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G R O U P

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AHRQ: Innovative Digital Health Care Solutions to Improve Quality at the Point of Care

OVERVIEW

On February 9th, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) released a funding opportunity for the development of research projects that test promising digital health care interventions aimed at improving quality of care and health care service delivery at the point of care (e.g., in a clinic setting, at the bedside, in the home, or in ambulances). Not-for-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, or governments may apply (possibly alongside for-profit corporations in a consortium). Total funding of up to $1,025,000 is available per project.

The funding opportunity focuses on the following three research areas of interest:

- **Advanced Analytics**
  - Examples include projects that use artificial intelligence to improve practice workflows, or projects that apply machine learning to improve care delivery and quality at the point of care.
- **Patient-Centered Digital Health Care Technologies**
  - Technologies may be clinician-facing or patient-facing. Particular focus areas are:
    - (1) Facilitating information sharing and shared decision-making, and
    - (2) Novel digital solutions for patients with multiple chronic conditions.
  - Examples include projects involving wearables, sensors, and apps and other mobile health solutions.
- **Augmenting Clinical Decision-Making Support**
  - Examples include digital clinical decision-making tools that incorporate patient-generated data and patient-reported outcomes, or technologies that combine natural language processing (NLP) with a decision support tool.

The full funding opportunity is available here. This opportunity operates on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) application cycle. Applications submitted for the next cycle (Cycle II) are due June 16th.

FUNDING

AHRQ will provide awarded applicants with up to two years of support for initial development activities (the R21 phase) and up to an additional three years of support for expanded activities that will build on the initial developmental phase (the R33 phase). Three months before the end of the R21 phase, projects will submit a progress report and a description of whether the original aims of the project will be modified. If approved, projects will then transition to the R33 phase. Transition to the R33 phase is not guaranteed and will depend on peer review recommendations, successful completion of the originally described milestones, program priorities, and availability of funds.

The R21 initial phase will provide up to $275,000 in funding over a period of up to two years. No more than $200,000 in total costs may be budgeted in either year of the R21 phase.

The R33 phase will provide up to $750,000 in funding over a period of up to three years. No more than $300,000 in total costs may be budgeted in any single year of the R33 phase.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- Higher education institutions;
- Not-for-profits with and without 501(c)(3) status; and
- Faith- or community-based organizations.

For-profit organizations are not eligible to lead applications under this funding opportunity, but may participate in projects as members of consortia or as subcontractors. Applicants may submit more than one application, provided that each application is scientifically distinct.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS

AHRQ supports research projects concerning health care delivery in inner-city and rural areas and health care for priority populations, including:

- Low income individuals;
- Minority groups;
- Women;
- Children;
- Elderly individuals; and
- Individuals with special health care needs, such as those with disabilities or in need of chronic or end-of-life care.

APPLICATION

Applications are not required to include preliminary data/information or extensive background material, but this information may be included if available. Appropriate justification for the proposed work may be provided through literature citations, data from other sources, or investigator-generated data if available.

Application reviewers will provide an overall impact score in consideration of the following review criteria:

- Significance
- Investigator(s)
- Innovation
- Approach
- Scientific environment

Reviewers will also evaluate the proposed project's protections for human subjects, degree of responsiveness to the purpose/objectives of the opportunity, budget and period of support, and inclusion of priority populations.

Timeline

Applications for this cycle are due on June 16th, as outlined here.

Questions regarding the application instructions and process should be submitted to GrantsInfo@nih.gov. Scientific/research questions should be sent to Derrick L. Wyatt at

DigitalHealthcareResearch@ahrq.hhs.gov and financial/grants management questions should be sent to Brian Campbell at Brian.Campbell@ahrq.hhs.gov.