



Brain-Heart Interconnectome Program

Scientific Council Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

Brain-Heart Interconnectome Program (the “**BHI Program**”) is the first dedicated interdisciplinary research program to study, prevent and treat co-occurring brain-heart disorders. The BHI Program will train the first generation of research leaders in interconnectome science and brain-heart integration, leading the way with novel integrated knowledge translation and approaches to research that embed equity, diversity, and inclusion.

2. Vision

The vision of the BHI Program is to transform the prevention and treatment of brain-heart interconnected conditions, improving the health and quality of life of Canadians and people worldwide.

3. Objectives

The BHI Program objectives are as follows:

- Understand the fundamental pathogenesis of connected brain and heart conditions.
- Identify risk prediction tools for chronic brain and heart conditions, incorporating wide-ranging social determinants of health.
- Develop novel biomarkers and imaging approaches to predict, diagnose, gauge severity and monitor interventions.
- Develop novel therapeutics and interventions.
- Mobilize knowledge and evaluate real world implementation and effectiveness of new integrated prediction, diagnosis, intervention, and care models for brain-heart conditions.
- To be recognized globally for the Brain-Heart Collaborative Portal, facilitating big data collaboration, up-to-date information and tools for health professionals and patients, thereby contributing to a Canada-first Brain-Heart Health Action Plan.

4. Strategy

The BHI Program unites longstanding areas of priority and excellence from the University of Ottawa (“**uOttawa**”), McGill University, and the University of Saskatchewan. The BHI Program will engage more than 48 government, non-governmental, private sector, and academic partners. It will lead a globally renowned paradigm shift in brain-heart diseases and will improve the health and quality of life of Canadians, while benefiting the Canadian economy and Canada’s global standing in this research area.

5. Funding

The BHI Program is funded by a grant from the Government of Canada's Canada First Research Excellence Fund (the "CFREF"). The CFREF helps Canadian postsecondary institutions excel globally in research areas that create long-term economic advantages for Canada.

The CFREF grant funding the BHI Program is awarded to and held by uOttawa for seven (7) years starting in March 2023 and ending in March 2030. As the holder of the CFREF grant, uOttawa is responsible for ensuring that the grant is used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant and the policies of the CFREF program and applicable uOttawa policies and procedures.

The uOttawa Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (the "OVPRI") is responsible for the management of the CFREF grant.

6. BHI Scientific Council

6.1 **Establishment and mandate:** Established under the authority of the BHI Executive Committee, the BHI Scientific Council has delegated authority to oversee and facilitate the successful implementation of the BHI Scientific Strategy and Implementation Plan. The Scientific Council ensures BHI supports excellent and inclusive research that effectively incorporates the principles of the BHI cross-cutting themes and advances the transdisciplinary study of brain-heart conditions.

6.2 **Responsibilities:** Without limiting the general interpretation of Section 6.1, the Scientific Council is responsible for:

- Oversight of scientific and knowledge mobilization activities to help ensure alignment with the scientific objectives of BHI and achievement of relevant key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Reviewing and providing recommendations on processes related to peer review and recruitment of reviewers to ensure the highest scientific standards and integration of cross-cutting themes in all aspects of BHI.
- Monitoring training activities and progress and advising on BHI recruitment needs.
- Providing advice on diverse issues related to the BHI Scientific Strategy and Implementation Plan including research infrastructure needs, potential partnerships and collaborations, knowledge mobilization gaps and approaches, and interdisciplinary research and global positioning opportunities.

6.3 **Membership and Appointments:** The Scientific Council is co-chaired by the BHI Co-Scientific Directors. The committee consists of a up to twenty-four (24) members:

- Co-Scientific Directors (2) (co-Chairs)
- Director, Transformation and Impact

- BHI Foundation Leaders (2)
- BHI Theme Leaders (4-8)
- BHI Cross-Cutting Theme Leaders (7)
- Patient Partners (2)
- Trainee (1)
- BHI researcher (1)

Foundations, Themes and Cross-Cutting Themes can have up to two Co-Leads. Co-Leads are highly encouraged for Foundations and Themes to ensure appropriate breadth of scientific expertise. Leaders of BHI Foundations, Themes and Cross-Cutting Themes will serve a term of three years. The BHI Executive Committee may invite Leaders to extend their term for up to an additional four years. Other members of the Scientific Council will serve for a two-year term, with the possibility of extension of one additional year. All vacant positions will be filled through an open call for nominations administered by the BHI Secretariat.

Should a member not be able to attend a meeting, a member from the same Foundation, Theme or Cross-Cutting Theme may be delegated. Ad hoc guests and/or observers with specialized expertise may be invited to participate in meetings of the Scientific Council at the discretion of the Chair. The BHI Senior Director attends Scientific Council meetings in a non-voting capacity. Other BHI staff may attend at the discretion of the Senior Director.

6.4 Meetings, Quorum, Voting and Minutes: The Scientific Council meets 4-6 times per year. Meeting dates will be scheduled in advance to ensure that all members are aware of upcoming meetings within a reasonable timeframe. Additional meetings will be held as needed, at the discretion of the co-Chairs. The meeting agenda will be prepared by the BHI Senior Director with guidance from the co-Chairs.

A simple majority of members constitute the quorum for meetings of the Scientific Council. Decisions are normally made by consensus. If consensus is not forthcoming within a reasonable timeframe, the Chair may proceed with a vote on a question. For the vote to be valid, a majority of members with voting rights, must cast a vote (quorum). Each member has one (1) vote. Normally, the Chair does not vote other than in the case of a tie. An e-vote may be conducted when appropriate. A simple majority of all members is required for e-vote decisions. Should a voting member fail to vote by the established deadline, this will be counted as an abstention.

A written record of the decisions arising at each SC meeting will be duly documented in official meeting minutes, which, once approved by the SC, will be available for audit upon request.

The BHI Senior Director is responsible for ensuring that the agenda and meeting material is sent to members a minimum of 4 days prior to each meeting, and that accurate minutes



of the meeting are taken and duly circulated at the next meeting for approval. The responsibility for taking minutes may be delegated to BHI staff under the supervision of the Senior Director.

Terms of Reference Review History

- **Approved** by the BHI Strategic Steering Committee on March 26, 2024.