

Annual Review Fiscal Year 2020-21 Research at WRH

In the past year, Windsor Regional Hospital took an important stride toward positioning itself in becoming a regional academic health sciences centre by creating the Office of Research in May 2020. The Office was established to operationalize the Academic and Research vision outlined in Dr. Saad’s 5-year strategic plan as Chief of Staff. This plan intends to support the already active research work at WRH, with 46 clinical trials and 50 other research projects at various stages of activity in 2020-21.

Working alongside the Academic and Research Committee, a sub-committee of the MAC, and with our partners at WE-SPARK Health Institute, the goal of the Office is to provide a centralized resource for all clinicians and students interested in research which facilitates and promotes the development of research capacity at WRH and to equip researchers for success at every level of their pursuits.

With this goal in mind a 5 year strategic roadmap was developed and received approval by the WRH Board in November 2020.

The roadmap identifies 5 priority areas for the Office to support the expansion of research at WRH:

1. Facilitating Administrative & Operational Support
2. Promoting Research Productivity & Collaboration
3. Ensuring Quality & Integrity in research processes and practices
4. Providing Education & Training Opportunities
5. Ensuring Financial Sustainability & Impact.

The Office has reached several milestones toward achieving the goals of these priority areas:

- A research intake form and process was created to support and streamline the administrative aspects of research project start-up including departmental impact evaluation, contracts, funding, and WRH Research Ethics Board submissions.
- In the 2020-21 fiscal year, the Office reviewed 51 research project proposals; submitting 31 to the WRH REB, facilitating 12 formal Departmental Impact sign offs, and developing two successful grant applications.
- In collaboration with WE-SPARK the research intake process was expanded to create a formal fresh tissue trial process, creating a clear pathway for external researchers to develop and collaborate with WRH clinicians.
- In efforts to understand the current research landscape and needs of researchers at WRH, a research activity questionnaire was developed which surveyed all staff and professional staff on their research interests and current activities, also embedding a demographic questionnaire to get a snapshot of who WRH researchers are to better serve them. 67 responses were received with 52 respondents providing substantive feedback on how the Office can support research at WRH.

- The Office collaborated with WE-SPARK to adopt a web-based research data management platform, REDCap, a powerful tool for researchers to collect and analyze research data that is used in over 5000 institutions across the world; significantly reducing barriers for WRH's researchers to share data and collaborate with external partners.
- Various outreach initiatives also took place: 10 departmental roadshows providing an overview of services and supports that the Office offers, 6 research specific event invitations to all WRH staff and professional staff, and the creation of a website to provide a central location to house the research intake form, inform potential researchers of internal processes, and link relevant resources.