

## Research program transforms for 2019

Heart & Stroke has undertaken a strategy renewal initiative, touching all aspects of our mission, to set the future direction for the organization. While specifics of the strategic plan are still in development, we wanted the heart and stroke research community to know the broad themes of the coming research transformation in advance of the release of the updated strategic plan. Our vision for change is substantial.

Over the next two years, we will transform our research program to address the most urgent and relevant questions of our time and to nurture the next generation of leading heart and stroke investigators.

Heart & Stroke will launch a transformative, multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional and highly competitive research program that emphasizes excellence and innovation, accelerates the translation of knowledge into action, and accelerates impact on the people we serve. We are uniquely positioned to connect discovery in individual labs, clinics and institutions to the broader health systems and to impacts for patients and their care partners.

We will also focus on supporting the best advanced trainees and early-career investigators in order to build a sustainable next generation of investigators across Canada. The development of early-career investigators has had insufficient investment in past years and merits focused attention.

Our commitment to research is unwavering. Through these changes, we will abide by two key principles that have been central to our research program: research excellence through peer review and investigator-initiated research.

Specifically, we will accomplish this vision by:

- Creating and launching a transformative research competition of large, multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary grants supported by donors, partners and Heart & Stroke. This multi-million dollar competition will focus on addressing the most urgent and relevant questions of our time. Eligibility would be open to all career stages from new to senior-level investigators.
- Expanding our personnel program (which now exists only in Ontario and Alberta) to support trainees across Canada in the latter stages of their advanced training and early years of their academic career.
- Refreshing the GIA program to focus on early-career investigators undertaking curiosity- and investigator-initiated research; and
- Aligning provincial research programs to focus on health systems and policy change research that will advance our organizational priorities within that jurisdiction.

Our direction is very clear, but it is still early in terms of planning of changes. Over the next year we will design the new programs and supporting infrastructure by:

- Analyzing the data and historical trends in our applications and funding and in the heart and stroke research funding environment and assessing other programs and other funders doing this kind of innovative work
- Engaging with members of the scientific community to determine appropriate definition and criteria for early career investigator
- Ongoing consultation with Scientific Review Committee (SRC) and the Council on Mission Priorities Advice Strategy and Science (CoMPASS) leadership
- Supporting the work of our Mission Critical Area Councils that are helping to identify the urgent and relevant questions of our time to drive the new research competition as well as the priorities for systems and policy change.

Results and details will be shared as they are available. There are no changes to the June 2018 competition, apart from our strengthened commitment to require research to address sex and gender, as appropriate. It is certain that there will be changes to the program in 2019.

The national board of directors has set an exciting new direction for the foundation. We are excited by this vision, ready to tackle the questions of our time to address heart disease and stroke, and ready to continue to fund the breakthroughs that will save and improve more lives.

We will continue to communicate and provide updates as the details are confirmed through the research website and Anne Simard, Chief Mission and Research Officer. In the meantime, please direct questions to: [research@heartandstroke.ca](mailto:research@heartandstroke.ca)