjects, a certificate stating that the protocols and methods have been reviewed by the Institutional Research Ethics Board and found to be acceptable in accordance with current edition of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada: 'Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans' (2014) (www.pre.ethics.gc.ca). If studies use investigational compounds, regulatory approval from Canada's Health Protection Branch is also required.
4. *Use of Human and Biological Samples*. TFRI is committed to ensuring that highquality bio-specimens are used in research it funds, as these yield high, reproducible quality data. For this reason, TFRI requires all applicants for funding to certify that (i) all prospective (new) bio-specimens included in the TFRI-funded research will be collected in accordance with the standards set by the Canadian Tissue Repository Network (https://www.ctrnet.ca/en/resources/national-standards/) and/or the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments Act (CLIA) of the United States (https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/CLIA/index.html) and/or (ii) all retrospective (old) bio-specimens used in the TFRI-funded research have come from a CTRNet or CLIA-certified bio-repository. Links to the CTRNet certification program and registered biobanks can be found at https://biobanking.org/webs/certification. Applicants are required to submit evidence of current certification and participation in external quality assurance programs with the proposal.

b. Project Title & Use of TFRI logo

Funded applicants will be designated as a "MOHCCN Patient Voices in Research Project in [project short title]". Investigators are expected to comply with TFRI and MOHCCN Visual Identity Guidelines as appropriate, to be found at: www.tfri.ca and www.mohccn.ca

c. Employment Equity

TFRI is committed to compliance with the Canadian Employment Equity Act and to ensuring that our funded research programs provide equal employment opportunities to women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities. All Funded Applications are required to employ non-discriminatory hiring practices in their workplaces.

d. Inclusion of sex and gender in research design where appropriate

Applicants are expected to include a statement in the proposal that they have considered sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA) as appropriate. The purpose of SGBA is to promote rigorous science that is sensitive to sex and gender and therefore has the potential to expand our understanding of health determinants for all people[1].

[1] Please refer to http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50836.html for more resources on SGBA.

e. Participation and contributions to TFRI and MOHCCN

TFRI also expects the applicant and collaborators to contribute at TFRI and MOHCCN Meetings during the project's term. Applicants and collaborators may have the opportunity to join relevant MOHCCN working groups and will be invited to make recommendations for future research in the context of continued Network growth and future Network deliverables. Research teams may be invited to create new collaborations with the MOHCCN Patient Working Group and other Network members to develop further research projects and address these deliverables.

For inquiries, please contact:

Jessie Micholuk, MPH
Network Program Manager
Terry Fox Research Institute
Email: jmicholuk@tfri.ca
675 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver BC V5Z 1L3

Date: November 19, 2026