



## **NEW CANADA-WIDE INITIATIVE RECEIVES FEDERAL FUNDING TO ACCELERATE CHILD HEALTH RESEARCH**

*The CHEER initiative has received \$2.5M from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to develop infrastructure that facilitates multi-site studies for enhanced and expedited child health research across Canada.*

**TORONTO, September 9, 2020** – A new Canada-wide collaboration will develop a research ethics review process to facilitate efficient multi-site pediatric studies. Based at Queen’s University and led by Clinical Trials Ontario (CTO) and the Maternal Infant Child and Youth Research Network (MICYRN), the **Canadian Collaboration for Child Health: Efficiency and Excellence in the Ethics Review of Research (CHEER)** aims to improve child health in Canada by enhancing and expediting child health research. CHEER is supported by \$2.5 million in funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), by the CIHR Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health and the CIHR Institute of Genetics.

Canada is a world leader in child health research, but investigators developing multi-site research studies often encounter challenges with gaining Research Ethics Board (REB) approval across multiple provinces. This can delay research, increasing the costs and timelines of conducting studies and creating setbacks for patients and families who are waiting for new evidence and treatments. To address these challenges, CHEER is building a web-based system that researchers and REBs can use to enable a single REB review for studies conducted across the country.

“Streamlined research ethics review plays a vital role in conducting successful, efficient clinical research,” says Susan Marlin, President and CEO of CTO and Nominated Principal Investigator for CHEER. “By developing a Canada-wide approach to ethics review, we can respond more quickly to emerging health crises, strengthen our role as a global leader in pediatric research and, most importantly, move research forward more efficiently to improve child health in Canada and beyond.”

In collaboration with investigators, REBs, patients and families, and other organizations, CHEER will also establish a program to assess REBs for the streamlined ethics review process and develop educational programs to support high-quality, consistent and efficient REB reviews.

“An effective education component is key to ensuring research teams, trainees, and REB members are informed of new systems and processes in a timely manner,” says Thierry Lacaze-Masmonteil, Scientific Director of MICYRN and Principal Investigator for CHEER. “Through all phases of the project, we will engage researchers, sub-specialty networks, and patients and their families to ensure information that can help improve child health in Canada is accessible, effective and engaging.” The Queen’s University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Office for Professional Development and Educational Scholarship will play a key role in supporting the educational programming for CHEER.



"Across the country, Canada is home to a strong children's health research community," says Dr. Christine Chambers, Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health. "Through collaboration and knowledge translation, the CHEER initiative will help our community work together effectively and expedite research that improves the health and development of mothers, infants, children, youth, and families in Canada and throughout the world."

"We are thrilled to see the breadth of the scope of this initiative, and the key role played by patients' representatives," says Christopher McMaster, Scientific Director of CIHR Institute of Genetics. "We are looking forward to seeing the outcomes of this project, as they will be a key factor in supporting our efforts – especially those supporting research on inherited diseases, which represents by far the highest burden on our children's health."

CHEER focuses on child health research, but a broader vision is baked into the initiative. "We hope that this will be a first step in developing a single research ethics review process for any multi-site health research study conducted across Canada," says Richard Carpentier, Principal Investigator for CHEER, Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Sherbrooke, and Chair of the Hôpital Montfort REB. "As we move forward, we will consider opportunities to expand this program across all areas of study to ultimately improve the environment for conducting health research in Canada."

More information on the CHEER project can be found on its newly launched website: [cheerchildhealth.ca](http://cheerchildhealth.ca)

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### **About Clinical Trials Ontario**

[Clinical Trials Ontario](#) is a leading organization in the clinical trials community dedicated to strengthening, promoting and capitalizing on Ontario's competitive advantages for conducting high quality clinical trials. CTO works collaboratively with industry, research institutes, patients and the public and other health innovation organizations to improve the clinical trials environment and attract investment to the province, while supporting the highest ethical and quality standards.

### **About MICRYN**

[The Maternal Infant Child and Youth Research Network](#) is a federal not-for-profit, charitable organization founded in 2006 to build capacity for high-quality applied health research. It now links 20 maternal and child health research organizations based at academic health centres in Canada; is affiliated with more than 20 practice-based research networks; provides support to new and emerging teams; and has established strong national and international partnerships.

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