September 29, 2023

Request for Pilot Funding Applications
UHCC *Hawaii Minority Health and Cancer Disparities SPORE* – 2023-2024

Purpose

For this recently funded Cancer Health Disparity SPORE planning grant, applications are requested that address cancer-related minority health or disparities research with translational endpoints. Each proposed project must meet the NCI definition of **translational research**, and **cancer health disparities** or **minority health research** (PAR-23-284) (see below). The translational nature of the projects proposed may pertain to advancing any clinically relevant cancer area, including cancer early detection, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and/or survivorship.

The proposed project needs to address cancer minority health or disparities, have clear translational potential, and must stem from research on human biology using cellular, molecular, structural, biochemical, and/or genetic experimental approaches (see PAR-23-284). Projects proposing mainly studies in non-human models are allowed only if a human application/human endpoint is clearly delineated and would be the next step in the research. Finally, proposals to develop new cancer-relevant interventions should include both a laboratory component addressing mechanisms and a human application that must be proposed within the project aims. These grants are funded by the Hawaii Minority Health and Cancer Disparities SPORE (P20 CA275734). Up to two 1-year grants will be awarded in this cycle, with budgets of up to $50,000 each.

Evaluation Criteria

The criteria that will be evaluated for funding are the following:

- Scientific merit and potential impact
- Innovation and significance of the question being studied
- Translational potential
- Relevance to cancer minority health or disparities
- Potential as a future SPORE project
- Applications are particularly encouraged from early-stage investigators

Eligibility

- Cancer Researchers who are UH Faculty and/or UHCC members at all levels (Full, Associate, Affiliate, Collaborating, and Clinical)
- New project that is not supported by existing extramural funding
- Applicant has not received SPORE seed funding during the last 2 years
- A one-page progress report is required at the end of the project period

Seed Grant Specifics

- Applications are due by 5:00 pm on **January 15, 2024**; funding will start February 1, 2024.
- All funds must be utilized within 1-year.
- A 2nd year may be allowable upon satisfactory progress.
- Two awards of $50,000 will receive funding.
- An additional $50,000 maximum may be available for a competitive project lead by faculty of under-represented racial/ethnic groups to foster diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Funds may be utilized for personnel salary (no faculty salary), supplies, and research-related expenditures.
- Travel support is permitted only for presentation at scientific meetings of the research conducted.
- Explain that no overlap exists between current of pending projects.
- Re-submissions of a previous application will be allowed only once.
- Proposals may be reviewed by internal, external or the Pilot Grant Committee reviewers.

Application Instructions (all in one pdf file)

- Research Plan (5 pages maximum)
  - Specific Aims
  - Background/Significance/Translational Relevance
  - Innovation and Impact
  - Research Approach and Methodologies
  - Description of Inter-Programmatic Collaborative Interactions and use of SPORE and UHCC Cores
  - Brief Description of Future Plans, Including potential as a SPORE project (PAR-23-284)
- One or two-year budget ($50K total) including the names of all co-investigators (1 page)
- Literature Cited
- Biosketches with Other Support
  - Please utilize Arial 11 Font, with margins no less than 0.5 in
  - Please do not submit supplemental information or appendices
  - Submit as a single PDF
  - Send to Alison Ross (ARoss@cc.hawaii.edu) copied Gertraud Maskarinec (gertraud@cc.hawaii.edu) and Loïc Le Marchand (Loic@cc.hawaii.edu).

Definition of Translational Research in Cancer

The Pilot Fund Committee employs the NIH SPORE definition of Translational Research in Cancer (PAR-23-284):

"Translational research uses knowledge of human biology to develop and test the feasibility of cancer-relevant interventions in humans and/or determines the biological basis for observations made in individuals with cancer or in populations at risk for cancer. The term "interventions" is used in its broadest sense to include molecular assays, imaging techniques, drugs, biological agents, and/or other methodologies applicable to the prevention, early detection, diagnosis, prognosis, and/or treatment of cancer. SPORE translational research projects may involve the use of any cellular, molecular, structural, biochemical, and/or genetic experimental approaches. By this definition, SPORE projects are permitted to move not only in the forward direction, toward clinical trials and studies in areas of prevention, early detection, treatment, development of biomarkers, and population science, but also in the reverse direction, using human biospecimens, often from clinical trials, to study new phenomena, to optimize previous findings, or to develop new hypotheses based on results from human studies."

Definition of Cancer Health Disparities and Minority Health (CHD-MH) Projects: *"Cancer health disparities refer to health differences that adversely affect specific populations, based on one or more of the following health outcomes listed below.*

- *Higher incidence and/or prevalence and earlier onset of cancer;*
- *Higher prevalence of risk factors, unhealthy behaviors, or clinical measures in the causal pathway of a cancer outcome;*
- *Higher rates of condition-specific symptoms, reduced global daily functioning, or self-reported health-related quality of life using standardized metrics;*
- *Premature and/or excessive mortality from cancer; and*
- *Greater global burden of cancer using standardized metrics.*

Minority health research is the scientific investigation of distinctive health characteristics and attributes of minority racial and/or ethnic groups who are usually underrepresented in biomedical research to understand health outcomes in these populations. NIH defines health disparity populations as racial and ethnic minority populations, less privileged socioeconomic status (SES) populations, underserved rural populations, sexual and gender minorities (SGM). SGM populations include, but are not limited to, individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, Two-Spirit, queer, and/or intersex (NOT-OD-19-139).

SPORE research in CHD-MH projects should focus on 1) the investigation of health outcomes and/or disparities in health outcomes and 2) the development of novel-cancer relevant interventions in underserved populations with cancer or at risk for cancer. Proposed CHD-MH projects would require a reference or comparator group to assess disparities in cancer outcomes. However, the identified reference group would be based on the scientific rationale or question proposed and is not by definition required to be non-Hispanic White. Examples of SPORE projects focusing on cancer patients or individuals at risk for cancer that would qualify for the CHD-MH designation include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Discovery, validation, and assessment of how various determinants of health intersect with the biology of cancer to promote cancer in underserved populations, including geographical location, environment, culture, occupation, access to care, genetic ancestry, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity.*
- *Characterization of the biological impact of social determinants of health and identifying specific biological pathways that might be targeted by clinical or public health interventions.*
- *Hypothesis generating studies characterizing risk factor prevalence or biological differences in underserved populations.*
- *Investigating the role of determinants of health and comorbidities on toxicity to therapeutic interventions in underserved populations."*

Other useful information can be found in the SPORE PAR:
PAR-23-284: Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPOREs) in Human Cancers for Years 2024, 2025, and 2026 (P50 Clinical Trial Required) (nih.gov)