THRIVING

The iTHRIV Newsletter

February 2025

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iTHRIV CTS Pilot Studies Funding Opportunity

 The iTHRIV Pilot Studies Program announces $200,000 in available funding to support innovative approaches to translational science projects (TS), and to foster research collaborations across iTHRIV institutions. TS projects seek to understand the scientific and operational principles underlying the translational process.

TS is focused on the general case that applies to any target or disease. Translational research (TR) projects solely focused on a particular target or disease are not allowed. Please see this Learning Short video and this brief video to learn more about translational science.

 An information session about the iTHRIV CTS Pilot Studies program and the proposal submission process will occur on April 8, 2025 at noon EST on Zoom: Click here to register in advance for this session. All applicants are strongly encouraged to attend this session.

In addition, in order to help research teams prepare competitive applications, iTHRIV will host four optional workshops to provide feedback on whether proposed projects align with the translational science (TS) framework, and to offer suggestions for better alignment. The workshops are scheduled for 2/18/2025, 3/18/2025, 4/1/2025, or 4/15/2025. They are all virtual. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED! Click here to register in advance. All applicants for the iTHRIV CTS Pilot Studies Program are strongly encouraged to attend whether or not they are seeking feedback on their project proposals. Understanding translational science concepts vs. translational research will be paramount to submitting a well formulated proposal. For more information about the workshops, contact the iTHRIV CTS Program Manager, Medard Ng at htn3u@uvahealth.org.
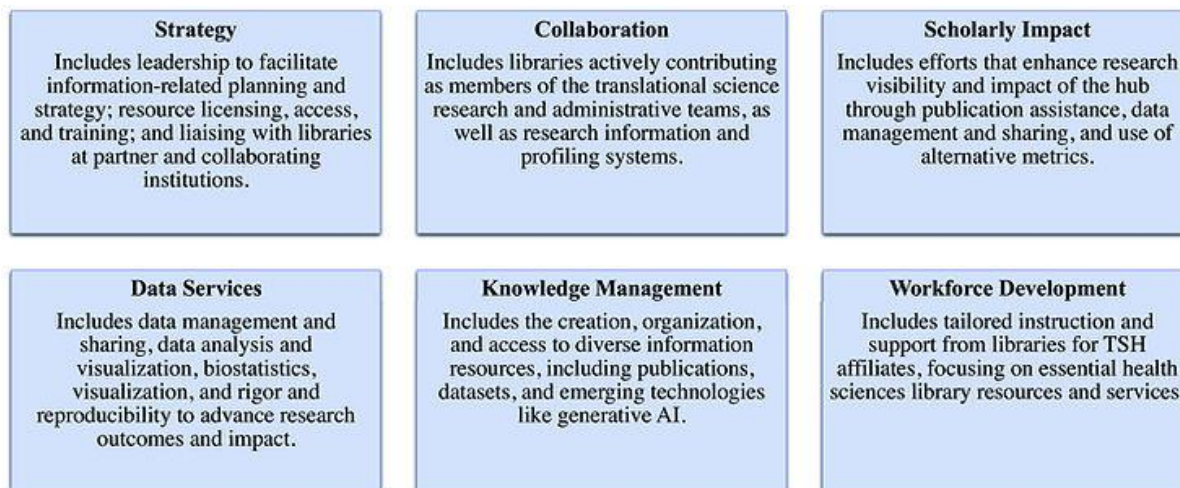
The application period for the CTS Pilot Studies Program is expected to be open in late March/ early April of 2025 (contingent on availability of NIH funding). Applicants can request up to $50,000 in funding. Projects are required to be completed within one year. For more detailed information and access to all required forms please review the full funding opportunity announcement.

The CTS Pilot Studies Program Director, Dr. Antonio Abbate (Antonio.abbate@virginia.edu) is available for consultation. For additional questions, please contact iTHRIV: iTHRIVAdmin@uvahealth.org.

Libraries Empower Translational Science Hubs with Collaborative Resources and Expertise

Academic health sciences libraries play a pivotal role in advancing clinical and translational science, offering services that span the entire research lifecycle. As essential partners in the success of clinical and translational research, libraries have long collaborated with Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) Program hubs, along with other translational initiatives such as the IDeA Clinical & Translational Research Network.

A recent article in the Journal of Clinical and Translational Science features contributions from 23 authors across various institutional libraries and geographies, and emphasizes the valuable role libraries can play in supporting Translational Science Hubs (TSH). The article highlights potential areas for collaboration, offering a comprehensive overview of how libraries can enhance the work of TSH by addressing the diverse information needs of researchers.

Strategy Includes leadership to facilitate information-related planning and strategy; resource licensing, access, and training; and liaising with libraries at partner and collaborating institutions.	**Collaboration** Includes libraries actively contributing as members of the translational science research and administrative teams, as well as research information and profiling systems.	**Scholarly Impact** Includes efforts that enhance research visibility and impact of the hub through publication assistance, data management and sharing, and use of alternative metrics.
Data Services Includes data management and sharing, data analysis and visualization, biostatistics, visualization, and rigor and reproducibility to advance research outcomes and impact.	**Knowledge Management** Includes the creation, organization, and access to diverse information resources, including publications, datasets, and emerging technologies like generative AI.	**Workforce Development** Includes tailored instruction and support from libraries for TSH affiliates, focusing on essential health sciences library resources and services.

Key topical categories for library-Translational Science Hubs partnership.

Drawing from the CTSA Program's five functional areas as outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, the article explores how libraries can actively support each of these areas. Libraries are uniquely equipped to provide essential services, resources, and expertise, positioning them as vital contributors to the success of TSH and the broader translational science ecosystem.

This work was led by Bart Ragon at the Integrated Translational Health Research Institute of Virginia (iTHRIV) and Director of the Claude Moore Health Sciences Library at the University of Virginia (UVA). Dr. Ragon believes the article can serve as a powerful catalyst for new discussions across academic and healthcare institutions. "This work can be used as a strong foundation for TSH and libraries to explore how they can collaborate to foster translational science innovation and implementation, advancing the goals of the CTSA Program and other translational initiatives."

Anne Seymour, Associate Dean of the Welch Medical Library at Johns Hopkins University & Medicine reinforces this sentiment. "This paper can foster collaborations to more fully realize the potential of thriving learning health systems—where we continually learn from what we do and do what we learn." Kristi Holmes, Director of Informatics and Data Science for Northwestern University

Clinical & Translational Sciences Institute (NUCATS) and Director of the Galter Health Sciences Library and Learning Center at the Feinberg School of Medicine, adds, "Our collaboration of over 20 library leaders exemplifies the power of collective expertise and a shared mission. Together, we're breaking down silos, accelerating discovery, and ensuring that knowledge serves its ultimate purpose—improving lives through science."

Karen Johnston, Associate Vice President for Clinical and Translational Research at UVA and co-director of iTHRIV, is a champion for strong library-CTSA collaboration: "Collaboration between translational researchers and librarians is a key tool to transform knowledge into action. Together, we accelerate the translation of research into practice, ensuring that vital insights research the diverse communities who need them most, ultimately improving health outcomes and fostering a healthier future for all. I am extremely grateful for the leadership of Dr. Ragon to facilitate these impactful partnerships." This perspective resonates strongly with Northwestern University, which positioned the health sciences library as a center within NUCATS over a decade ago to facilitate important research, clinical, and education synergies on campus. Richard D'Aquilla, Associate Vice President of Research, Senior Associate Dean for Clinical and Translational Research, and Director of NUCATS notes, "In translational medicine, the path from the bench to the bedside is only as strong as the knowledge networks supporting it. Our library partners play a pivotal role in facilitating access to the knowledge needed by researchers to foster innovation, collaboration, and evidence-based practice across disciplines."

With a shared commitment to improving patient care and enhancing the understanding of complex medical conditions, the collaboration between libraries and Translational Science Hubs promises to open new avenues for groundbreaking research and impactful scientific discoveries. The article provides a roadmap for TSH and libraries to deepen their collaboration, ensuring that researchers have access to the critical tools and information they need to drive innovation in clinical and translational science.

For more information, or to read the full article, visit https://doi.org/10.1017/cts.2024.664.

Announcing the New iDRIV Cohort

We are thrilled to introduce the newest cohort of scholars selected for the iDRIV program. This diverse group of talented individuals represents a wide range of disciplines and brings a wealth of expertise and experiences to the program. Here are the distinguished scholars joining us this year:

- **Alanna Bergman, PhD**: Post-Doctoral Fellow in Nursing.

- **Lucy Guarnera, PhD**: Assistant Professor at the Institute of Law, Psychiatry, & Public Policy, Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences, School of Medicine.

- **Austin Hogwood, PhD, MS**: Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Robert M. Berne Cardiovascular Research Center

- **Movicque King, MD**: Fellow in the Department of Pediatrics, Division of Neonatology.

- **Maria McDonald, PhD**: Post-Doctoral Fellow at the School of Nursing

- **Maria Luana Morais, PhD**: Scholar in the Department of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases & International Health.

- **Mirna Perusina Lanfranca, PhD**: Research Scientist in the Carter Immunology Center

- **Jacopo Pavan, PhD**: Bioengineering Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Center for Diabetes Technology, Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences.

- **Samantha Ruff, MD**: Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery, Division of Surgical Oncology.

- **Rachael Stone, PharmD**: Assistant Professor in the Department of Neurology, Stroke Division.

- **Ariel Williams, PhD**: Assistant Professor in Public Health Sciences, specializing in Biomedical Informatics.

- **Daniel Zegarra Ruiz, PhD**: Assistant Professor in Microbiology, Immunology, and Cancer Biology.

- **Yucong Zhang, MD**: Clinical Fellow in Pediatrics, Pediatric Cardiology

2025 iDRIV Cohort

The **Inspiring Dynamic Researchers in Virginia (iDRIV)** Program is founded on a dual commitment of supporting the success of exceptional investigators and building a dynamic research community to enhance our mission of improving human health. The iDRIV program aims to accelerate the research careers of early-career and aspiring faculty at UVA under the leadership of Program Co-Directors Chelsea Marie Braun, PhD and Patricia Rodriquez-Lozano, MD. iDRIV provides education, coaching, mentoring, and sponsorship tailored to early career biomedical science researchers during the six-month program.We look forward to the professional growth and development these scholars will achieve through the iDRIV program. Their diverse backgrounds and expertise will undoubtedly enrich our community and drive forward our mission of advancing health and science.

 To learn more about iDRIV, contact the iDRIV Program Manager: Jennifer Phillips at jvp8a@virginia.edu.

iTHRIV Scholar Alumnus Makes an Impact

iTHRIV Scholar alumnus Dr. Kara Wiseman's work is being featured in the 2025 U.S. Surgeon General's Alcohol and Cancer Risk Advisory report (Alcohol and Cancer Risk | HHS.gov) on alcohol and cancer risk. Dr. Wiseman is an epidemiologist and Assistant Professor of Public Health at the University of Virginia School of Medicine and graduated from the iTHRIV Scholars/KL2 Program in 2022. Her research focuses on cancer prevention and control and plays a pivotal role in influencing public health policy.

Dr. Wiseman's research has been instrumental in raising awareness of alcohol's cancer risks, with findings such as the startling statistic that fewer than half of U.S. adults engage in conversations about alcohol and cancer risk with their healthcare providers. This is crucial in shaping future healthcare conversations and preventive measures. Her advocacy for increasing awareness through health warning labels on alcohol products and increased dialogue between healthcare providers and patients is aligned with the US Surgeon general and especially timely as alcohol use continues to rise in the U.S.The Surgeon General's advisory is a testament to the impact of her research, not only in academic and scientific communities but also in shaping public health policy. It is inspiring to see iTHRIV Scholar alumni driving meaningful change in health recommendations.

This Advisory describes the scientific evidence for the causal link between alcohol consumption and increased risk for certain types of cancer

The increased awareness and support for health warnings will hopefully lead to broader societal and behavioral benefits.Jason Papin, Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Director of the iTHRIV Scholars Program adds, "Dr. Wiseman's research is having a tremendous impact, shaping policy that will improve health outcomes across the world. It is a privilege to see the research careers of the iTHRIV Scholar Program faculty flourish." Congratulations to Dr. Wiseman and everyone involved in this important research!** The iTHRIV Scholars Program is a mentored, career development award over a two-year period which is supported in part by the National Center for Advancing Translational Science of the National Institutes of Health Awards UL1TR003015/ KL2TR003016. This competitive program prepares Scholars to excel in a transformed biomedical research environment in which digital data drives health care hypotheses, interventions, and health quality evaluation. The program contributes to the growth of team science culture with a strong emphasis on clinical translational science.iTHRIV Scholar cohorts consist of faculty from the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech and Carilion Clinic. All Scholars participate in weekly virtual sessions for a variety of activities supporting their research and career development goals. For more information about the Scholars Program visit our website: https://www.ithriv.org/ithrivscholars-program-main.

Resources to Improve Research Subject Retention

The NIH-funded "Improve Long-Term Outcomes" (www.improveLTO.com) research infrastructure project (R24HL111895) has created practical tools for maximizing participant retention in longitudinal research studies. These FREE resources include adaptable tools, templates, and operations manuals to minimize loss to follow-up of research participants, including an interactive searchable database of >600 participant retention strategies. These resources were informed by a systematic review, qualitative research regarding best practices for cohort retention, and practical experience of the Johns Hopkins Outcomes After Critical Illness and Surgery research group (OACIS, www.hopkinsmedicine.org/OACIS). The direct link to these FREE cohort retention tools is: www.improvelto.com/cohort-retention-tools/.

In addition to cohort retention tools, www.improveLTO.com has a library of information on many survey instruments and tests that have been used in evaluating research participants during follow-up (www.improvelto.com/instruments). For example, each information sheet contains detail regarding any licensing/permission requirement, number of items for surveys, and average time needed to administer.

Follow-up studies evaluating functional outcomes can be complicated due to differential mortality in treatment groups. In addition, patients who survive may have missed visits/assessments causing missing data for the long-term outcomes. To deal with these issues, the Improving Long-Term Outcomes project has a free, downloadable standalone statistical application to assist with appropriate statistical analyses (www.improvelto.com/stats-tools/).

Lastly, as research fields continue to expand and advance, there is greater focus on standardizing the evaluation of research participants by selecting a minimum set of outcomes and related measurement instruments (Core Outcome Set [COS] and Core Outcome Measurement Set [COMS], respectively) that will always be evaluated in that field. To assist with this endeavor, the team has shared tools and templates used in their COS/COMS development, along with other relevant citations and links to other resources (www.improvelto.com/cos-resources/).

These resources are available as part of the Recruitment Innovation Center (RIC) which provides evidenced based recruitment and retention methods, tools, and strategies. The RIC is a part of the larger Trial Innovation Network and is federally supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS), National Institutes of Health (NIH). To learn

more about additional resources to support recruitment and retention of research participants, contact the iTHRIV Research Concierge Services team at ithrivadmin@uvahealth.org.

iTHRIV Under the Microscope

Medard Ng, PhD is making significant contributions to iTHRIV as the Research Quality Manager, where he plays an instrumental role in shaping our collaborative clinical research initiatives. As part of his responsibilities, he oversees the development, management, and direction of the overall quality management and assurance program for clinical research involving human subjects within iTHRIV. His work also includes designing educational programs, assessing the effectiveness of training tools, and offering consultations to researchers to ensure high-quality standards are met. Medard is passionate about supporting and providing resources critical to the success of iTHRIV's clinical and translational science researchers.

Currently, Medard is preparing for the expected launch of the 2025 iTHRIV Clinical and Translational Science Pilot Studies Program, where he will serve as the program manager. The announcement of this much-anticipated program is expected soon, bringing new opportunities for the clinical and translational science community across iTHRIV.

Medard serves as part of the leadership team for the NIH-NCATS Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) national quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) group. This group serves as a critical liaison between NCATS staff and the QA/QC teams across the country, addressing challenges in the NIH-prior approval process and working to improve practices. They also share best practices to enhance the work of QA/QC personnel across the national consortium. Before joining iTHRIV, Medard served as a compliance coordinator for the Institutional Review Board for Health Sciences Research at the University of Virginia, a regulatory coordinator at the Office of Clinical Research at the UVA Cancer Center, and a project manager in a biotech company. His academic background includes training in developmental biology, genetics, and molecular biology. Outside of work, Medard enjoys spending time with his spouse and two children, traveling – particularly internationally- and salsa dancing (his current idol is Fadi Fusion). He also enjoys exercising, watching professional soccer, and reading. Currently, he is interested in books about the history of the Renaissance period and personal finance.

Meet a Mentor

Carol Manning, Ph.D. ABPP-CN
University of Virginia

Harrison Distinguished Teaching Professor of Neurology
Vice Chair for Faculty Development
Director Memory Disorders Clinic
Department of Neurology

Dr. Manning is an exceptional mentor who selflessly gives ample time to mentoring many junior faculty and trainees. One of Dr. Manning's standout qualities in her mentorship approach is her ability to tailor her support, advocacy, and mentorship to the needs of the individual mentee. This is all the more impressive given that she mentors clinicians and scientists in multiple stages of training/career development and in different disciplines.

My training as a postdoctoral fellow and my career as a junior faculty member at UVA have been significantly propelled by Dr. Manning's mentorship. She is quick to offer opportunities for growth and advancement, she provides sound counsel on prioritization of different demands, and she gives expert guidance on scientific proposals and manuscripts. She does all of this with warmth, empathy, and positive encouragement. I feel extremely fortunate to have Dr. Manning as a mentor and am immensely grateful for her continued support and sponsorship.

Virginia Gallagher, PhD, iTHRIV Scholar (2024-2026)
Find Out More!