Cycle 3: Pragmatic Clinical Studies to Evaluate Patient-Centered Outcomes

Applicant LOI Town Hall

October 15, 2015
Agenda

- Welcome
- About PCORI
- Research Goals
- Overview
- Programmatic Requirements
- Administrative Requirements
- Applicant Resources
- Questions?

Submit questions via the chat function in Meeting Bridge.

Ask a question via phone (an operator will standby to take your questions).
Today’s Presenters

**David Hickam, MD, MPH**  
Program Director  
Clinical Effectiveness Research

**Suzanne Schrandt, JD**  
Deputy Director  
Patient Engagement

**Iris Giggetts, MSW, CRA**  
Contracts Associate, Pre Award  
Contracts Management and Administration
About PCORI
Pcori.org
Why PCORI?

- For all the advances it produces, research still has not answered many questions patients face.
- People want to know which treatment is best for them.
- Patients and their clinicians need information they can understand and use.
Our Mission

PCORI helps people make informed health care decisions, and improves health care delivery and outcomes, by producing and promoting high integrity, evidence-based information that comes from research guided by patients, caregivers and the broader health care community.
Our Focus at PCORI

Comparative Clinical Effectiveness Research

- Patient-centered
- Answering questions important to patients and other clinical decision makers
- Comparisons of choices that matter to patients
- Attention to possible heterogeneity of treatment effects
Research Goals
Our Work Answers Patients’ Questions

Given my personal characteristics, conditions and preferences...

“What should I expect will happen to me?”

“What are my options and what are the potential benefits and harms of those options?”

“What can I do to improve the outcomes that are most important to me?”

“How can clinicians and the care delivery systems they work in help me make the best decisions about my health and healthcare?”
What does PCORI look for?

- Patient Centered
- Comparative
- Scientific Rigor
- Immediately Impactful
- Burden on the U.S.
- Chronic or Multiple Chronic Conditions
- Cross Cutting Research
- Rare and Understudied Conditions
Focus on Comparative Clinical Effectiveness Research (CER)

CER includes:

- Studies that compare health outcomes and the clinical effectiveness, risks, and benefits of two or more approaches to healthcare

All applicants should:

- Explain how the research is comparative
- Name the comparators
- State why the comparisons are important to decision-makers
Research We Do Not Fund

PCORI does not fund studies of cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA).

Examples of CEA

- Research that conducts a formal CEA in the form of dollar-cost per quality-adjusted life-year (including non-adjusted life-years) to compare two or more alternatives.
- Research that directly compares the overall costs of care between two or more alternative approaches as the criterion for choosing the preferred alternative.
Research We Do Not Fund

PCORI does not fund research whose findings will include

• development of clinical practice guidelines
• coverage recommendations
• payment
• or policy recommendations

NOTE: PCORI does fund studies that explore the burden of costs on patients—for example, out-of-pocket costs.
Overview
PFA Overview: Large Pragmatic Studies to Evaluate Patient-Centered Outcomes

Objective of this PFA:
• Address critical clinical and health-related comparative effectiveness questions faced by patients, their caregivers, and their clinicians

In this PFA we seek to fund or co-fund:
• Large pragmatic trials
• Large simple trials
• Large scale observational studies

Available Funds and Duration:
• A total of $90 million (direct and indirect) for this cycle
• Up to $10 million in total direct costs per project
• Projects should be completed within 5 years
Three Types of Applications for the Large Pragmatic Studies PFA

- Applications proposing “clinical comparative effectiveness research (CER)”
- Applications proposing “improving healthcare systems (IHS) CER”
- Applications proposing “CER to reduce/eliminate health and health care disparities”

- These types of projects are patient centered outcomes research (PCOR)
  - CER model: compare 2 or more options
  - Examine outcomes that are important to patients
  - Assess the balance of benefits and harms
What is a Pragmatic CER Study?

• Answers a practical, real world comparative effectiveness research question.

• Assesses whether two or more options differ in effectiveness when administered as they are in real life

• Project is conducted in a clinical setting that is as close as possible to a real world setting.

• The methodological approach (including study design, outcome measures, and follow-up) is as simple as possible without sacrificing scientific rigor.
Programmatic Requirements
Essential Characteristics of Studies

• Involve broadly representative patient populations in typical clinical care and community settings
• Have strong endorsement and study participation by relevant national or regional patient organizations, professional organizations, and/or payer or purchaser organizations
• Aim to
  • Address prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or management of a disease or symptom
  • Improve the performance of healthcare systems
  • Eliminate health or healthcare disparities
• Have a sample large enough to allow precise estimates of effect sizes and support evaluation of differences in treatment effectiveness in patient subgroups
• Measure health outcomes that are meaningful to the patients
Comparators of Interest

- Specific drugs, devices, and procedures
- Medical and assistive devices and technologies
- Techniques for behavioral modification
- Complementary and alternative medicine
- Delivery-system interventions
The Case of Usual Care

- “Usual care” is typically a suboptimal comparator for CER studies.
- It is ill-defined, difficult to quantify, and subject to considerable geographic and temporal variations, thus limiting interpretability, applicability, and reproducibility.
- If the applicant proposes “usual care” as a rational and important comparator in the proposed study, then it must be described in detail, coherent as a clinical alternative, and properly justified as a legitimate comparator (e.g., usual care is guidelines-based).
- Additionally, it should be accompanied by an explanation of how the care given in the usual care group will be measured and how appropriate inferences will be drawn from its inclusion.
Sources for Topics of Interest

- PCORI Priority topics (updated 10/2015; refer to the PFA)
- AHRQ Future Research Needs Projects
- IOM 100 priority topics for CER
- Investigator initiated topics will also be considered.

Researchers must make a strong case for the importance of the proposed research. Describe clearly the evidence gap that the study will fill.
What About Other Investigator Initiated Topics?

• The need for such a topic must be supported by a critical gap identified by a credible and recent systematic review.

• Head to head comparison of two or more options that currently present considerable decisional uncertainty to decisionmakers.

• These options have been shown to be efficacious, effective, or are commonly used.

• Plans for partnership with relevant national and/or regional professional and stakeholder organizations.
Research Activities Not Supported in the Large Pragmatic Studies PFA

- Studies of decision aids
- Efficacy trials
- Evidence syntheses
- Cost-effectiveness analyses
- Research that aims to compare the overall costs of care between two or more alternatives and use the results to determine the preferred alternative
PCORI Methodology Standards

- 47 standards in 11 groups.
- The Methodology Standards do not address all issues related to study designs and methods.
- Note that PCORI is not using a specific set of methodological standards for “pragmatic studies.”
  - Consider design tradeoffs (e.g., blinding vs not blinding)
  - Refer to other respected sources for additional guidance.
PCORI Methodology Standard* RQ1 – Identifying Gaps in Evidence

• “Gap analysis and systematic reviews should be used to support the need for a proposed study. If a systematic review is not available, a systematic review should be performed using accepted standards in the field (see standard SR-1), or a strong rationale should be presented for proceeding without a systematic review. In the case where a systematic review is not possible, the methods used to review the literature should be explained and justified.”

Justification for the Design Elements of a Large Pragmatic Study

• Suggest reviewing pragmatic–explanatory continuum indicator summary (PRECIS) tool

• Consider tradeoffs
  • Eligibility criteria
  • Flexibility of intervention
  • Range and types of outcomes
  • Follow up intensity
  • Adherence
  • Etc.

See:


What PCORI looks for when reviewing LOIs?

- Importance and relevance of the topics to PCORI priorities, as evidenced by critical gaps identified by clinical guidelines developers and/or recent relevant systematic review.
- Clarity and credibility of applicants’ responses to the LOI questions such as well-described comparators, clear research methods (e.g., study design, sample size, effect size)
- Programmatic fit and balance
Responsiveness Review

- Letters of Intent are reviewed based on criteria detailed in the PFA
- Additional screening for
  - Comparative effectiveness research
  - NON Inclusion of cost-effectiveness analysis
  - Administrative Guidelines
- Only responsive LOIs will be invited to submit a full application
Engagement
Patient-Centeredness vs. Patient Engagement

- **Patient-Centeredness**
  - Does the LOI mention outcomes (both benefits and harms) important to patients?
  - Are the interventions being proposed for comparison available to patients now?

- **Patient and Stakeholder engagement**
  - Does the LOI mention intent to build an interdisciplinary study team that includes appropriate patient and stakeholder representation in consultation with PCORI?
Evidence of appropriate engagement of relevant patients and other stakeholders

- Funding applicants are expected to consult with patients and other stakeholders on their decisional dilemma and evidence needs or to reference previously documented decisional dilemmas in preparation for the submission of LOIs.
- Identify the patients and stakeholders you consulted in determining that the proposed study addresses their evidentiary needs for decision-making and indicate your commitment to continuing to engage them actively in the conduct of the study.
Several approaches to engagement can succeed. PCORI provides many engagement resources for applicants:

- PCORI’s “The Engagement Rubric”
- Sample Engagement Plans
- Engagement in Research website page
  [http://www.pcori.org/funding-opportunities/what-we-mean-engagement](http://www.pcori.org/funding-opportunities/what-we-mean-engagement)
- PCORI’s Methodology Standards PC-1 to PC-4
Administrative Requirements
Eligibility to Submit a Proposal

• Any private sector (non-profit or for-profit) research organization
• Any public sector research organization (university or college hospital or healthcare system, laboratory or manufacturer, unit of local, state, or federal government)
• Non-domestic components of organizations based in the US and foreign organizations may apply, as long as there is demonstrable benefit to the US healthcare system and US efforts in the area of patient-centered research can be clearly shown.
• Individuals are not permitted to apply.
Competitive LOI Process

This is a competitive LOI process:

• An LOI is required and must be submitted prior to completion of an application.

• The LOI is due on Nov 12, 2015, by 5:00 p.m. (ET).

• Only those LOIs deemed most responsive to this PFA will be invited to submit a full application.

• Applicants will be notified by December 18, 2015, whether or not to submit a full application.

• Please refer to the PFA, Application Guidelines, and PCORI Online User Manuals in the Funding Center here: http://www.pcori.org/funding-opportunities/announcement/pragmatic-clinical-studies-evaluate-patient-centered-outcomes
Using the PCORI Online System

- Apply through PCORI Online (https://pcori.fluxx.io)
- Access the website using Chrome or Safari browsers only
- Create a new request and begin the LOI
- Designate the LOI with the following individuals:
  - PI, PI Designee, AO, and Financial Officer
- Enter information into all required fields in the system
- Convert the document to PDF file
- Upload the LOI in the system
Complete a Letter of Intent (LOI)

- Refer to the PCORI Online User Manual: Submitting a Letter of Intent
  - Pre-Screen Questionnaire
  - PI and Contact Information
  - Project Information
  - Key Personnel
  - Template Upload
- Refer to the PFA-specific LOI Template to address the program’s areas of interest
  - Please make sure to address all required sections of the LOI template
  - Please refer to the specific PFA as each program has its own unique characteristics and requirements
Letter of Intent (LOI)

- Download the Letter of Intent Template specifically for the Cycle 3 PCS PFA from the Funding Center to begin your LOI.
- LOIs must not be more than 5 pages. All references should be included in American Medical Association (AMA) citation style within the five-page limit. Do not submit additional page(s) of references. LOIs that exceed five pages will not be reviewed.
- You must answer all questions, including the question on brief justification for the cost ("Will not exceed $10 million" is not a sufficient answer!).
- Do not upload additional documents as part of your LOI.
- Letters of endorsements or support are not accepted at this stage.
- You must upload your LOI as a PDF in PCORI Online.
Formatting

Formatting:

• Include the Principal Investigator’s (PI’s) full name on every page in the top left corner of the page header.
• Use at least half-inch margins and single spacing.
• Use font size Calibri 11 for the main body of the text. Figures and captions may have smaller type.
• Keep the numbering of the LOI questions within the LOI template.
# Submission and Key Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOI-Applicant Town Hall</td>
<td>October 15, 2015 at 1:00 PM ET</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOI due in PCORI Online</td>
<td>November 12, 2015 by 5:00 PM ET</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicants notified as to whether they have been selected to submit a full application</td>
<td>December 18, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicant Town Hall (if invited)</td>
<td>January 5, 2015 at 1:00 PM ET</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Deadline (by invitation only)</td>
<td>February 16, 2015 by 5:00 PM ET</td>
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<td>Merit Review Dates</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awards Announced</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earliest Start Date</td>
<td>September 2016</td>
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Resources
Where can I find help?

Visit pcori.org/apply
- Application Guidelines
- FAQs
- PCORI Online User Manuals
- Sample Engagement Plans

Schedule a Call with a Program Officer
- Submit a request at pcori.org/content/research-inquiry
- Call 202-627-1884 (programmatic inquiries)
- E-mail sciencequestions@pcori.org

Contact our Helpdesk
- E-mail pfa@pcori.org
- Call 202-627-1885 (administrative and technical inquiries)
Q&A

Ask a question via the chat function in Meeting Bridge.

Ask a question via phone (an operator will standby to take your questions).

If we are unable to address your question during this time, e-mail the Helpdesk at pfa@pcori.org.
Thank You