2023 Request for Applications (RFA)
Penn State Inter-Campus Health and Medicine Research Program
For Collaborative Research in Health & Medicine
between Penn State Harrisburg and the College of Medicine

A. Overview
The Penn State Inter-Campus Health and Medicine Research Program is a grant program that supports interdisciplinary and intercampus research projects in health and medicine, broadly defined. This new program was established to foster collaboration and synergy among researchers from different disciplines and campuses and to leverage the diverse expertise and resources of Penn State in the Hershey and Harrisburg region. The program aims to fund innovative and impactful research projects that address important health problems and advance the field of biomedical science. The program also seeks to enhance Penn State Harrisburg and College of Medicine’s research capacity and competitiveness and promote the translation of research findings into clinical practice and community health.

The Penn State Inter-Campus Health and Medicine Research Program will host a Hershey + Harrisburg Faculty Connect Event on Thursday, January 18th, from 2:00 to 4:00 at the Penn State College of Medicine University Conference Center. This event will allow the College of Medicine faculty to share clinical challenges and research expertise through brief presentations and breakout sessions, to foster potential collaboration ideas for a competitive proposal for an Inter-Campus Planning Grant or Seed Grant.

B. Eligibility Criteria

1. All proposals must include two Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) who are substantially invested in the project and who work together to draft and revise the proposal. Additional team members or investigators from Penn State College of Medicine and Penn State Harrisburg or other campuses/colleges are eligible to participate as Co-Investigators (Co-Is).

Requirements:

- One of the two Co-PIs must have a primary academic appointment in the College of Medicine as an Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor. In addition to the basic science faculty, all physicians employed by Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical
Center have a primary academic appointment in the College of Medicine and thus are eligible to apply.

- One of the two Co-PIs must have a primary academic appointment and tenure home at Penn State Harrisburg as an Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor.

C. Program Guidelines

1. Proposals representing a new area of collaboration between the Co-PIs that have not previously received support from this or other competitive grant programs are encouraged.

2. Applicants together may request a Planning Grant/Micro Grant for up to $10,000 total direct costs ($5K College of Medicine/$5K Penn State Harrisburg) and a Seed Grant for up to $50,000 total direct costs ($25K College of Medicine/$25K Penn State Harrisburg). Additional co-investigators from other campuses should provide in-kind/matching support. All funds must be spent over a period of up to 1 year:

   The Planning/Micro Grants should aim to form a collaboration and generate initial preliminary data to secure follow-on funding.

   Seed grants can be used in multiple ways, including but not limited to:
   a. Fundamental Research that aims to generate preliminary data for co-authored publications in a new line of research leading to external grant submissions.
   b. Applied Research that aims to demonstrate feasibility or develop a prototype of a new medical device, surgical tool, digital health application, diagnostic, or therapeutic treatment that will become attractive for commercial development.

3. Although no minimum percent effort is required for the Co-PIs, the effort that Co-PIs and others plan to devote to the project must be specified in the budget justification. Each Co-PI may charge the grant for a maximum of 10% effort. Should a Co-PI’s full salary exceed the NIH cap, the anticipated percent effort should be indicated and budgeted to reflect the current NIH cap.

4. Funds may be requested for student wages, research staff, postdoctoral fellows, small equipment, materials/supplies, and expenses related to animal studies and the involvement of human subjects.

5. Funds may not be requested for publication expenses or travel to conferences; however, travel expenses necessary for the conduct of the research project are allowable.

6. Acknowledgement is required for publications. In addition, all publications resulting from the project must adhere to the NIH Public Access Policy. This policy requires scientists to submit final peer-reviewed journal manuscripts that arise from NIH funds to the digital archive PubMed Central upon acceptance for publication. To help advance science and improve human health, the Policy requires that these papers are accessible to the public on PubMed Central no later than 12 months after publication.

7. Each application must include separate budgets for the portions of the project that will be conducted at the Penn State Harrisburg Campus and the College of Medicine. Co-PIs are encouraged to develop proposals requesting approximately equal funding to support the activities in each location. Skewing the budget toward one Campus requires a statement in the
budget justification addressing the need for a skewed distribution and the nature of the involvement of the PI from the other campus.

8. **Co-PIs of Penn State Inter-Campus Health and Medicine Research Program Grants must agree to:** 1) submit a final written progress report within 60 days of completing the project and 2) report periodically on the impact of this award on subsequent sponsored research activities upon request.

D. **Identification of Collaborators**

Potential applicants may obtain advice and assistance in identifying potential collaborators with engineering, scientific, or clinical expertise in specific areas. Investigators may contact Dr. Sharareh (Sherri) Kermanshachi at Penn State Harrisburg (svk5464@psu.edu) or Dr. Yuval Silberman at the College of Medicine (yus72@psu.edu) for information and assistance.

E. **Register Intent to Submit an Application (Required)**

Investigators planning to submit an application in response to this RFA must register their intent via email to ResearchDevelopment@pennstatehealth.psu.edu on or before **12 Noon (EST) on January 30, 2024.**

Please include:

1. the names, departments, and colleges of the Co-PIs,
2. a descriptive title of the application, and
3. “Penn State Inter-Campus Health and Medicine Research Program” in the subject line.

F. **Instructions for Applicants**

All applications should use standard letter paper size (8 ½” x 11”), a font size of 11 points or larger with single line spacing, and provide one-half inch (0.5”) margins—top, bottom, left, and right—on all pages. Applications that do not follow the required format may be returned without review. The final PDF should include all of the information listed below in the order indicated:

1. **Cover Page:** Complete the cover page template provided on the PSU InfoReady competition page [link with added with InfoReady release](#).
2. **Table of Contents:** Include page numbers starting with the cover page, numbering all pages consecutively.
3. **Lay Abstract:** Briefly summarize the objective, specific aims, and health-relatedness of the project in terms that will be understood by a non-scientific lay audience.
4. **Program Goals:** Identify the goals of the program as either a (1) Planning Grant to establish a new collaboration and generate preliminary data, (2) Fundamental Research to establish a new line of research that will likely lead to extramural funding, or (3) Applied Research to provide proof-of-concept or prototype development for a new medical device, surgical tool, digital health application, diagnostic, or therapeutic treatment that will become attractive for commercial development.
5. **Research Plan:**
2 pages maximum, including figures and tables for Planning Grant.
5 pages maximum, including figures and tables for Seed Grant.

Must include the following:

a. **Specific Aims** – List the specific aims of this proposal and explain how their accomplishment will help achieve the program goals identified above.

b. **Significance** – Explain how the proposal addresses an important problem or clinical barrier.

c. **Innovation** – How does the proposal challenge or shift existing paradigms? Specifically, highlight any novel concepts, approaches, methods, or instrumentation.

d. **Approach** – Describe the proposed experimental design, preliminary studies, and anticipated results.

e. **Environment** – Describe the research environment and resources that will contribute to this project.

6. **Investigator Contributions:** This program encourages **genuine collaborations** between researchers, clinicians, and biomedical scientists. Each Co-PI is anticipated to make critical and meaningful contributions to the project. Use this section to clearly and fully describe the contributions that the Co-PI from Penn State Harrisburg and the Co-PI from the College of Medicine will each make to this project, individually and collaboratively. If one Co-PI will be more fully involved early and the other somewhat later, the timetable for that should be clearly described in the application. Proposals that require only token or minor contributions from one Co-PI or the other (such as obtaining tissue samples or analysis or engineering modest refinements to an existing device or process) should seek support from other, more appropriate mechanisms.

7. **Human Subjects and/or Vertebrate Animals:** Describe involvement, if any.

8. **Literature Cited:** List references.

9. **Budget:** Each application must include separate SIMS budget forms for the portions of the project that will be conducted at Penn State Harrisburg and in the College of Medicine (Planning Grant/Micro Grant: up to $10,000 total direct costs; Seed Grant: up to $50,000 direct costs). See Program Guidelines for budget details.

   - Indicate any cost-share from local departments, research centers, or university consortia.
   - The budget period should be **6/1/2024 through 5/30/2025.**
   - There will be no need to initiate an IAF. No cost extensions only allowed under extraordinary circumstances.

10. **Budget Justification:** Provide a separate justification page for the budget request from each college (1 page each). Explain and justify all proposed expenditures to clarify why they are essential for the project’s success. Expenditures not fully justified can be removed at any time during the review process.
11. **Biosketches**: Include a current biosketch for Co-PIs and all Co-Is or key personnel using the short NSF (5-page) format or the current NIH format. NSF Biosketches must be generated through [ScienCV](https://www.sciencv.com). Please see [NSF Formatting Guidelines](https://www.nsf.gov) for guidance on the NSF bio. For NIH biosketch template and examples, see [https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm).

12. **List Other Support**: Include all active and pending support for both Co-PIs. Indicate clearly whether each project listed does or does not overlap with this application and explain the nature of any overlap.

13. **Future Plans**:
   - For Fundamental Research applications – Assuming the project is successful, describe plans to secure continued funding, including the most probable sponsor, mechanism, and expected receipt date for the first application.
   - For Applied Research applications – Describe the most probable licensee, plan for commercialization, and summary of the IP portfolio.
   - **For both types of projects**, explain how you envision that collaboration between the Co-PIs and potentially other team members will be extended and sustained.

G. **CTSI Resources.**
Consultations are available from the Clinical Research Center (University Park and/or Hershey); BERD (biostatistics); Community Engagement; Team Science; REDCap (data collection and storage); Marketing and Communications; Informatics (AI/ML); i2b2 (data discovery); use/access to electronic medical record (EMR) data; Recruitment and retention strategies for study participants; Innovative trial design; Ethics.

To access any of these services, please use the CTSI research consultation services request found at: [http://ctsi.psu.edu/ctsi-consultation-services/](http://ctsi.psu.edu/ctsi-consultation-services/)

H. **Submission**
All applications must be submitted as a single PDF through the PSU InfoReady competition page ([link will be added with InfoReady release](https://www.infoready.psu.edu)) before **12 Noon (EST) on March 1, 2024**. Before taking steps to submit a proposal, it is recommended that applicants first review the **PSU InfoReady Guidance for Applicants** on page 6 of this RFA.

I. **Review Process**
Applications will undergo a review for scientific and technical merit by non-conflicted members of a joint College of Medicine/Penn State Harrisburg Collaborative Research Review Committee. Reviewers will use a scoring system adapted from the NIH to evaluate the following review criteria: responsiveness of the proposal to the RFA, significance, investigators, innovation, approach, environment, and the potential for the project to subsequently attract significant support for research and/or commercial development of a promising new medical device, surgical tool, digital health application, diagnostic, or therapeutic treatment from an external sponsor. In addition, the Collaborative Research Review Committee will be asked to comment on compliance and identify changes in study design and/or methodology that would strengthen each proposal. These recommendations will be returned to the applicant with the reviewer’s critiques.
at the conclusion of the review process. The Collaborative Research Review Committee will make all final decisions regarding awards.

J. Awards
Contingent upon the receipt of meritorious applications, awards will be announced on or about May 10, 2024. The anticipated start date for this award is June 1, 2024. All necessary research compliance approvals (e.g. IRB, IACUC, Biosafety, Radiation Safety, Conflict of Interests, etc.) must be obtained before funding will be released.

K. Questions
Questions regarding the guidelines or eligibility for this funding opportunity, application format or the submission, review, and award process should be directed to Research Development at the College of Medicine: ResearchDevelopment@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

L. PSU INFOREADY GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS
In order to submit applications through PSU InfoReady, applicants must first login to InfoReady using their Penn State credentials and complete the authentication process through Penn State University’s Single Sign-On (SSO) at least one time prior to submission. InfoReady requires this one-time log in/SSO process to authenticate applicants as affiliates of Penn State. Once authenticated, applicants have the ability to submit a proposal on their own OR to designate a proxy who can submit proposals on their behalf. All users are reminded to use only PSU access ID email accounts (e.g. xyz123@psu.edu), not an alias PSU email, when using PSU InfoReady. PSU InfoReady does not recognize applicant submissions associated with other email domains.

DESIGNATING A PROXY
Proxy submitters are individuals designated by the PI to submit a proposal on their behalf. Typically, a proxy is a department research administrator that supported the applicant’s submission. InfoReady provides step-by-step Instructions for Designating a Proxy. Both the proxy and applicant will receive all competition notifications.

SAVE AS DRAFT
InfoReady allows users to Save as Draft and return later to complete an application. Access your draft applications through the Applications tab on the home navigation bar. Clicking ‘Apply’ more than once for a particular opportunity may create multiple submissions in the competition. Delete any old or duplicate drafts by clicking the trash can icon to the right of the desired application.

EDITING A SUBMITTED APPLICATION
Prior to the submission deadline, InfoReady administrators are able to return applications to applicants for edits. There is no need to start a new application. Please contact Megan Jones, PhD, MBA, at myoung3@pennstatehealth.psu.edu if you need to recall a submitted application. The applicant and/or proxy submitter will receive an email notification with a link to the application, which will return to draft status in the Applications tab. The applicant will be able to make edits and re-submit. Once the submission deadline has passed, only an InfoReady administrator can make edits to a submitted application.
QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?
If applicants or administrators encounter any technical issues with InfoReady, they are encouraged to submit a ticket for technical support by emailing InfoReady at support@inforeadycorp.com. InfoReady’s support team is very responsive and available from 8:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. (EST).