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Cancer
Network



Qi² Quality Improvement Initiatives Fund

Reference Document

2023 Edition

Rossey Cancer Network Quality Improvement Initiatives Fund: Summary

The RCN Quality Improvement Initiatives Fund (QI²) was established to support quality improvement initiatives for cancer care and health services across Rossey Cancer Network (RCN) hospitals. This initiative builds on the exceptional pool of expertise across the partner institutions that make up the RCN: The McGill University Health Centre (MUHC), the Jewish General Hospital (JGH), St. Mary's Hospital Center (SMHC), and the McGill Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences.

The Fund helps to support the unprecedented collaboration among the McGill-affiliated cancer missions at the heart of the RCN by promoting continuous improvement projects, related to enhancing the quality of cancer care services provided to patients and their families. The fund aims to support initiatives that can be delivered in a 12-month timeframe that lead to measurable improvements in patient outcomes, experiences, and access to timely and effective cancer care. Project themes may include but are not limited to interventions to improve cancer trajectories, enhancing multidisciplinary collaboration and communication, promoting patient-centered care, disseminating best practices amongst healthcare professionals, and supporting the adoption of technology to improve cancer care delivery and outcomes.

Funding is open to all health professionals directly involved in the provision of cancer care at RCN partner hospitals. Proposed initiatives should reflect collaboration among the network's partners, by involving at least two or more RCN partner hospitals.

To avoid overlap, proposals targeting scientific development or professional skills enhancement should be directed to the RCN Research Fund or the RCN Investing in the Future Fund (all which fall under the RCN's CQI Program). As with the other lines of RCN funding, QI² investments aim to enhance services provided to patients and cannot substitute institutional standard operating budgets.

We are confident that this exciting initiative will empower health care teams to continually improve cancer care delivery and enhance patient experience and outcomes across the network.

Purpose

- Accomplish RCN's mandate of improving the quality of cancer care received by the population served by the RCN partner institutions, the MUHC, the JGH and SMHC.
- Facilitate the deployment and execution of RCN strategic priorities and vision.
- Enhance opportunities to create common projects and network initiatives investments to support cancer care improvements at all RCN partner institutions.
- Support cross-institution collaborative care so as to develop optimal outcomes for cancer patients across the network.
- Seek to achieve an optimization of cancer patient care and services at the highest quality and safety levels across the RCN partner institutions in a manner that is seamless from the patients' perspective.

Eligibility

The RCN QI² Fund is open to **all health care professionals** actively involved in the delivery of health care to cancer patients within the RCN network of hospitals and. All applicants must be employed or hold a position at one of the RCN hospitals.

The list of eligible professionals includes, but is not limited to:

- Physicians
- Nurses and all nursing-affiliated personnel
- Rehabilitation experts (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, kinesiology, speech therapy, etc.)
- Psychosocial health experts
- Other hospital-based professionals that participate in or who have an interest in the delivery of care to cancer patients

Funding offered:

Support offered through the QI² Fund is focused principally on making specialized skill sets available to support cancer teams in achieving their care improvement objectives. Therefore, funding for projects is structured the following way:

1. RCN Resources allocation: A portion of the funding is provided in the form of personnel support from the pool of specialized professionals at the RCN. These include:

Professional	Expertise offered	Maximum allocation per project
Project manager	Accompanying project development and deployment; structuring project charter and tracking timetable of deliverables; keeping records of project decisions, actions and meeting minutes, handling budget and reporting requirements; managing personnel, assisting with inter-departmental and inter-hospital relations; ensuring project success. (See below for further details)	Not to exceed 2.5 days / week
Clinical Data Specialist	Facilitating access to patient datasets; participating data extraction	Equivalent of 0.5 day / week
Data analyst / Epidemiologist	Providing expertise on variables definition; providing statistical and analytical support.	As required but not to exceed maximum of 0.5 day / week

2. Additional financial Support:

Additional support for a maximum of \$40,000 is available for items such as: specific skills not available within the RCN workforce (e.g., nurse, I.T. programmer, etc.), equipment, material, third-party services/vendors).

Please note:

- Additional human resource expenditures exceeding \$10,000 will require justification if proposal is selected.
- Any budget items in this category will be bound to comply with hospital procurement policies. Any item surpassing the amount of \$15,000 requires specific justification and may require at least 3 competitive quotes.
- The RCN reserves the right to decline budget items that are exclusively related to research productivity (e.g., publication and travel fees)

Application Terms and Conditions

- All Principal Applicants and Co-applicants must hold a position at one of the RCN-partner institutions: The McGill University Health Centre (MUHC), the Jewish General Hospital (JGH) and St-Mary's Hospital Center (SMHC).
- External collaborations can only be sought if a required expertise, skillset or resource is not available at the RCN or its partner institutions. These require specific approval.
- Project proposals must reflect a collaborative effort from at least 2 RCN partner institutions. This rule is subject to exception in instances where one of the RCN institutions is designated by the Ministry (MSSS) as the sole provider of a specific care type. RCN reserves the right to determine if the project submitted represents the essence of true collaborative efforts.
- Any QI² proposal must be a new project or a new aspect of an existing project. The RCN will not award funds for projects currently or previously funded by the RCN or any of the participating hospitals, or via other funding sources (e.g., hospital quality initiatives, private foundation, etc.).
- The RCN will manage all media and communications related to a funded proposal in collaboration with the communication department of each institution and the Principal Applicant.
- An RCN Project Manager (PM) will be assigned to the project by the RCN Operations Director and will be responsible for reporting progress and financial updates on a monthly basis.
- All proposals must follow the application requirements set forth by the RCN (application, budget proposal, letter of support, etc.). Proposals that fail to do so will be excluded.
- Funding is not recurrent. The sustainability of the project beyond completion is the responsibility of the hospital(s) and not the RCN.

RCN Project Manager Role

An RCN Project Manager (PM) will be assigned to each awarded QI² project. This person and the Principal Applicant bear joint responsibility for:

- Budget management and elaboration
- Project Charter
- Deliverables and timelines
- Project risks identification and mitigation
- Communication plan
- Project resources
- Project reporting to RCN leadership at monthly intervals
- Project performance and quality evaluation
- Scope management

Use of funds

- QI² funds provided must be used exclusively for the achievement of the approved QI² project.
- QI² funds provided must be spent in accordance with the budget approved by the RCN review committee (RCN Quality Council).
- QI² funds cannot be used for indirect expenditures such as leasing or maintenance, reimbursement of indirect costs assumed by host institution(s) or replacement of missing hospitals operational resources.
- The cost of human resources will be covered by the RCN contribution. However, an estimate of the person/time required must be included in the proposed QI² project budget. RCN reserves the rights to revise proposed budget and exclude expenditures based on its mission.
- Funds will not be issued in advance to the Principal Applicant or to a participating partner institution; they will be released on invoices/reimbursement basis according to hospital procurement policy and upon approval by RCN Director of Operations. All expenses/invoices related to the project must be pre-approved by the PM.
- Management of funds must comply with internal local purchasing & procurement policies
- QI² funds cannot be used to supplement or replace institutional / clinical operating budgets.

Acceptance Terms and Conditions

- Project Principal Applicant and Co-Applicant(s): All applicants must have expertise in areas relevant to QI² projects (e.g. nursing, medical, information technology, administration). One Principal Applicant who will act as the exclusive point of contact with RCN must be identified.
- Project Manager (PM): QI² projects will be assigned RCN Project Managers (PMs). The RCN PM and the Principal Applicant bear joint responsibility for the success of QI² projects. The PM will be in charge of the organisation and management of budget, resources *etc.* and will work with the Principal Applicant to define/refine timelines and deliverables following best practices in project management.
- Correspondence: the RCN PM is the first point of contact for any matter related to the management of QI² project funds.
- Ethics clearance: The Principal Applicant is responsible for ensuring that ethics clearance is obtained when necessary.
- Management of funds: the RCN PM is responsible for management of QI² project funds.
- Transfer of funds: As a general rule, labour costs incurred by an RCN QI² project will be paid by participating RCN hospitals first, and subsequently reimbursed by the RCN. Any other expenses incurred by an RCN QI² project are processed on a case by case basis (either paid by RCN directly, or paid by hospital first and reimbursed by RCN). A written approval by the RCN Director of Operations (after discussion with the PM) is required for reimbursement of hospital labour costs and expenses related to RCN QI² projects.
- Amount: The original amount awarded will remain unchanged during the course of the project.
- Reporting requirement (financial and project progress): the RCN PM is responsible for reporting project progress and financial updates to the, RCN CQI Program Lead. In special circumstances, the Principal Applicant may be asked to present project status and progress.
- Communication: the RCN reserves the right to use any portion of the project summary provided in the application for visibility purposes. In addition, it may ask the Principal Applicant and his/her team for photographs or interviews or any other material deemed necessary by the RCN for visibility purposes. For harmonization purposes, visual presentations related to RCN QI² projects may be reviewed by the RCN Operations Director.
- Acknowledgments: All presented material (poster, oral, digital, print) must include the RCN Signature Branding.

- RCN-related events: RCN PMs and QI² Principal Applicants are expected to attend RCN-related events to present project progress and results.
- Project sustainability: The signature of the Oncology Chief at the RCN institution where the Principal Applicant holds his/her appointment indicates an approval of the project and its sustainability after the end of the non-recurrent RCN QI² funding and relevance to the overall direction of the cancer center.
- Project timeline: Project completion should be achieved within a 12 months' timeframe.

Selection and Approval Process

- QI² project proposals will be selected for funding by the RCN Quality Council which includes: Management and/or subject matter experts from each hospital's quality department, oncologists, nursing leads, patient representatives, RCN clinical lead and RCN Operations Director. RCN leadership may adjust committee membership, according to specific expertise requirements.
- Members of the RCN Quality Council will independently score each proposal according to the assessment grid provided in this document; this will be followed by a common review session.
- The RCN EC is responsible for approval of QI² Fund allocations, after review of recommendations from the RCN Quality Council chair.
- Note: The RCN Executive Committee has approved the following measures to minimize the potential for conflict of interest:
 - Hospital Oncology Chiefs (Drs. Aprikian, Batist & Langleben) are not eligible to apply. They will be asked to confirm relevance of project proposals to their respective centers and sustainability after the year of funding;
 - Members of the RCN Quality Council and the Clinical Lead for the RCN are not eligible to apply;
 - Hospital Oncology Nursing Directors are not eligible to apply as Principal Applicants. They will be asked to confirm the relevance of nursing-rich proposals to their respective centers.

Reporting Process for Recipients

- The RCN PM is required to provide financial and project progress reports to the RCN leadership on a monthly basis, using standardized reporting tools.
- The RCN PM is required to track all project expenditures using standardized reporting tools.
- The Principal Applicant is required to provide a Final Report detailing evaluation and outcomes of the Quality Improvement Initiative within 6 months of project completion.

A separate document detailing process and reporting requirements will be provided to the Principal Applicant and assigned Project Manager upon attribution of funding.

Application Requirements

Required documents include:

- 1) Application form (available on the RCN website)
- 2) Proposal

Applications must be submitted via the RCN website: <http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/grants/qi2-fund/submit-proposal>

Applications will not be accepted if they are:

- Filled out by hand
- Incomplete or inaccurate
- Emailed directly to RCN personnel
- Submitted past the deadline
- Containing documents additional or different from the items described above.

Additional Information

For questions, please contact:

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RCN Operations Director

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Assessment Grid

CRITERIA	SCORE
<p>Quality of the proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project targets rapid cancer care quality improvement - The project includes an objective assessment/evaluation component - Clarity of the proposal (problem statement well documented, objectives measurable and tangible outcomes) 	/5
<p>Feasibility of the proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project proposal is realistic within the proposed health care environment and timeline - Technical capacity: The team composition covers all relevant skills necessary to the success of project - The project has identified risks that can be mitigated - The sustainability proposal is realistic within the healthcare context 	/4
<p>Relevance of the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance of the proposal according to RCN objectives and strategic priorities (Patient Experience, Evidence based-care, Access to care, Leading-Edge treatments, Research and Education) -The project directly benefits patients - The project involves cross-site collaboration for teams and outcomes -experience or knowledge gained from the deployment of this project has the potential for spread initiative to other disease sites or healthcare teams 	/9
<p>Budget relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed budget realistically reflects the requirements to successfully complete the project (sufficiency) - The proposed budget covers all aspects to successfully complete the project (comprehensiveness) 	/2