Are You Up to the Challenge?

Hey you, is the stimulus package in your future? The NIH hopes so with the announcement of the Challenge grants.

As part of the Recovery Act, NIH has designated at least $200 million in FYs 2009-2010 for a new initiative called the NIH Challenge Grants in Health and Science Research, to fund 200 or more grants, contingent upon the submission of a sufficient number of scientifically meritorious applications. In addition, Recovery Act funds allocated to NIH specifically for comparative effectiveness research (CER) may be available to support additional grants. Projects receiving these funds will need to meet this definition of CER: “a rigorous evaluation of the impact of different options that are available for treating a given medical condition for a particular set of patients. Such a study may compare similar treatments, such as competing drugs, or it may analyze very different approaches, such as surgery and drug therapy.”

This new program will support research on Challenge Topics which address specific scientific and health research challenges in biomedical and behavioral research that will benefit from significant 2-year jumpstart funds. Challenge Areas, defined by the NIH, focus on specific knowledge gaps, scientific opportunities, new technologies, data generation, or research methods that would benefit from an influx of funds to quickly advance the area in significant ways. The research in these areas should have a high impact in biomedical or behavioral science and/or public health.

Within each broad Challenge Area the NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices have specified particular Challenge Topics that address their missions.

Remember the deadline is fast approaching. April 27, 2009. For more info check out the link http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-OD-09-003.html or contact your program officer to get more details.

Faculty Spotlight- Andrea Doyle, PhD, MSW

The BSS Core is excited to welcome Dr. Andrea Doyle to the University of Pennsylvania and the Penn CFAR. Dr. Doyle currently holds a position as an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Policy and Practice. Dr. Doyle comes to us from the University of Washington School of Social Work where she recently completed her doctorate. She is a seasoned practitioner trained in dialectical behavioral therapy and psychodynamic approaches to clinical therapy. Her interest in dynamic processes in clinical encounters led to training in a variety of research methods, and she has incorporated chaos and catastrophe theory in the mathematics of change into her work. She also has experience in qualitative ethnographic methods.

The addition of Dr. Doyle to the Penn faculty promises to be a complement to the existing talent at the University.
SBSRN this Fall

The Fourth National Scientific Meeting of the SBSRN will be held in Boston, MA Oct 1-2, 2009 and is already shaping up to be one of the best to date. The theme of this year’s conference “Integrating Behavioral and Biomedical Approaches to HIV Prevention and Technology” with the current plenary speakers identified as follows: David Bangsberg, MD (Harvard); Kenneth Mayer, MD (Brown); Greg Millet, MPH (CDC); and Gail Wyatt, PhD (UCLA). Pre-meeting activities include mentoring for transitional and early career investigators on Sept. 30th.

There will be plenty of opportunity to get updates on the state of the science, network with the leaders in the field and present ideas/recent findings with the addition of a poster session to this year’s meeting.

Registration is available online. Hurry and get the early bird special. Visit the SBSRN blog at: http://sbsronline.blogspot.com/

In the Community


- On March 12, 2009 the Colours Organization hosted a community social at Ms. Tootsie’s restaurant about HIV vaccine research in the MSM communities of Philadelphia, with special guests from the HVTN and Univ. of Penn’s own, David Metzger, PhD with specifics about the upcoming HVTN 505 trial.

- The Ninth Annual Summer Institute on Design and Conduct of Randomized Clinical Trials Involving Behavioral Interventions happens July 2009 and the Univ. of Penn’s School of Nursing. Dr. Anne Teitelman has been selected to participate. The NIH’s OBSSR main objective with this institute is to provide a thorough grounding in the conduct of randomized clinical trials to researchers and health professionals interested in developing competence in the planning, design, and execution of randomized clinical trials involving behavioral interventions.

Where to find

- Assessment Tools
  http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/aids/cores/bssc/assessment.htm

- Office of Research Services to promote the research endeavors at Penn
  http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/

- CRISP – searchable database of federally funded biomedical research projects
  http://crisp.cit.nih.gov/

- NIH Funding Opportunities and Notices, grant policies, guidelines and funding opportunities

- Grants.gov, is your source to FIND and APPLY for federal government grants
  http://www.grants.gov/index.jsp

- The CITI Program, providing research ethics education to all members of the research community
  http://www.citiprogram.org

Faculty spotlight continued

Dr. Doyle’s experience includes her work for the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center evaluating counselor fidelity to a smoking cessation intervention targeted towards adolescents and based on cognitive behavioral and motivational interviewing techniques.

Dr. Doyle has also designed, implemented, and was part of the evaluation team for a psychoeducational adherence support group for disenfranchised low-income women with HIV as part of a larger National Institutes of Health and SAMHSA funded adherence to treatment intervention study.

Additionally, she has clinical experience in the areas of trauma and substance abuse.

Tell us what you think!

1. How will the grant submission process affect you with the reduction of times you can resubmit an application?
2. How can the BSS Core improve to meet your needs?
All responses can be emailed to: Tiffiny Brown at tybrown@mail.med.upenn.edu

More to Know

Here are some more links for funding opportunities that are available: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-09-056.html

What’s on your IPOD?

1 Always by Stevie Wonder (It’s Stevie, enough said)
2 Ode to Joy by Beethoven (Hey, it’s spring that is cause for celebration even if I’m still wearing a coat, hat, gloves, and scarf)
3 Purple Rain by Prince (The guitar solo is killer. Besides he has enough music he could probably release a new album a week)
4 Blue Moon on Kentucky by Bill Monroe (part March Madness reference, part love of Blue Grass music. You know you love it—maybe just the Elvis version)
5 Over There by Terrence Blanchard (hauntingly perfect)
6 Fly Me to the Moon by Frank Sinatra (The place to write home about even Neil Armstrong had to go)
7 I Have A Dream by Martin Luther King Jr (Reminder of the possibilities in life)