



Open Call - Expression of Interest to Join Marathon of Hope Atlantic Cancer Consortium

The Atlantic Cancer Consortium (ACC) pilot project of the Terry Fox Research Institute (TFRI), launched in January 2021, has brought together cancer centres, hospitals, and researchers in Atlantic Canada with the purpose of conducting precision medicine cancer research, which includes the participation of cancer patients across the region. For the pilot project (2 years), the group received \$3.6 million from TFRI and partner organizations in 3 Atlantic provinces - New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The ACC developed five projects (3 infrastructure and 2 research projects) with a unifying vision to conduct research that will inform improved outcomes for future cancer patients in Atlantic Canada. More details can be found on our website - <https://www.tfri.ca/our-research/atlantic-cancer-consortium>.

Now we have been invited to apply to join the Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network (MoHCCN) as a designated consortium from Atlantic Canada. The MoHCCN's mission is to bring together leading cancer centres, clinics, and academic institutions across Canada to collaborate on precision medicine research to benefit cancer patients and drive innovation. For more details on MoHCCN, please visit <https://www.tfri.ca/our-research/marathon-of-hope>.

ACC will join the British Columbia, Ontario, Montreal, and Prairies Cancer Research Consortia. The national network operates on a partnership model, requiring investments and matching cash contributions to be raised by each of the consortia. The Federal Government, through Health Canada, has committed 50% of the funding, which will be matched by TFRI (10%) with the remainder (40%) coming from regional agencies and institutions. The total potential funding envelope for the ACC is approximately \$13 million for the next three years, depending on our ability to raise matching funds locally. The application for designation is due in August 2022 with an anticipated start date of January 2023.

Our main objectives as a designated MoHCCN consortium are as follows:

1. To enroll 900 cancer patients into the ACC tumor biobanks to contribute to the "gold cohort" as part of the the national objective of profiling 15,000 cancer patients.
2. To collect comprehensive and high-quality patient-related genomic, epigenomic, transcriptomic, microbiomic, and/or immune profiling data.
3. To leverage findings from the biobanking and profiling described above for research to develop and support precision medicine approaches aimed at improving cancer outcomes.
4. To engage underrepresented indigenous and rural communities.

By necessity, the initial ACC application was limited to a few projects and included only some researchers and academic institutions within the Atlantic region. With the recent opportunity to join the national network, ACC is able to expand its scientific scope and number of investigators/institutions in the forthcoming application for designation into the MoHCCN. Thus, ACC is inviting expressions of interest from all Atlantic Canadian cancer researchers to help expand the ACC. We wish to hear from researchers, clinicians, and institutions regarding your perspectives on the broad direction that the ACC should consider taking with this initiative, and what specific contributions you could make to the program. Please

submit 1) a brief summary (1-2 pages) of your ideas that includes the scientific question/problem, the experimental approaches (brief), the major deliverables and 2) a set of concise CV's (up to 5 pages) including publications, grant funding, and training experience from the past 5 years. We welcome submissions that describe individual projects as well as integrative projects requiring contributions from multiple investigators, even if all investigators have yet to be identified.

Submissions should consist of 1 PDF file sent to neetu.singh@mun.ca. The deadline for submission is Thursday, March 31, 2022, 5 pm NST.

Synergies will be sought across research teams and institutions to ensure we build a collaborative and robust research ecosystem for precision oncology. We see this call for expressions of interest as an efficient, open, and inclusive approach to invite cancer researchers, clinicians, and institutions from across Atlantic Canada to potentially join the ACC as we prepare our application to become part of the MoHCCN. The ACC Executive Council will review and discuss all submissions and will be tasked with inviting new members to join the ACC. The ACC membership will then work collaboratively to craft a proposal for MoHCCN designation that will incorporate the work of both existing and new members. We aim to complete the process of inviting new members to join the ACC by April 15, 2022.

