

COVID-19 Program of Research Steering Committee Terms of Reference

Vision: A strategic, collaborative and world-leading program of research at the Melbourne Children's Campus (MCC) that tackles unanswered research questions of global importance in COVID-19 with a focus on children, adolescents and their families.

Current Mission: Build on the strengths of MCC by engaging, connecting and supporting researchers at the MCC to address the most urgent and important issues of COVID-19, regarding:

- Prevention and treatment
- Infection and transmission
- Mental health and wellbeing

Background and Purpose: The COVID-19 Research Steering Committee was established to provide a **single reference point** for COVID-19 research on the MCC. We aim to use our clinical, academic and research strengths to unite research on the campus and provide strategic direction.

Our primary objectives are to support COVID-19 research at MCC by providing strategic input to:

- Foster collaboration between MCC researchers and other partners and networks with aligning interests.
- Guide research direction including: maintaining agility of research response and maintaining research focus.
- Provide high level research governance including: communication and risk management.

Terms of Reference

- To oversee the COVID-19 program of research at MCC, including:
 - Considering the constantly evolving COVID-19 situation and providing strategic direction to place or re-orient studies in the changing environment;
 - Remaining informed and up-to-date on all projects and their progress;
 - Enabling communication and collaboration between groups located at the MCC involved in similar research and;
 - Facilitating opportunities for engagement, partnerships and collaboration with local, state and national groups.
- To create structures and processes that support new research coming into the program of research.
- To create and maintain strategic and collaborative relationships with other research institutions, government, funders and other potential partners that would facilitate the program of research.
- To support studies in their prioritisation of sample use as part of the COVID-19 program of research, and provide guidance where necessary.
- To identify and share fundraising opportunities.

- To communicate directly with the MCRI Executive Committee, the Communications Team and Philanthropy.
- To champion COVID-19 research across the MCC and celebrate success.

Governance

The Committee reports to the Director's Office. Actions and accountability may be delegated to individual Committee members, but they remain accountable to the entire Committee.

COVID-19 Program of Research business and major decisions will be managed by the Committee during scheduled meetings. In making decisions, the Committee should aim for a consensus view.

Reporting and Confidentiality

The minutes of each meeting will be prepared by the Program Coordinator. Full copies of the minutes, including related documents, shall be provided to all Committee members following each meeting. Meeting minutes will act as a record of any decisions that are made.

The Committee will fulfil all reporting requirements as directed by the MCRI Executive Committee. Associated members of the COVID-19 Research Working Group will only present on behalf of Committee members at internal forums or as otherwise agreed. Accomplishments of the Committee and individual members will be clearly differentiated in all communications.

Members are to be aware that meetings, including agenda material and minutes, of the Committee should be considered confidential. The release of the Committee's correspondence or papers can only be made with approval of the Committee.

Compositions and Responsibilities

Membership of the Committee will be reviewed from time-to-time by the Committee. Membership will be based on merit and will strive to be equal, diverse and representative. Members should perform their roles in good faith, honestly and impartially.

It is expected that members will make every reasonable effort to attend scheduled meetings, promote the program of research on campus, respond to correspondence and make timely decisions so as to not delay progress. The Committee will endeavour to provide a supportive and constructive forum for the discussion of COVID-19 research, strategy and other related matters.

Membership and responsibilities of the steering committee will include:

- **Co-Chairs:** drive agenda and activities, represent committee and program of research at internal forums and with stakeholders, management of program staff, report to the Director's office.
- **Committee members:** guide agenda and development, represent committee and program of research at internal forums and with stakeholders where appropriate,

monitor research and strategic issues, provide timely updates to the group regarding associated COVID-work in their respective working groups.

- **Program coordinator:** maintains governance and processes, records decisions and actions, facilitates communications, provides timely reporting to the Committee on the progress of COVID-projects.

Funding & Grants Management

The committee will distribute funding calls and grant opportunities to the wider COVID-research group, with some advice and interpretation, and information on internal and external deadlines.

The committee will liaise with the grants team and the Director's office to provide advice if appropriate. However, this will not replace the grants' team normal processes for prioritisation.

Variations and Amendments

This Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by the COVID-19 Program of Research Steering Committee.

Date Approved: 15 June 2020