

## **BC among the first to support new national clinical research internships, next funding call now open**

Two clinical research professionals and investigators in British Columbia are among the first in Canada to begin a unique pathway to enhancing their skills through a new immersive, internship program.

The clinical research internship program is an initiative of the Canadian Consortium of Clinical Trial Training (CANTRAIN), a national platform funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The program integrates online training with experiential, engaged learning opportunities and expert mentorship. It offers clinical research professionals and new investigators a distinctive opportunity to upgrade their skills and gain valuable experience in clinical trial activities outside their own institutions.

Michael Smith Health Research BC is a proud partner of CANTRAIN's clinical research internship program. As the province's health research agency, Health Research BC is committed to building research talent for BC's future. Partnering with CANTRAIN enables Health Research BC to recruit, support and retain diverse research expertise.

The organizations are pleased to award funding for internships to BC recipients Sherry Sandhu and Dr. Aresh Sepehri.

Sherry is a research assistant in the department of mental health and substance use at Fraser Health. She will complete her internship at both the BC Centre on Substance Use and Changemark Research + Evaluation. "My entire team and I are beyond thrilled to accept this award. It represents opportunity, learning and new avenues for innovation for me, our research project and all of us at Fraser Health," says Sherry.

Aresh is an orthopedic trauma surgeon at Vancouver General Hospital and clinical assistant professor in the department of orthopedic surgery in the faculty of medicine at the University of British Columbia and at Vancouver General Hospital. He will complete his internship at McMaster University. "The internship will support the growth and training of the orthopedic research team in clinical trial design, conduct and management," says Aresh. "This will provide the foundation needed to initiate our site for enrollment in two multicentre clinical trials in orthopedic trauma at Vancouver General Hospital."

"We're proud to support these talented interns as they embark on their clinical trial projects," says Jean Smart, regulatory affairs and quality officer, Clinical Trials BC, part of Health Research BC. "By funding these opportunities, we reaffirm our commitment to clinical trials excellence in BC, fostering innovation and collaboration across the province. Congratulations to both recipients for their dedication and drive to advance clinical research. Their work is pivotal in shaping the future of health in British Columbia and beyond."

Clinical trials are crucial for making sure that new drugs, treatments, medical devices and therapies are safe and effective. There is a critical need in Canada to train and mentor clinical researchers to conduct high-quality clinical trials.

"CANTRAIN is pleased to have initiated and partnered with Michael Smith Health Research BC for setting an example in Canada for an internship program of clinical trial research professionals and new

investigators. The two awardees and their participating home and hosting institutions will foster collaboration and exchanges of best practices for clinical trials across Canada,” says Dr. Jean Bourbeau, National Lead for CANTRAIN. “We are pleased to continue our partnership with Health Research BC to support this unique program for 2024/25.”

### **Call for 2024 internship applications**

The clinical research internship program for 2024 is currently accepting applications from interested clinical research professionals and new investigators in BC. Internships can be in the form of in-person, virtual or hybrid engagements.

Applications are open on a rolling basis until March 2025. For information on eligibility and application guidelines, visit our [funding page](#).

*Health Research BC partners with the Canadian Consortium of Clinical Trial Training (CANTRAIN), and other clinical trials training platforms funded by CIHR, to increase clinical trials expertise and build capacity across BC. Our [Clinical Trials BC](#) team plays an instrumental role in developing CANTRAIN's national training platform, education program and evaluation. Together, we're creating a diverse, skilled research talent pool and advancing BC's [vision](#) for a robust clinical trials ecosystem.*