

Unique researcher-administrator partnerships improving patient care at QEII and IWK

Halifax, N.S. – The second round of QEII Foundation and IWK Foundation *Transforming Research Into Care (TRIC)* grants have been awarded to 11 researcher-administrator teams at the QEII and IWK Health Centres, promising direct and positive impacts for patients.

Grants awarded will improve patient care in the areas of: emergency services, cancer care, cardiac surgery, stroke rehabilitation services, flu vaccine policy, pediatric oncology, and neonatal and pediatric critical care.

Funded by the IWK Foundation and the QEII Foundation, TRIC grants are available to Capital Health and IWK Health Centre research teams. The idea for TRIC grants came from the Integrated VP of Research and Innovation at Capital Health and the IWK Health Centre, Dr. Patrick McGrath. The TRIC grant model is one of the first of its kind, bringing researchers, administrators and patients together to tackle some of the most pressing issues facing the health care system.

"TRIC grants are unique because they bridge the gap between research on the verge of implementation and the clinical care setting," said Dr. McGrath. "To be funded, TRIC grant applicants must show an expected improvement in one or more of the following areas: patient outcomes, safety, access to care, reduced wait times or reduced costs. They also require the support of a health centre administrator and consider the patient voice in their research plans."

The 11 most recent grant recipients include a QEII scientist with the Department of Emergency Medicine, Stacy Ackroyd and her administrative partner, Health Services Director, Sandra Janes. Their funding will allow them to tailor and build on the success of a New York program that has increased support for elderly patients in the emergency department, while reducing pressure on vital and acute care resources.

"The goal of the program is to achieve a more positive emergency department experience for our aging patients," says Ackroyd. "Our frail and elderly patients may be dealing with challenges such as dementia and decreased mobility. The emergency department can be an intense place for them and they may benefit from a little extra support. We aren't changing the way we deliver emergency care to this population, but we do want to enhance the resources that are available to patients, families and front-line providers in the emergency department."

At the IWK, Neonatal Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Marsha Campbell-Yeo, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) manager Darlene Inglis and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit Manager Stacy Burgess received TRIC funding for a research study aimed at reducing noise levels in the neonatal intensive care unit.

"Excessive noise in the NICU increases stress for families and their babies receiving care in the NICU," says Inglis. "Increasing noise awareness and decreasing unnecessary environmental noise reduces the interruption of quiet family time parents spend with their babies. This quiet time enhances infant development and supports babies to have restorative, uninterrupted sleep. Premature and ill babies in

the NICU benefit greatly from developmental care and one of their special needs is quiet time with their families. We are striving to increase noise awareness and to meet recommended safe sound standards in our NICU. By reducing noise we can positively impact sleep time and development for babies, and provide a more comfortable soothing environment for families.”

TRIC grants have also been awarded to collaborative research studies between QEII and IWK administrators and researchers, including a project that will evaluate influenza control policies across the province.

Both Foundations raise the money for TRIC grants through philanthropic gifts and fundraising events, such as the QEII Foundation's TRIC grant annual research gala, *Charm Diamond Centres Night of Discovery*, coming up on October 18.

Since the TRIC grants program was initiated in 2013, 25 teams have received awards totaling over \$550,000. Applicants apply for one of three levels of funding: \$3,000, \$30,000 or \$100,000. To date, 54 researcher-administrator teams have applied for TRIC grants. Grant-winning teams are determined following a stringent review process by a committee of researchers, administrators and community members.

The next intake of TRIC grants will occur in November with funding awards expected in January 2015.

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