

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The Johns Hopkins ALACRITY Center for Health and Longevity in Mental Illness *Improving Physical Health and Reducing Premature Mortality*

ALACRITY Pilot Grant Program, 2020

The ALACRITY Center for Health and Longevity in Mental Illness is dedicated to improving physical health and reducing premature mortality among people with serious mental illness. People with serious mental health conditions like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder die 10-20 years earlier than the overall population, primarily due to cardiovascular disease. The primary goal of the NIMH-funded ALACRITY Center is to develop strategies for widespread translation of evidence-based interventions to address physical health conditions and risk behaviors into U.S. community mental health settings, like community mental health clinics and psychiatric rehabilitation programs, which serve people with serious mental illness. The Center is led by Director Gail Daumit, Associate Director Beth McGinty, and Methods Core Directors Elizabeth Stuart and Nae-Yuh Wang. For a full list of the Center's transdisciplinary leadership and faculty, see:

<https://www.hopkinsalacritycenter.com/meet-the-team>

The Center's work is focused on the following priority conditions, which are leading causes of premature mortality among people with serious mental illness:

- Cardiovascular risk factors and behaviors, including obesity; hypertension; dyslipidemia; diabetes mellitus; physical inactivity; unhealthy diet; and tobacco smoking
- Cancer
- Liver disease
- Chronic lung disease
- HIV/AIDS

The review articles below summarize the current evidence surrounding the prevalence of, quality of care for, and evidence-based interventions to address cardiovascular risk factors and behaviors in the population with serious mental illness:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0163834315000456>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0920996415001838>

<https://academic.oup.com/schizophreniabulletin/article/42/1/96/2518930>

For more details regarding ALACRITY Center research projects and priorities, see our website:

<https://www.hopkinsalacritycenter.com/>

Pilot Grant Program

The ALACRITY Center pilot grant program is an opportunity to serve as the Principal Investigator of a NIMH-funded pilot grant. The pilot grant program will support investigators conducting R03-scope studies on topics related to improving physical health among people with serious mental illness. Competitive proposals will make a clear case for how their pilot work will be leveraged into future NIH-funded research.

Examples of topics of interest include:

- Development and/or evaluation of implementation strategies (e.g. provider trainings, audit-and-feedback tools, performance coaching, see: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25889199>) to scale-up evidence-based interventions to improve physical health for people with serious mental illness.
- Epidemiological or health services studies examining disparities in physical health outcomes or physical health care access/quality among people with serious mental illness.
- Development of consumer-centered outcome measures of quality of physical healthcare among people with serious mental illness.
- Evaluation of financing models for delivering evidence-based interventions to improve physical health among people with serious mental illness.
- Methodological innovations related to generating and using data to inform scale-up of effective interventions, e.g., advances in sequential or stepped randomized trial designs or systems science work modeling the potential effects of intervention scale-up in the U.S. population with serious mental illness.
- Cost-effectiveness studies of evidence-based interventions to improve physical health among people with serious mental illness.
- Pilot interventions to address priority physical health conditions (see page 1) among people with serious mental illness.

Leveraging the Center's Available Data: Applicants are encouraged to leverage the ALACRITY Center's existing data resources, which include:

- Data from randomized clinical trials testing interventions to improve physical health among people with serious mental illness (e.g., the ACHIEVE trial: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23517118>);
- Maryland Medicaid administrative claims data for people with serious mental illness, 2010-2016
- Interviews and surveys with providers and consumers about a variety of topics related to physical health in serious mental illness, including care coordination and smoking cessation;
- And other data resources. For more information, contact the Center's Training Core Director, Beth McGinty, at bmcginty@jhu.edu.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include post-doctoral fellows and faculty (all ranks) with an appointment at Johns Hopkins University. Applicants from across all JHU schools and divisions are welcomed. Applicants from historically underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. Post-doctoral applicants must have a position at JHU that spans the entire duration of the project period.

Mentorship: Applicants new to the topic of improving physical health and reducing premature mortality in serious mental illness are encouraged to apply. Interested grant recipients will be matched with a researcher with expertise in this field who will provide mentorship and guidance throughout the grant period.

Project Funding

The ALACRITY Center anticipates supporting 1-3 R03-scope pilot grants starting in 2020.

- Applicants can propose a research project lasting one year or two years.
- Applicants can request up to \$50,000 per year; smaller-scope projects that require less funding are welcomed.
 - In certain circumstances, we will consider proposals with budgets over \$50,000 per year, but this must be approved prior to submitting a concept note. Please contact bmcginty@jhu.edu.
- The total costs of selected applications will determine the number of awards granted.
- Funds may be used to support faculty salary, research assistant costs, and other research activities such as data purchase or collection. Funds may not be used for university overhead, clinical patient care, or the purchase of food.
- Funded applicants will be required to submit a progress report every four months and present their work to Center faculty at least once per year.
- Awardees will be expected to participate as a member of the growing community of ALACRITY Center investigators working on physical health issues in persons with serious mental illness. This includes seminars and symposia held throughout the year.

Application Guidelines

The application process includes three phases:

1. **Phase 1: Concept Note:** Eligible applicants should submit a 1-2 page (single-spaced, size 11 font, 0.5 inch margins) concept note that includes a brief summary of the points below.
 - The aims of the proposed research project
 - The methods that will be used to achieve those aims
 - The proposed study team and their credentials
 - A brief synopsis of how the proposed pilot work will be leveraged into a larger NIH proposal
 - Applicants should also submit their NIH-format biosketch (not counted toward two-page limit: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>)

2. **Phase 2: Collaboration with Center Faculty to Develop Full Proposal:** Concept notes will be reviewed by Center faculty and members of the Center’s stakeholder advisory board. Applicants with strong concept notes will be invited to submit full proposals. If selected, applicants are required to meet with a Center faculty member to discuss plans for the full proposal. For candidates new to research on addressing premature mortality in SMI, Center faculty will provide additional support as-desired by the applicant (including providing access to existing Center data, literature reviews, etc.).

3. **Phase 3: Full Application (single-spaced, size 11 font, 0.5 inch margins):**
 - Title page with abstract (one-page limit)
 - Introduction and specific aims (one-page limit)
 - NIH-format Research plan (four-page limit) – standard NIH sections are expected: significance, innovation, and approach
 - List of references cited (no page limit)
 - Budget and budget justification (see templates at end of RFP)
 - Human subjects protection – please follow PHS 398 guidelines (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-d/general/g.400-phs-398-research-plan-form.htm#Human>)
 - NIH biosketch for all study investigators
 - Proposals that involve a partnership with an external organization, e.g. a community mental health clinic, should include a detailed letter of support from that entity signaling their commitment to the project.

Review Process

Each application will be reviewed by a committee of experienced investigators with relevant expertise to evaluate the proposal and members of the ALACRITY Center’s stakeholder advisory board, which is comprised of community mental health program leaders, federally qualified health center leaders, front-line providers serving people with serious mental illness, consumers with serious mental illness, family members of consumers with serious mental illness, and family/consumer advocacy group representatives. Reviewers will use the NIH scoring rubric (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/review/rev_prep/scoring.htm).

Application Timeline

1. Submit concept notes to alacritycenter@jhmi.edu by 5:00pm EST on Friday, March 27, 2020.
2. Applicants will be notified about the status of their concept note by the end of April. Applicants whose concept notes have been accepted to move forward to the next phase will be connected with relevant Center faculty to discuss their proposal.
3. The deadline for full applications submission is by 5:00 pm EST on Friday, July 31st, 2020. Submit to alacritycenter@jhmi.edu.
4. Grantees will be notified of funding decisions in early August with anticipated project start date of Tuesday, September 1st, 2020.

Contacts:

For questions regarding application and award logistics, please contact ALACRITY Center staff at: alacritycenter@jhmi.edu

For questions regarding the fit of a grant idea with this RFP or other scientific questions, please contact ALACRITY Center Associate Director Beth McGinty: bmcginty@jhu.edu

Detailed Budget Justification

- A. Personnel – Please use FY21 salary.
- B. Consultant
- C. Equipment
- D. Supplies
- E. Travel
- F. Patient Care Costs
- G. Other Expenses