

The Penn Mental Health AIDS Research Center (PMHARC)
Call for Pilot Project Concepts
Concepts accepted and reviewed October 1 to October 30, 2020

The PMHARC seeks 1 page concepts for its pilot research program. This competitive program will select projects with clear potential to lead to larger funded, basic, clinical, and translational research. Concepts will be evaluated for scientific merit, programmatic relevance, utilization of PMHARC Core services, feasibility for completion within one year, and likelihood that the work will lead to future NIH grant funding. Priority will be given to applications that are responsive to the research priorities of the PMHARC (<http://www.med.upenn.edu/pmharc>), the AIDS Program of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) (<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/about/organization/dar/index.shtml>), the NIH Office of AIDS Research (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-15-137.html>) and the national initiative to End the HIV Epidemic by 2030 (<https://www.hiv.gov/federal-response/ending-the-hiv-epidemic/overview>). Concepts that address issues of social justice, race, and health disparities will also be prioritized. Selected concepts will be invited to submit a 5-page application and budget. Projects must include both established and early career investigators. Research approaches may include basic and pre-clinical studies, small feasibility trials, and secondary analysis of large data sets.

Potential areas of research include:

- Impact of COVID-19 on HIV prevention or the health of people living with HIV
- Treatment of psychiatric disorders among people living with HIV infection and co-occurring medical conditions—metabolic syndrome, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, cancers, HCV, TB, substance use disorders
- Interventions/treatments of psychiatric conditions to improve adherence to ART or PrEP
- Adaptations of evidence based psychiatric treatment to the unique needs of HIV patient populations
- Research on effective treatment of mental illness to improvements in biological measures of health status
- Research on the treatment of HAND (HIV-Associated Neurocognitive Disorders)
- Studies of interaction effects between psychiatric and antiretroviral medications
- Secondary analyses of datasets with the potential to improve understanding of relationships between psychiatric disorder and ART treatment engagement, adherence, and retention
- Studies that use the PMHARC data and specimen repository (serum, plasma, genomic DNA).

Funding amount: \$25,000 plus support from PMHARC Cores. Additional funds (up to a total of \$40,000) may be requested for projects that link directly to PHMARC, NIMH, OAR, and EHE priorities. Funds may be used for personnel (including up to 10% of salary for senior investigator), supplies and/or equipment.

Core Utilization: Full use of appropriate PMHARC Core services is strongly encouraged and will be viewed as responsive to this announcement. Details can be found at: <http://www.med.upenn.edu/pmharc/cores.shtml>

PMHARC Core Assessments and Repository: All studies involving human subjects will be expected to utilize a core battery of clinical and lab assessments which, for most projects, will be completed by the Clinical Assessment Core and the Laboratory Biomarkers Core. All subjects will be offered participation in the PMHARC data and specimen repository.

Eligibility: All projects must be led by a member of the Penn Faculty (including Instructors). Post Docs and Senior Fellows at Penn are also eligible with a faculty sponsor.

Applications and Instructions: One-page concepts should include a brief statement of the problem, the hypotheses to be tested or questions to be explored, methods, sample size and PMHARC, NIMH, EHE, or OAR priorities to be addressed. Please include a cover page listing principal and co-investigators, faculty status, departmental affiliation, and budget requested.

Submit prior to October 30, 2020 to: Chelsea Voytek, MPH at chelseav@penntmedicine.upenn.edu. For further information, please contact Dave Metzger, PhD, Director of Developmental Core at dsm@penntmedicine.upenn.edu.