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# PROGRAM GUIDE:

## Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Health System (PRIHS) 6: 2020

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

#### Background

Maintaining the quality and accessibility of health care in the face of rising costs and demand is a major challenge facing governments and health care organizations around the world. Alberta Innovates (AI) and Alberta Health Services (AHS) co-launched the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Health System (PRIHS) program out of a shared commitment to developing research and innovation (R&I) activities that contribute to health system sustainability in Alberta.

PRIHS 6 builds on the momentum of previous competitions, and consistent with PRIHS 5, provides a streamlined process for connecting Alberta's academic institutions with AHS' Strategic Clinical Networks™ (SCNs), patients, providers and leaders in AHS to:

- Translate research evidence that has been pilot tested, preferably in an Alberta health care setting, and has strong evidence of clinical effectiveness to suggest that the solution will address a priority health system challenge in Alberta as articulated by the SCNs in their Transformational Roadmaps or through recent emerging priorities identified by the SCN's; and
- Generate the evidence needed to identify and accelerate the spread and/or scale of evidence-based solutions that close care gaps to foster more efficient and/or effective use of health care resources.
- Priority will be given to projects that target improving appropriateness of care and reducing unwarranted variation leading to significant impact and demonstrated cost savings over the PRIHS 6 timeframe.

#### The PRIHS Challenge

PRIHS is designed to align the knowledge production efforts of researchers with the evidence needs of the health system. This is achieved by providing opportunities for researchers to propose solutions to priority health system challenges and partner with SCNs; this partnership includes support and access to expertise within AHS and other health system partners to test a promising solution in the Alberta context.

These tests of implementation will help AHS identify and advance solutions that improve health care quality, health outcomes and value for Albertans.

## Program Details

AI and AHS are investing up to \$7 million in the PRIHS 6 competition. No maximum budget is set for each proposal. The Project term is up to three years (2021 – 24)

*PRIHS is designed to align the knowledge production efforts of researchers with the evidence needs of the health system by providing opportunities for researchers to propose solutions to priority health system challenges and access support from SCNs and other expertise within AHS to administer implementation studies.*

## HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

### Eligibility

Only proposals that are developed in partnership with one or more SCN and will address a priority health system challenge in Alberta that will demonstrate significant impact/cost savings will be considered for funding. All PRIHS 6 applications must include:

- Co-Primary Investigators' with one primary lead who holds an academic or research appointment at an Alberta-based Institution and one lead from the SCN Leadership Team.
- SCN Leadership that are identified as lead or co-lead of a project are expected to recuse themselves from the internal Expression of Interest (EOI) SCN selection process. SCN Executive Leadership are exempt from all involvement in PRIHS EOI and Full Application process review, evaluation and selection processes and panels.
- The SCN Chief Program Officer (CPO) and SCN Associate Chief Medical Officer (ACMO) are not eligible to apply to this competition.

#### **The role of SCNs in PRIHS**

SCNs consist of networks of patients and families, academic partners, clinical leaders, and other stakeholders who are knowledgeable about specific areas of health and serve as enduring structures for setting Research & Innovation (R&I) priorities and driving clinical innovation within AHS. SCNs are key to the success of PRIHS.

Developing PRIHS projects in partnership with SCNs ensures that:

- Project teams have access to key health system expertise, stakeholders, and leadership as early as possible in the PRIHS lifecycle; and
- Only those projects with the appropriate line of sight to Alberta's health system priorities and sustainability are developed into full applications.

### **(b) Project Eligibility Criteria**

To qualify for funding, all Projects must:

- Include key Project milestones based on metrics and deliverables, stepped with critical “go/no go” decision points;
- be completed within the 3-year term;
- submit to other criteria that Alberta Innovates may develop from time to time;
- address a priority as outlined in the SCN Transformational Roadmaps or emerging priorities approved by the SCN (accessible on the PRIHS 6 web page);
- consist of one or more evidence-based solution(s) that can be formulated into an implementation study;

- be supported by strong evidence of clinical effectiveness (generated from pilot testing in Alberta (preferable) or another health care setting);
- have the potential to deliver significant, measurable impact to health system performance; and
- be accomplishable within the timeframe of a PRIHS grant

## Program Objectives and Performance Measurement

PRIHS strengthens health research capacity in Alberta by encouraging collaboration and partnerships between Alberta's academic institutions, health and clinician researchers, patients, and AHS operations to impact in the health system.

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*Over the life of a Project, Alberta Innovates employs an active project management philosophy, regularly monitoring performance and supporting the Applicant to reach their objectives. Funding is tied to outcomes and achievement of results. For this reason, Alberta Innovates funds on a milestone completion basis. This means the Applicant are expected to submit a Progress Report before Alberta Innovates advances the next tranche of funds.*

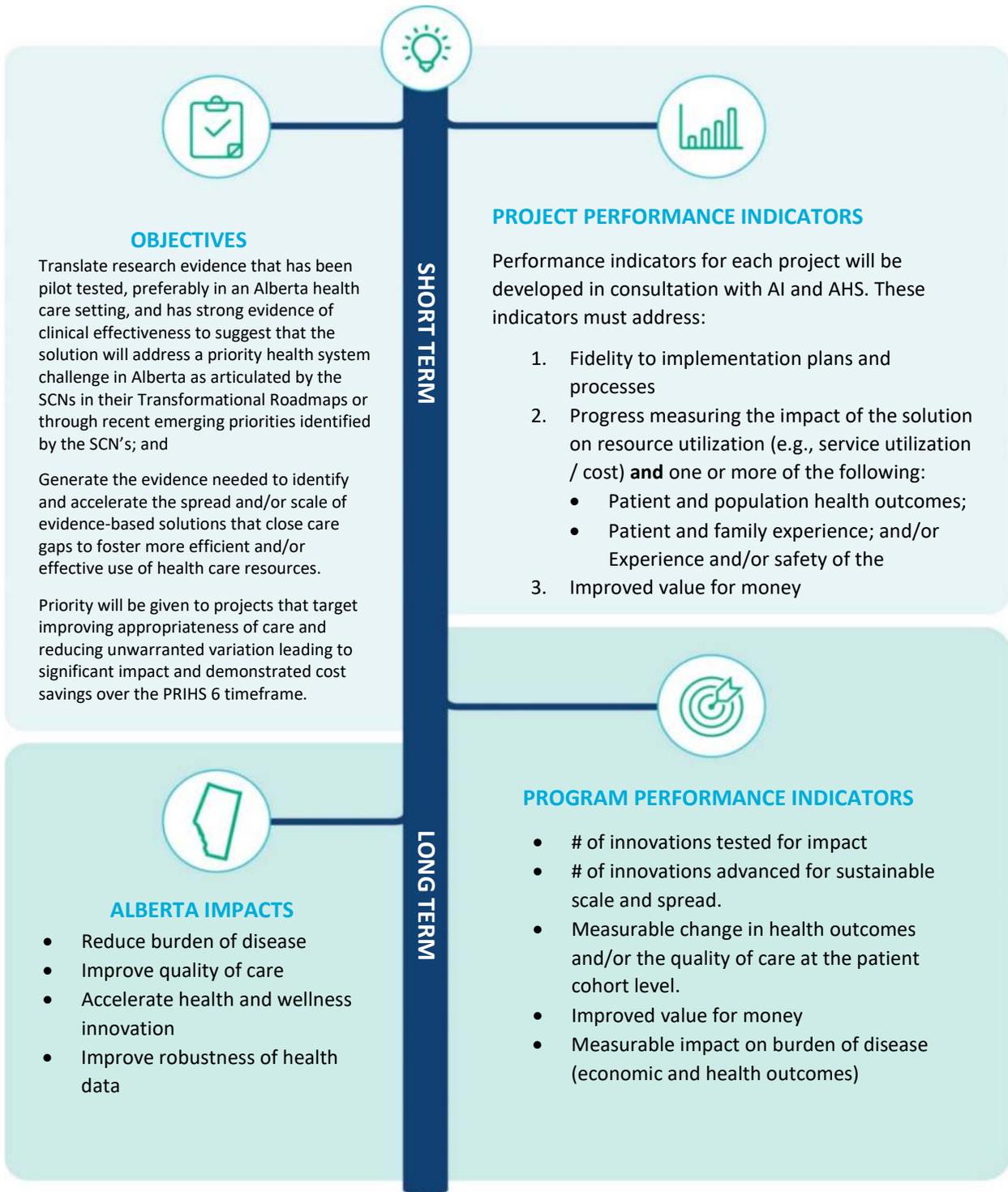
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Once Projects are completed, Alberta Innovates continues to monitor performance for five (5) years to accurately evaluate the economic, social and environmental benefits realized for the province.

All Investment Agreements outline performance indicators tracked over the course of the Project and the responsibilities of the Applicant to report on outcomes subsequent to the completion of the Project.

Alberta Innovates has a common set of performance metrics it monitors, both at the individual Project level and for the aggregate Program.

# Objectives and Performance Metrics



## How Funding Works

### (a) Project Funding

No maximum budget is set for each proposal.

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*Alberta Innovates and Alberta Health Services will contribute up to \$7 Million CAD to support approved Projects over a maximum term of 3 years.*

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### (b) Eligible and ineligible expenses

Alberta Innovates only funds reasonable costs incurred subsequent to a signed Investment Agreement between Alberta Innovates and the Applicant. Any costs incurred prior to the signing of the Investment Agreement, or costs greater than market prices are deemed ineligible. Costs must be incurred between arm's length entities. Please refer to our standard form Investment Agreement found on our website to get an in-depth understanding of eligible and ineligible costs.

The chart on the next page provides a high-level summary of eligible and ineligible expenses.

## Summary of Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Category	Eligible Expenses	Ineligible Expenses
<b>Labour</b>	 Labour costs for those individuals specifically identified as working on the Project	 Overhead costs charged to employee labour rates  Professional training & development  Salary support for Leads and Co-Leads  Professional fees unless directly related to the Project
<b>Materials</b>	 Reasonable material costs	 Sales and marketing collateral
<b>Capital Assets &amp; Software</b>	 Capital improvements  Capital equipment  Software or information databases	 Major equipment (>\$5,000)  Acquisitions of land or buildings  The undepreciated value of eligible capital costs which extends beyond the Project term
<b>Travel</b>	 Mileage, lowest economy class airfare, and accommodation where the Industry Partner's place of business is located in a different city than the Applicant	 Costs relating to meals, entertainment, hospitality and gifts  Passport or immigration fees  Reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer programs

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Commuting costs between place of residence and place of employment</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-contractors</b>	✓	Services or products of another entity	
<b>Other</b>	✓	Costs which Alberta Innovates pre-approves in writing as an eligible expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Pharmaceutical drug-related trials</li> <li>× Local programs or projects in one zone or one hospital that are not applicable to other zones or sectors</li> <li>× Costs associated with development and protection of intellectual property</li> <li>× Federal and provincial income taxes, goods and services taxes</li> <li>× Expenses for projects or activities outside the approved Project</li> <li>× Costs associated with applying for government grants and programs</li> <li>× Technical or professional journals</li> <li>× Provisions for contingencies</li> <li>× Routine testing and maintenance</li> <li>× Costs Alberta Innovates deems ineligible at its sole discretion</li> </ul>

## HOW TO APPLY



### **STEP 1** Expression of Interest (EOI) to SCNs

Deadline: Feb 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 at  
4:00pm MT

Prospective applicant representatives connect with relevant Strategic Clinical Networks (SCNs) to discuss proposed solutions. SCN contact information and the priority areas of each SCN can be found at [AlbertaInnovates.ca](http://AlbertaInnovates.ca).

SCNs select up to 2 projects for submission to Stage 1.



### **STEP 2** Stage 1 Application

Deadline: May 22, 2020 at  
4:00pm MT

**Problem Definition**  
(quantify magnitude)

+

**Relevance**

+

**Description of the Solution and  
Implementation Study**

(initial sketch)

+

**Expected Improvement**  
(measurable outcomes &  
estimates of change)

**10 Projects Advance to Full  
Application**



### **STEP 3** Full Proposal (Stage 2)

Deadline: October 16, 2020 at  
4:00 pm MT

**Operational Considerations**

+

**Implementation Design**  
(expert consult provided)

+

**Description of the Solution and  
Implementation Study**

(strengthened)

+

**Expected Improvement**  
(strengthened with operations  
and & health economist consult)

Alberta Innovates and Alberta Health Services will then make funding decisions, including funding amount, term, and conditions

## Competition Process

### Expressions of Interest are Submitted to SCNs

Applicants contact the Scientific Director (SD) or Assistant Scientific Director (ASD) of the appropriate SCN (accessible on the PRIHS 6 web page) to discuss potential ideas or solutions. During this initial discussion, the SD/ASD will assess PRIHS readiness, or if the idea:

- Addresses a priority as outlined in the SCN Transformational Roadmaps or emerging priorities approved by the SCN (accessible on the PRIHS 6 web page);
- Solution(s) that can be formulated into an implementation study;
- Is supported by strong evidence of clinical effectiveness (generated from pilot testing in Alberta or another health care setting);
- Has the potential to deliver significant, measurable impact to health system performance; including eliminating variation in care by ensuring proper or correct use of health services, products, and resources
- Can demonstrate a significant positive impact on the utilization of health resources within the timeframe of a PRIHS grant, i.e. tests a solution that can likely generate cost saving and/or help avoid future cost increases.

Prospective applicants whose solutions align with the above criteria will be asked to complete an intake form by February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

### Prioritization of Solutions for Further Development

Each SCN will review the intake forms and select **up to** two PRIHS-ready solutions to co-develop into an EOI application. In the present environment, applications that address cross-cutting challenges, those that address multi-SCN priorities and those that can deliver significant impact based on proven evidence are encouraged. Each SCN will inform prospective applicants of its desire to move forward on an EOI application by March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

### Stage 1 Application

**Application Development:** Stage 1 applications must be developed in collaboration with SCNs and their academic partners and submitted through the Alberta Innovates Application portal (on the Alberta Innovates website) by Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00PM.

**Adjudication:** Stage 1 applications will be reviewed by a panel of experts and stakeholders on June 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. Up to 10 applicants will be invited to proceed to Full Proposal.

### Full Proposal (Stage 2)

**Application Development:** Full Proposal applications must be developed in collaboration with SCN partners, as well as in consultation with operational, economic and implementation science expertise in AHS. Stage 2 application must be submitted through the Alberta Innovates Application portal (on the Alberta Innovates website) by October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 4:00PM.

**Adjudication:** Full Proposal applications will be reviewed by a panel of experts and stakeholders during the week of November 16 – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Applicant Representatives will have the opportunity to present in person and address reviewer questions and concerns directly. The review committee will rank order proposals and make funding recommendations to the PRIHS Steering Committee.

**Conditional Approval:** Those proposals endorsed by the PRIHS Steering Committee will be given conditional approval during the first week of December 2020. Agreement execution will take place prior to public announcements.

## Summary of Key Dates

**Jan-Feb 2020:** SCN engagement and co-design

**Feb 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020:** Deadline for EOI applications to SCNs

**March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020:** SCNs select up to 2 projects for submission to PRIHS

**May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020:** Stage 1 application deadline

**June 22-23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020:** Stage 1 review and recommendations

**Aug-Oct 2020:** Co-design of full proposal for up to top 10 applications

**October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020:** Full Proposal (Stage 2) deadline

**November 16 – 20, 2020:** Full Proposal (Stage 2) review (in-person) and recommendations

**Early December 2020:** Conditional approval

**January 2021:** Funding announcement and initial disbursement of funds

## HOW APPLICATIONS ARE ASSESSED:

Five criteria will be used to identify PRIHS-ready solutions with high potential for impact that employ research evidence in addressing priority health system challenges/gaps.

### **Problem/Solution Specification:**

- Identification of a quantitative measurable gap within the Alberta health system (services, infrastructure, policy, etc.) that is a priority and of significance to Albertans.
- Evidence to suggest the proposed solution(s) is clinically effective and will produce a measurable impact in Alberta.

### **Relevance:**

- Extent to which the targeted problem & solution(s) are relevant to: a) the overarching objective of PRIHS (i.e., contributing to health system sustainability) and generating impact within the PRIHS time horizon; and b) health system need / priorities (as endorsed by the SCN communities).

### **Scientific Merit:**

- Extent to which the proposed solution(s) and the implementation study are informed by evidence, methodologically sound, and designed to generate high quality evidence on the impact of the solution and the implementation process.

**Feasibility:**

- Extent to which patients and families and the affected areas have been engaged in implementation planning and endorse the design as reasonable and sustainable.
- Suitability of the project team for the proposed activities (e.g., expertise, roles).
- Demonstration of clearly delineated evidence from Alberta or another jurisdiction that can inform successful implementation and the methodological approach that will be used to test and understand of the implementation (i.e. identification of facilitators and barriers to implementation).
- Extent to which the study deliverables and timelines are realistic and reflect a good understanding of the resources and operational activities required.
- Extent to which foreseeable risks (e.g., data access, requirement for AHS IT services, team member changes) have been identified and appropriate mitigation strategies are outlined.

**Impact Potential:**

Demonstrated potential to impact one or more of the following areas:

- Patient and family experience
- Patient and population health outcome
- Experience and/or safety of the workforce

AND support health system sustainability and bring value for the money invested.

Note: The magnitude of the expected impact(s) will be assessed along with the evidence upon which the estimate is based and the capacity to measure and attribute change. Factors such as how transformative the solution(s) is and if it addresses a cross-cutting theme or leverages an emerging technology will be considered in assessments of impact potential.

## EVALUATION PROCESS

During the different phases of the program, Alberta Innovates leverages internal staff and external expert reviewers to evaluate the Applications submitted. Alberta Innovates evaluates promising projects based on criteria related to the innovation opportunity, Project implementation, business readiness, and potential for Alberta impact.

Alberta Innovates retains the sole right to determine the evaluation process and does not disclose the names of its external reviewers to ensure their objectivity and impartiality. All external parties are subject to both confidentiality and conflict of interest policies set by Alberta Innovates.

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*The assessment criteria and all investment decisions are at the sole discretion of Alberta Innovates.*

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## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This Program Guide is intended as a high-level overview of the Program. It provides interested Applicants with a roadmap of what to expect over the lifecycle of a PRIHS Project, from the announcement of the program, through the Application stage, during the Project and post-completion. Should you have any questions about this guide or what is expected, please contact Alberta Innovates. Please be aware Alberta Innovates may modify this guide from time to time in keeping with any changes to the program.

Alberta Innovates will only correspond in writing and provide copies of the Application to the person named in the Application form as the one authorized to speak for the Applicant.

Once we have evaluated and approved an Application for funding, Alberta Innovates will require the Applicant to sign our standard form Investment Agreement. A copy of the Investment Agreement is available on the Alberta Innovates website. The Investment Agreement sets out in detail the roles, responsibilities and obligations of the various Parties to ensure a successful Project. Alberta Innovates will not provide any funding until the Investment Agreement has been signed by all Parties.

Alberta Innovates will only fund Applicants who have satisfied all eligibility criteria. Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee access to funding, and all funding decisions will be made by Alberta Innovates at its sole discretion.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI)

We believe the Alberta research and innovation (R&I) ecosystem is stronger and more sustainable when it is broadly reflective of the overall diversity of our community. Alberta Innovates strives to ensure all interested and qualified parties have an equitable opportunity to participate and contribute. Historically, there have been a number of groups/populations that have been under-represented in the Alberta R&I landscape including:

- Women entrepreneurs/researchers;
- Indigenous entrepreneurs/researchers;
- Remote/small community entrepreneurs/researchers; and
- New immigrant entrepreneurs/researchers.

We are guided by the principles of:

- Diversity – both internal and external participants to our processes are comprised of a varied composition of demographics;
- Equity – our processes support equal access across all demographics; and
- Inclusivity – our processes proactively work to include underrepresented segments of the R&I landscape.

Accordingly, as part of its commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Alberta Innovates will request Applicants' permission to:

- Collect data in the Application on a voluntary basis to better understand diversity;
- Provide Application navigation support to Applicants from under-represented groups; and
- Integrate a DEI focus into its due diligence processes including striving to have diverse review committees to foster unbiased decision making.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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