![PRAXIS Spinal Cord Institute]

Request for Applications (RFA)

Identifying Strengths and Gaps in the Provision of Essential Community-based Health Services for Canadians with Spinal Cord Injury

About Praxis

The Praxis Spinal Cord Institute is a Canadian-based not-for-profit organization that drives innovation in spinal cord injury (SCI) research and care. By facilitating an international network of researchers, health care professionals, entrepreneurs, investors, individuals with SCI, and their supporters, we strive to improve the lives of people living with SCI in Canada and around the world.

Background

The objective of Praxis' Care Program is to achieve evidence-informed equitable care for Canadians who sustain a SCI, with a focus on the following areas: preventing secondary complications, maximizing functional recovery, supporting long-term care, health, wellness, and assisting community participation.

In order to achieve this, we fund innovative initiatives selected through strategic investments and open competitions that align to our program objective.

Description of this RFA

Working towards achieving evidence-informed equitable care for Canadians with SCI, Praxis conducted a series of national consultations with the SCI community and found that while much success has been seen in acute and rehabilitation care, provision of care still varies in the community. Specifically, there is a need for a person-centred approach to optimize support for home, community care, and community living for individuals with SCI throughout their lives following injury. One of the recommendations from the consultations was to establish partnerships with SCI community partners[1] specifically to explore inconsistencies or inadequacies in the access and provision of SCI health-related services essential to support community living across provinces. This gap was accentuated during the COVID-19 pandemic when the access and provision of essential services (e.g. home care, medical supplies) were impacted, negatively affecting the health and wellness of individuals with SCI.

Given the importance of accessing essential services for the health and wellness of individuals with SCI both during and after the pandemic, the focus of this RFA is to identify strengths (i.e. best practices) and gaps in the provision of essential community-based health services for Canadians living with SCI. The goal is to address these gaps by facilitating access to essential services and/or policy change across Canada.

Outputs/deliverables of this RFA will include:

- An **environmental scan (e-scan)** including topics such as:
  - prioritized essential community-based health services along with rationale for inclusion,
  - baseline levels of provision and equipment delivery for these services in all provinces,
  - evaluation of existing policies on provision of these services in each province with consideration of payers (e.g. work-related claims, motor vehicle claims), biases (e.g. potential sex/gender, age-related), and opportunities for improvement,
  - strengths and gaps (weaknesses/challenges) that each province has with provision of these services, as well as the ability of individuals with SCI to access these services,
  - identification of best practices taken in provinces to successfully advocate for more support;

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[1] SCI Care for Canada: A Framework for Strategy & Action

- **Knowledge translation (KT) activities:**
  - sharing of the e-scan findings with provincial SCI organizations and other relevant organizations,
  - creating KT tools and materials tailored for the relevant key stakeholder groups to share best practices and to address gaps,
  - French translation of KT tools and materials to increase accessibility and inclusiveness;

- An **implementation plan** and **pilot**:
  - a list of identified stakeholders that have interest or influence in achieving the goal of this initiative (e.g. individuals with lived experience, SCI community organizations, policy expertise, provincial decision- and policy-makers),
  - a list of activities for engaging these stakeholders to facilitate implementation of this initiative,
  - execute activities outlined in the implementation plan in 1 or 2 provinces;

- A **sustainability plan** outlining:
  - plans to scale up implementation in other provinces and opportunities for alignment with other provincial or national SCI initiatives to support wide implementation in the future,
  - details of website options for hosting the e-scan findings, KT tools, and any relevant materials (e.g. website of SCI Canada, SCI Research Evidence [SCIRE], or Praxis, etc.) and for being available in French after the initiative is completed, and
  - a proposed process to update the findings of the e-scan in the future.

The intended outcomes of this RFA are:

- **Short-term/immediate outcome:** Increased engagement and awareness of the strengths and gaps in health service delivery in stakeholders at piloted provinces using the e-scan findings and KT tools.

- **Medium-term outcome:** Increased advocacy in provinces for addressing the gaps in service delivery.

- **Long-term outcome:** Provision of essential community-based health services for individuals with SCI is increased to an optimal and equitable level across Canada.

Award Amount and Term

Up to C$80,000 is available for this competition for a maximum of two awards with a term ending no later than March 31, 2022. Each application can request a budget up to $40,000.

Awards can only be used to support direct initiative expenses. Ineligible expenses include:
- Rent
- Capital expenses (e.g. computers, office equipment, furniture, fixtures, etc.)
- Indirect expenses (overhead, administrative costs)
- Travel and accommodation expenses (prohibited during pandemic)
- Activities that are not part of the initiative
- Honoraria and costs that are already otherwise funded

Eligibility Criteria

The Principal Applicant or Co-Principal Applicants must:
- Be affiliated with a Canadian organization eligible to hold Praxis funds (be a qualified donee registered with Canada Revenue Agency)
- Be in a position which allows him/her to pursue and lead independent initiatives, including the proposed initiative
- Accept Praxis' conditions of funding (Appendix 1)

Individual(s) with lived experience must be part of the Application team.

All applicants must:
- Have the support of their organization to participate in the initiative
- Be an independent researcher or knowledge user who has an active, meaningful role in the initiative
- Disclose all real or perceived conflicts of interest (COI) (Appendix 2 and 3)

Key Dates

Key Dates	Timeline
Deadline to submit proposal	October 16, 2020
External review	October 19 - 30, 2020
Notice of decision	Week of November 2, 2020
Grant agreement process initiated	Week of November 16, 2020

Application Instructions

Applicants must complete the Application Cover (Appendix 4) and include the following:

1. Lay Summary (up to 250 words) & five Key Words

2. Proposal (6 pages maximum, excluding appendices: logic model, budget, Gantt chart)
   a. Background: What is the problem/gap this initiative is being address? How big is the problem/gap?

   b. Objective: What is the initiative doing to address the problem/gap?

   c. Methodology (see details above for content to be addressed by each deliverable)
      - **E-scan:** How will the e-scan be conducted?
      - **KT Activities:** How will the e-scan findings be disseminated?
      - **Implementation Plan and Pilot:** What will be the activities for developing the Implementation Plan? Which provinces will be targeted for the pilot and why? What data will be collected to measure effectiveness of implementation?
      - **Sustainability Plan:** What will be the activities for developing the Sustainability Plan?

   d. Expected Results and Evaluation Metrics
      - In a logic model, link the planned activities to expected outcomes as aligned to the intended outcomes of this RFA stated above (use template - Appendix 5; see more resources here).
      - Discuss the likelihood of success in achieving the expected outcomes and the evaluation metrics.
      - Outline potential risks and mitigation strategies.

   e. Operational Readiness
      - Describe experience and qualifications of the team to execute the initiative.
      - Describe the team's ability (time commitment) to deliver the expected results on time.

   f. Budget Request and Work Plan
      - Provide an itemized budget (use budget template - Appendix 6) and provide justification.
      - Provide a work plan that is related to the budget and that includes a breakdown of milestones, deliverables, and timeline in a Gantt chart.

3. Attachments
   a. COI Disclosure Form signed by all Applicants (Appendix 3)

   b. CV of all Applicants
      - CV formatted for CIHR or other formats as appropriate to reflect member's role (e.g. non-researcher clinicians, community organization staff, etc.) may be used.

   c. Letter of Support (e.g. from organizations/partners, etc.)

Submission

Application must be compiled into a single and indexed (i.e. include a table of contents) PDF or Word document. Please submit your application package electronically to funding@praxisinstitute.org before the deadline.

Application Package:
1. Application cover
2. Lay summary
3. Proposal
4. Appendices: Logic model, budget, and Gantt chart
5. Attachments: Signed COI Disclosure Forms and CVs from all applicants, and letter(s) of support

Review Process

For quality improvement purpose, a team of reviewers will evaluate the application using the criteria below.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Strategic Alignment:** Does the initiative align with Praxis's strategic plan, vision, and mission?

- **Merit and Feasibility:** Is the initiative within the scope of this RFA? Is there evidence of excellence and scientific merit of the initiative? Are the initiative's objectives realistic given the scope, schedule, and identified resources?

- **Potential Impact**: Does this initiative address a clearly defined need? Will the initiative's output be meaningful and of value to the SCI community? Is there evidence of meaningful engagement with individuals with SCI throughout the initiative?

- **Engagement and Sharing of Knowledge:** Is there evidence of partnership/collaboration between relevant stakeholders (e.g. individual with lived experience, health care provider, researcher, community organization, indigenous community, health authorities, policy-makers) in this initiative? Does the initiative have the ability to be sustainable?

- **Operational Readiness:** Is the work plan realistic? Is the budget appropriate? Is the team appropriately trained, resourced, and capable of executing the initiative? Is there evidence of meaningful engagement with all team members to successfully complete the initiative?

- **Evaluation Plan:** Is the plan for measuring outcomes appropriate? Is there any potential sex/gender-bias in the plan and if so, what response will be undertaken to help address it? Note: Where appropriate and feasible, researchers should stratify their findings to reveal any sex/gender-biases in measured outcomes. Any correlation of sex/gender and outcomes may result in sex/gender-specific considerations in the design of treatment regimes, and may constitute an important part of personalized medicine for SCI.

Funding Decision-Making Process

Upon completion of the review process, the review committee presents a recommendation to the CEO for a final decision on project funding.

Questions

Please contact funding@praxisinstitute.org for questions regarding this RFA.