The University of Minnesota Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI), in partnership with both UMN Department of Pediatrics and Children's Minnesota, is pleased to announce a 2020 Child Health Collaborative Grant Award “Request for Applications” (RFA) for rapid response proposals related to the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic on child health in Minnesota. Our vision is to support engaged scholarly collaboration that is co-developed by investigators at Children's Minnesota and UMN. The goal of this program is to foster innovation that connects novel strategies to address this historic pandemic to the development of evidence-based strategies that result in improved health outcomes for children and adolescents throughout Minnesota.

Proposals should represent novel studies stemming from COVID-19 that affect child or adolescent health. In addition, research that addresses health disparities and/or the social and behavioral determinants of health is strongly encouraged. Potential topics that are timely and important in our communities could include the following:

1. **Family Fragility and Disruption:** We know that the family unit is critical to the well-being of children. The social, psychological and societal burdens facing families – in addition to the medical consequences of COVID-19 – carry the risk of contributing to considerable social upheaval. Familial disruptions, unemployment, loss of educational opportunities, poverty, impaired access to well-child care (including immunizations), homelessness, food insecurity, and a loss of connection to a family’s faith community are all examples of the kinds of impact that COVID-19 may have on child health.

2. **Knowledge Gaps about COVID-19 in Children:** A popularly stated view has emerged that infants and children are much less affected medically than adults. However, this is not strongly evidence-based and more data are needed. This rapid response grant program welcomes applications that address unmet needs in learning about the biology
and epidemiology of COVID-19 infection in children. Projects aimed at improving understanding of virologic, epidemiologic and clinical consequences of COVID-19 infection are welcome.

3. Optimizing Pediatric Care in the Setting of the COVID-19 Pandemic: No clear consensus exists on optimal approaches to inpatient and outpatient care during this pandemic. In settings where diagnostic tests and personal protective equipment are lacking, outpatient care is currently highly rationed with subspecialty clinics closing their doors and all but emergent medical visits discouraged. Working together, what novel proposals can be envisioned that would address these health care gaps? Examples include telemedicine and computer-based approaches. What impact will COVID-19 have on routine childhood care, instruction about safety, scheduled immunization, access to social services? Of particular interest, what impact will social isolation have on childhood mental health? Applications that address this issue are particularly welcome.

The Collaboration must involve at least two co-Principal Investigators: one from Children's Minnesota, and an investigator from UMN (including all five campuses). Applicants from Children's Minnesota must be either employed or contracted for 0.5 FTE or greater. Applicants from UMN must be current, full-time faculty members in any track. If one of the co-PIs is not a full-time investigator based in the UMN Medical School Department of Pediatrics, the application must include a co-investigator in the Department of Pediatrics, with demonstration of active engagement in the proposed project. Rapid response proposals based on active partnerships are particularly well-poised to respond to this RFA. The collaboration of investigators from Hennepin Healthcare, Gillette Children's Specialty Health Care, HealthPartners and public health agencies is also encouraged, although the two co-PIs must be from UMN and Children's Minnesota.

To further dissemination and collaboration, all funded teams will be expected to attend a Child Health Collaborative meeting in late 2020, and briefly present on their project as a cohort. Teams will also be expected to present publicly on their projects at the Child Health Collaborative dinner, which typically occurs in November/December.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline of Events/Application Process</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COVID-19 Collaborative Grant RFA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Full applications (NIH-style format biosketch; formatting to be followed as on RedCap submission page; online submission; expedited review)</td>
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Applications, budget and letters of support (optional) must be submitted through the following link:
https://redcap.ahc.umn.edu/surveys/?s=WFY7TYHA7K

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<tr>
<td>Funding decisions made on a</td>
<td>Earliest funding decision April 20, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>rolling basis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project commencement</td>
<td>Funds must be expended within 12 months of acceptance; no extensions</td>
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<td>anticipated within 14 days of</td>
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<td>proposal acceptance</td>
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It is anticipated that up to nine (9), $10,000 awards will be funded, with a one-year budget period. Applications will be funded on a rolling basis. Indirect costs will not be supported. Up to 10% of salary effort may be requested.

Applicants should note that a broad range of available research resources are available to help inform your proposal. For general help navigating UMN CTSI resources, contact the CTSI Research Navigator at ctsi@umn.edu. In addition, researchers who believe that community input into their project is important can team up with CTSI’s Office of Community Engagement to Advance Research and Community Health (CEARCH). Working with CEARCH staff, investigators may propose, in their application, to include a Community Engagement Studio as a component of their project. The Studios provide a mechanism to allow researchers to obtain community input into their project. We can transition to conducting tele-Studios using Zoom. Contact Anne Snowden at snow1125@umn.edu to learn more.

Similarly, Children’s Minnesota has a department of Data and Analytics, department of Equity and Inclusion, community advisory boards, and employee resource groups that all can help further support team science and institutional collaboration by assisting with disseminating study findings to our peers, to study participants themselves, and to the broader community who stand to benefit from these research projects and what is learned. Please contact Stuart S. Winter if you wish to have access to any of these Children’s hosted programs.

Applicants should also note that, for all UMN co-PIs, approval is required before the project advances. Details will be provided for successful grantees upon notification of the proposed award.

Criteria for full proposal review will include the following components:

- **Investigators**: Is there clear evidence for engagement by all investigators? Is there evidence that co-PIs each will bring creative, independent contributions to the project? Do the investigators demonstrate a track record of previous collaboration, or outline a compelling plan for future collaboration?
● **Environment:** Is there evidence that both institutions are committed to the proposed project? Do letters of support indicate existing infrastructure and resources necessary to support the proposed project?

● **Synergy:** How will the proposed project leverage the respective strengths of the two institutions? What will the collaboration facilitate that neither institution could accomplish acting individually?

● **Innovation:** What innovative methods germane to COVID-19 are proposed that could change the face of the pandemic, and/or generate new knowledge to substantively improve pediatric outcomes?

● **Impact:** What is the public health importance for COVID-19 in children in Minnesota? How can the work have an impact on the current pandemic? How will study findings be shared with community stakeholders and have a practical, positive impact?

● **Prospects for scholarship, findings dissemination and future benefit:** Do the co-PIs convey a plan for scholarly publication/presentation of findings? Do they outline a plan for future funding (NIH, CDC, MDH, philanthropy, or other sources)?

Thank you for considering an application for the 2020 Child Health COVID-19 Collaborative Grant Program! Please contact Stuart Winter or Mark Schleiss with any questions.

Sincerely,

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