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Driving the future of mental health care  
through research.

Recherche est le moteur de l'avenir des soins de santé mentale.



# RESEARCH IS CARE

EMPOWERING LIVES THROUGH MENTAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS FOR ALL



STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN  
AS OF JUNE 2024



## FOREWARD

# At a time when mental health disorders affect one in four Canadians,

improving life and reducing the burden of mental illness and substance use disorders for clients and families is a clear – if not new – societal need. Yet, what we know about the human brain and mental illness is far outweighed by what we do not know. Our research at The Royal/IMHR has already demonstrated the value of a whole person approach, where the mental health of a person as a whole is a manifestation of biological, physical, psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being; where mental and physical health are considered as a whole.

*But the number of questions we have here at The Royal remain big and endless. For instance, how can we more precisely diagnose mental illnesses so that people can get better and more precise treatments faster? And how can we best integrate our research approaches and results spanning prevention, diagnostics and treatment to develop our bench to community vision - to best support a rapidly evolving ecosystem and society?*

*With so many potential questions to explore, this Strategic Research Plan provides a roadmap for the areas that we at The Royal and its University of Ottawa Institute of Mental Health Research (IMHR) will prioritize. In the pages that follow, we outline our areas of excellence and how we will build on them.*

Having a research institute embedded in a hospital provides unique opportunities to increase access to evidence-based care through cutting-edge research and technology, bringing research at the point of care. *Research is Care*. We ensure we take advantage of our hospital setting by creating interprofessional and interdisciplinary teams of researchers, clinicians, learners, administrative and operational staff, clients and their families. A research question can come from anywhere in our organization, anywhere in our community, and we build teams to pursue those questions that bring different experiences and expertise to the table.

*Our success in delivering this plan hinges on many things, but perhaps most importantly on our ability to attract and retain great talent and then empower them to succeed; and so you will see a focus on ensuring we have the funding, financial stability, technology, and complementary expertise (for example) to make our research teams successful.*

Finally, great research is all for naught if we do not ensure what we learn is both put into practice and shared widely. *Our integrated*

*approach at The Royal and across our ecosystem accelerates the adoption of new learnings.* This plan also emphasizes knowledge mobilization outside our institution – through existing and new cross-sectoral partnerships with other research organizations and hospitals, universities and the public and private sectors. New for us is a commitment to advocacy. With our expertise in mental health and addiction, we have a responsibility to create and support *rapid learning health systems* and ensure that both treatment and policy are evidence-based and evolve as we learn. As The Royal strives to achieve its mission of delivering the highest quality of care to its clients, research will inform the continuous quality improvement and innovation in care.

We are immensely grateful to our scientists, clinicians, clinician scientists, learners, staff, administrators, clients and family members as well as our community and institutional partners who helped shape this new Strategic Research Plan, which serves as the articulation of The Royal's research pillar. We see this plan as evergreen, with annual reviews to incorporate new experience, insight and priorities.

**With your support, we have articulated a clear path forward for the focus of mental health and addiction research at The Royal, as well as the enablers to our success in improving the lives of those with mental illness.**

#### **FLORENCE DZIERZINSKI, PH.D.**

President of University of Ottawa Institute of Mental Health Research (IMHR) at The Royal, and Vice-President of Research at The Royal

#### **JENNIFER PHILLIPS, PH.D.**

Interim Scientific Director, IMHR

#### **STEVE WEST**

Chair, IMHR Board

#### **SONYA SHOREY**

Chair, Integrative Research Committee of the IMHR Board

#### **CARA VACCARINO**

President and CEO, The Royal

#### **SHARON SQUIRE**

Chair, ROHCG Board

#### **CHRIS IDE**

President, Royal Ottawa Foundation for Mental Health

#### **JANE DUCHSCHER**

Chair, Foundation Board

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# The Royal/ IMHR's Strategic Research Plan,

**Empowering lives through mental health solutions for all**, lays the groundwork for advancing mental health research and integrating these advancements into client care, embodying the mantra "Research is Care." With the collaborative efforts of many, this plan targets the complex challenges of mental illness and substance use disorders in a rapidly evolving world.

*We will do this across prevention, diagnosis and treatment, creating equitable, integrated, whole-person, and precision approaches to foster well-being and recovery for all.*

## OUR GOALS:

### 1 FOCUS ON DISTINCTIVE RESEARCH AREAS:

We aim to propel The Royal's impact by concentrating on specialty areas such as Depression and anxiety, Trauma and stress-related disorders, Severe and complex mental illness, Intersection of substance use and mental health, and Mental health in equity-deserving and at-risk populations. Sleep, Cognition, Suicide Prevention and Culture/Gender, Advanced and Predictive Analytics, Music encompass multiple specialty areas. In each specialty concentration, we will build up research programs addressing: Key determinants of illness, Person-tailored care pathways, Novel and integrative diagnostics and interventions approaches, Health promotion and prevention solutions, and Evidence-based practice and policy.

### 2 ESTABLISH A RAPID LEARNING HEALTH SYSTEM:

By integrating data and research insights directly into clinical practice, we are making strides towards becoming a learning organization that continually improves client care.

### 3 BRIDGE THE DISCOVERY-IMPACT GAP:

Our objective is to enhance the translation of research findings into tangible benefits for clients, families, and society at large. We cannot wait 17 years to bring our innovations to care.

### 4 ACHIEVE GLOBAL RECOGNITION:

We strive to position The Royal as a leading academic health science center in mental health research and innovation.

## HOW WE WILL GET THERE:

### 1 INTERDISCIPLINARY AND INTERPROFESSIONAL RESEARCH AND CARE:

Combining expertise from psychiatry, psychology, neuroscience, and social sciences to accelerate prevention, diagnosis and treatment through collaborative research and innovation.

### 2 CLINICAL BRAIN RESEARCH CENTER (CBRC) AND ITS EMBEDDED RESEARCH CLINICS:

Seamlessly integrating research into client care, ensuring immediate access to innovative prevention, diagnostics and treatments.

### 3 TECHNOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP:

Emphasizing our capabilities in brain imaging and technology to pioneer new prevention, diagnostic and treatment options.



# Research is Care

*Empowering lives through mental health solutions for all represents a cohesive effort to tackle the challenges of mental health disorders, ensuring that The Royal leads in research and innovation, client care, and community engagement, ultimately improving the lives of those affected by mental illnesses and substance use disorders.*



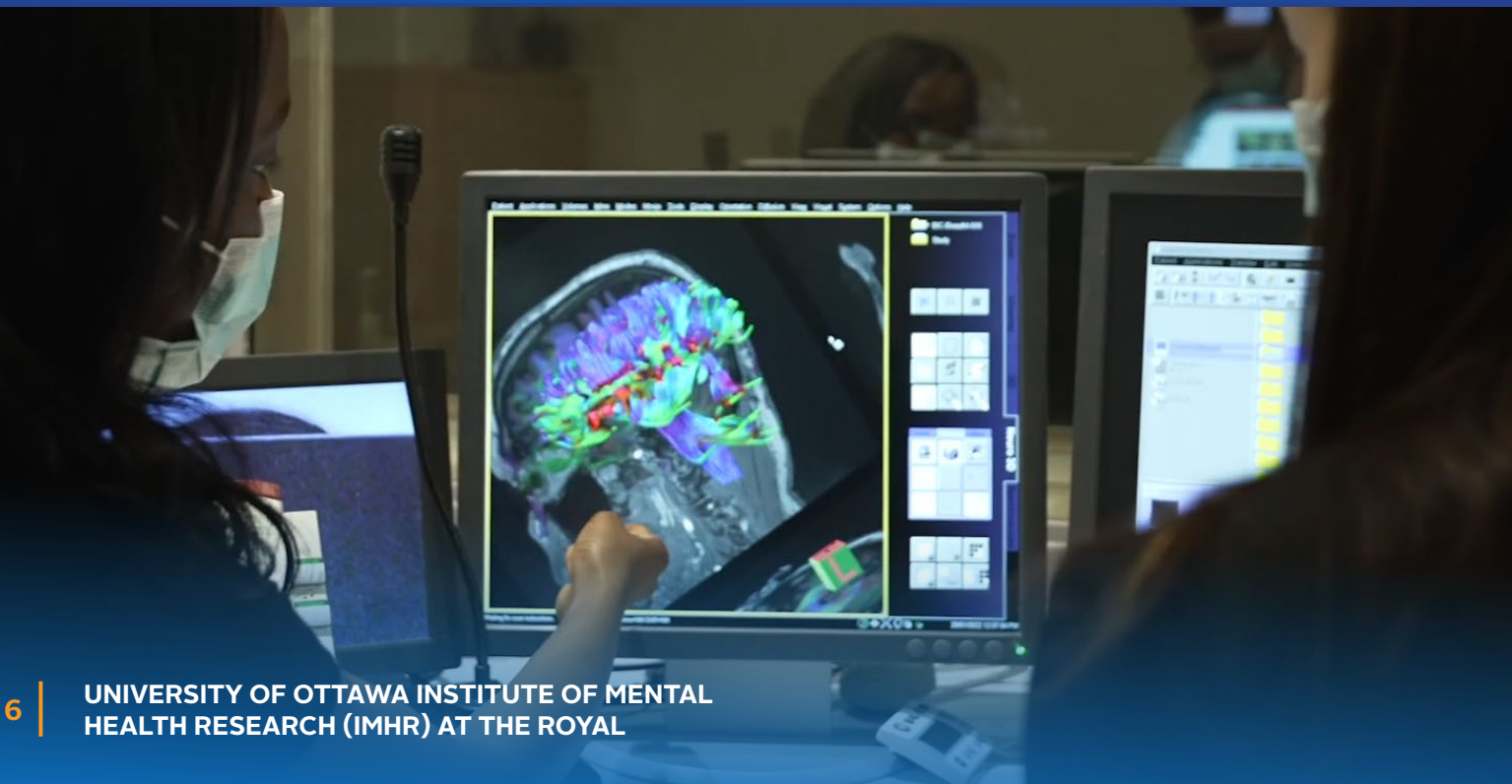
**The Royal is one of Canada's foremost mental health care, teaching and research hospitals.** Our mandate is simple: to help more people living with mental illness and addiction into recovery faster. The Royal's primary role is to serve people 16 and older living with complex and persistent mental illness. We combine our specialized mental health care, advocacy, research, and education to transform the lives of people living with complex and treatment-resistant mental illness. We also place a sharp focus on awareness building and health promotion public education initiatives.

Our University of Ottawa Institute of Mental Health Research (IMHR) brings together leading mental health professionals, scientists, and technology to gain a deeper understanding of the brain, and investigate innovative approaches to preventing, diagnosing and treating mental illness.

The Royal Ottawa Foundation for Mental Health raises funds that help support our work. It brings together community leaders and mental health advocates to advance mental health care, research and education.

Many of The Royal's clients receive care without ever walking through our doors in Ottawa. Most of our clients live in eastern Ontario, but some of our specialized programs reach into northern Ontario, Quebec, and Nunavut. Our campuses include: Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre — a 188-bed state-of-the-art mental health centre plus an 88-bed recovery/long-term care facility in Ottawa; Brockville Mental Health Centre — home to The Royal's 61 bed forensic treatment unit as well as the St. Lawrence Valley Correctional and Treatment Centre (Secure Treatment Unit), a 100-bed hybrid correctional facility and mental health centre; Community Mental Health Program and Ozerdinc Grimes Family Regional Psychosis Clinic in Ottawa; Two Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Clinic satellite campuses (Kinston and Arnprior).

**The Royal works with its many partners in the community to build their capacity to care for their clients, and to support people's mental health across their lifespan and spectrum of needs. We also educate thousands of health care professionals each year and work to promote mental health everywhere we can.**



## THE ROYAL/IMHR'S UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

# The Royal/ IMHR's unique value proposition in research and innovation

revolves around its pioneering integration of research and care within the mental health landscape, leveraging a distinct set of differentiators:

### 1 WORLD-CLASS INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH:

At the heart of The Royal's uniqueness is its interdisciplinary approach, combining expertise in psychiatry, psychology, neuroscience, and social sciences to advance mental health research and care. Together with its commitment to Equity, Diversity Inclusion and Indigeneity (EDII), this approach enables The Royal to develop whole-person, personalized solutions for prevention, diagnostic and treatment that address the complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors affecting mental health in a rapidly evolving world.

### 2 RESEARCH EMBEDDED IN CLIENT CARE:

Uniquely positioned with a research institute embedded within a hospital, with a commitment to client- and family-centred care and research, and with impactful novel research clinics (neuromodulation, (es) ketamine), The Royal aims to accelerate

the translation of world-class research directly into client care. This seamless bidirectional integration ensures clients have immediate access to the latest evidence-based treatments and innovations, making "Research is Care" not just a philosophy but a lived reality for clients and their families.

### 3 LEADERSHIP IN BRAIN IMAGING AND TECHNOLOGY:

The Royal sets itself apart with its exceptional expertise and capabilities in brain imaging and advanced mental health technologies, including world-class multimodal approaches (EEG/rTMS/MRI/PET). With a commitment to being recognized as the centre of excellence for brain imaging in the Ottawa region within the next five years, The Royal is at the forefront of discovering new prevention, diagnostics and treatments for mental illnesses and substance use disorders, offering hope and advanced care options to clients.

**Together, these differentiators position The Royal as a leading institution in mental health research and care, committed to advancing the understanding of mental illnesses and substance use disorders and improving the lives of clients and families through innovative, integrated, equitable, whole-person and personalized care solutions for all.**

### A FEW NUMBERS (FY23):

18	scientists
56	new research grants awarded (\$7.3M)
48	clinical investigators
69	research agreements executed
5	research chairs
2	new patents and 2 spin-off businesses
7	visiting scholars
2404+	volunteer hours contributed
74	students
2048	ROHCG clients in research studies
156	active research studies
7330	participants in research studies
245	publications

## STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN

# Methodology

In the summer of 2023, we began a comprehensive consultation process toward the development of The Royal's Strategic

Research Plan in order to support the scale and spread of our models of integrated research clinics, and to generate a solid roadmap for the development of our research enterprise for impact. We carried out 48 1:1 interviews, 6 focus groups (engaging 74 individuals in total), and distributed an organization-wide survey to learn about and integrate our constituents' perspectives.

We benchmarked upwards of 10 academic hospitals across Canada, a few with a mental health and neuroscience focus, to better understand comparator approaches to driving impact from research and innovation within a hospital setting.

We conducted a thorough analysis of our research performance and considered key success factors employed by the world's top-performing academic health sciences centres.

From this information, we distilled a number of key considerations related to our SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis. In early winter of 2024, we reflected on these considerations as a community, through iterative sessions with scientists, clinicians, clinician-scientists, clients, family members, learners and staff, with the Interprofessional Working Group, with Board Members and Board Chairs and Senior Leadership of The Royal, The Foundation and the IMHR, as well as with the Integrative Research Committee of the IMHR Board.

**Together we extracted a Framework for the Strategic Plan, which we collectively refined, revised and expanded to arrive at this Strategic Research Plan document.**





**STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN**

◀ Iterative Engagement with The Royal Community and Leadership, and with our Ecosystem Interprofessional Strategic Research Plan Working Group

**STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK**

**FINDINGS REPORT AND SWOT**

**AHSC CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS**

**RESEARCH PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

**BENCHMARKING**

◀ **13 ORGANIZATIONS** Including:

- Baycrest
- BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences
- Ottawa Academic Health Network [uOttawa, TOH/OHRI, CHEO(RI), Heart Institute, Bruyere(RI), Montfort/ISM]
- Unity Health Toronto
- Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care

**SURVEY**

◀ Distributed to ~1600 members of The Royal community

**CONSULTATIONS**

- The Royal, Foundation and IMHR Senior Leadership Team
- IMHR, Foundation and ROHCG Board Members
- IMHR Scientists, Clinician Scientists, Research Staff
- The Royal Clinicians, Clinician Scientists, Research Staff
- The Royal's Client Advisory Council
- The Royal's Family Advisory Council
- NewMe-TN Trainees Representatives
- Partners and External Partners

# Strategic Research Plan Structure



## 01 VISION

Our purpose and ultimate goal

## 02 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Overarching commitments that will guide and shape our work and decisions

## 03 GOALS

Outcomes we are striving towards by the end of our strategic planning cycle

## 04 OBJECTIVES

Shorter-term outcomes or milestones to help us achieve each goal. INDICATORS OF SUCCESS: Meaningful indicators and metrics to help gauge our short- and long-term performance vis-a-vis our objectives

## 05 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Cross-cutting actions to advance objectives (and achieve goals)



VISION

# Empowering lives through mental health solutions for all

We accelerate prevention, diagnosis and treatment through world-class collaborative and interdisciplinary research and innovation, creating equitable, integrated, whole-person, and precision mental health solutions for all





## What We Heard

Our consultations and benchmarking revealed several core considerations and imperatives which helped to inform our goals, objectives and strategic initiatives.

### POSITIONING AND PARTNERSHIPS

- The Royal/IMHR is not yet established as the mental health research hub in Ottawa. There are opportunities for strengthening **academic relationships** with uOttawa, as well as Carleton University and other regional institutions.
- There is opportunity for The Royal to expand its relationships and continue to fine-tune its **partnership model** to be authentically connected with our communities.
- The Royal has an opportunity to become the **regional go-to hub** for mental health innovation and technology validation, including a key site for industry-sponsored clinical trials.
- Considering the current political and social attention to mental health and substance use, The Royal/IMHR has significant opportunities for **advocacy**, including partnering with government on evidence-based policy development and program design.

### CULTURE

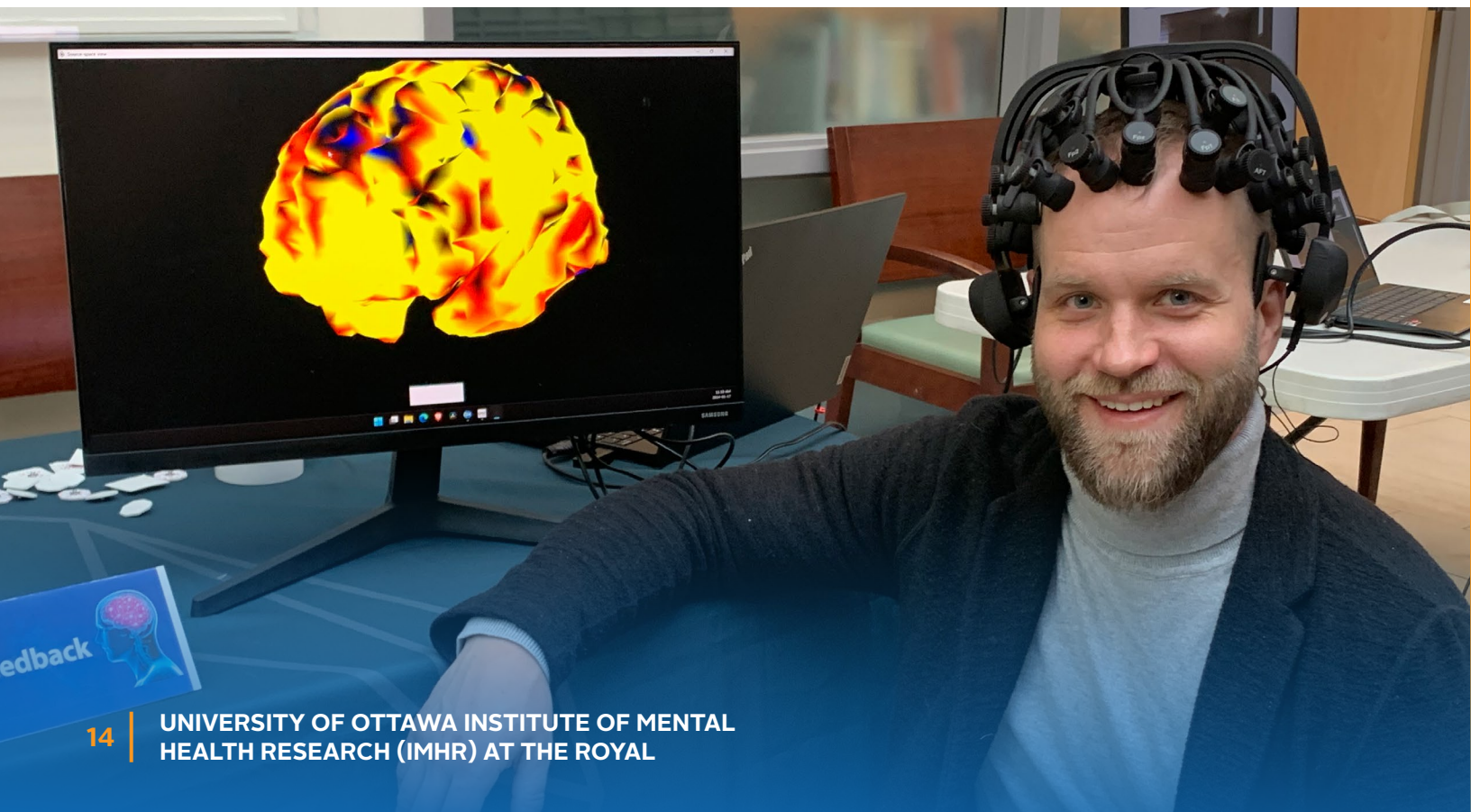
- The IMHR has developed a culture of **collaboration, interdisciplinarity and agility**. The need for intentional mechanisms and structures to bring cohesion across The Royal and prevent siloization are particularly important as the institute continues to grow.
- The Royal's **academic culture** is nascent and in development, yet there is high-level support across The Royal towards the integration of research, care, education and lived expertise.

### ALIGNMENT & INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH AND CARE

- There is a need for clearer **alignment** of the research enterprise with the Royal's clinical mandate at the corporate level, including alignment of funding priorities to sustain research as a key enabler of excellence in care.
- Connectivity and synergy between the research and care environments at The Royal is not optimal and at the moment, **clinician engagement** in research is low. Intentional mechanisms to support and enhance clinician research capabilities and to maximize collaboration between researchers and clinicians should be expanded and reinforced.
- Recent innovative 'Research as Service' programs at The Royal provide an excellent **bridge from research to impact in real time**. Our established pilot research clinics and the interventional psychiatry program in development demonstrate this. Going forward, these high-value programs should be elevated and expanded.
- Engagement of The Royal's **clients and families** in research programs can be significantly augmented through implied consent, client registries and education/communication.

## RESEARCH PERFORMANCE & IMPACT

- The Royal/IMHR is home to a significant pool of talent including established and early career scientists. An intentional retention and recruitment plan is needed to maintain this critical asset and to continue to build talent in strategic areas of focus for The Royal.
- Key research platforms and technologies including the Brain Imaging Center (BIC) (PET/MRI scanner), the EEG and rTMS platforms, wet lab and the Sleep Lab are key drivers of The Royal/IMHR's research. Together with our talent, they form the basis of our in-development Clinical Brain Research Center (CBRC), including its three programs (treatment/intervention, diagnostics, and prevention). Going forward, these platforms must continue to be supported and maintained with the latest equipment and appropriate support staff (including technological experts) to continue making a difference.
- The Royal/IMHR has research strengths in numerous areas of psychiatry, psychology and behavioural science, neuroscience, imaging etc. These areas of strength must be strategically concentrated to help The Royal articulate and advance a specific niche and reputation within the mental health and substance use space.
- Innovative approaches to mental health (e.g. arts and music, AI-driven social interventions, lifestyle etc.) are locally-unique drivers of fundraising, community impact as well as research brand identity.
- The Royal/IMHR has had a significant focus on biomedically-oriented research; in order to make a mark in the mental health space, and for our clients and families, it needs to continue to widen and encompass a whole-person lens. This is demonstrated by our current interdisciplinary studies, which includes our biomedical orientation (Multidimensional Assessment of PTSD [MAPS]) and our interprofessional pilot projects (BMO innovative clinic for depression, neuromodulation research clinic).
- Access to multimodal approaches and advanced analytics capabilities will be critical to developing tailored mental health solutions. The Royal's foundational data and informatics ecosystem must be strengthened to harness this opportunity.



# Our Guiding Principles and Commitments

The overarching concepts we will adhere to in all of our decision making, including the design and implementation of our research programs:

## RESEARCH IS CARE

**Increasing client access to new prevention, diagnostic and treatment solutions** through world-class research, technology and methodology is a top priority and an overarching organizational mindset

## WHOLE PERSON VIEW

Our research will **focus on the whole-person**. Mental health is a manifestation of biological, physical, psychological, emotional, social, spiritual and economic well-being

## INTERDISCIPLINARY & INTERPROFESSIONAL LENS

There is not one single discipline with the appropriate frameworks and tools to examine, understand and deliver effective solutions in mental health. **Our collaborative and integrative approaches support our philosophy based in interdisciplinarity and interprofessionalism**

## PARTNERSHIP WITH CLIENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

Creating **evidence-based mental health solutions** is only successful when it is carried out in partnership and in relation with our clients, families and communities in both official languages

## SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

Conducting socially accountable research matters to us. This includes our **commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigeneity (EDII)**.

We will remain vigilant in **anticipating and addressing the ethical, legal and social challenges** raised by research, training and innovation in the mental health space, fostering growth, trust, safety and privacy

# Our Goals

- 1 Propel The Royal's impact and profile by focusing on distinctive research in specialty areas
- 2 Advance the evolution of The Royal into a rapid learning health system
- 3 Reduce the gap between discovery and impact for clients, families, the community and society at large
- 4 Become a globally renowned academic health science centre for mental health research and innovation





# Objectives

## 1 Propel The Royal's impact and profile by focusing on distinctive research in specialty areas

### Shape specialty concentrations in the following areas:

- Depression and anxiety
- Trauma and stress-related disorders
- Severe and complex mental illness
- Intersection of substance use and mental health
- Mental health in equity-deserving and at-risk populations

\*As Sleep, Cognition, Suicide Prevention and Culture/Gender, Music –all notable strengths of The Royal–represent cross-cutting/intersectional elements of mental health, they are assumed to be encompassed within multiple specialty concentrations

### In each specialty concentration, build up research programs addressing:

- Key determinants of illness
- Person-tailored care pathways
- Novel and integrative diagnostics and interventions approaches
- Health promotion and prevention solutions
- Evidence-based practice and policy

## 2 Advance the evolution of The Royal into a rapid learning health system

- Facilitate an internal cultural shift towards becoming a learning organization that uses evidence to improve care

- Expand communication and education with clients and families to convey the inherent synergy between research and care delivery at The Royal
- Establish informed implied consent strategies for ethical, respectful, meaningful, and informed engagement in research studies and use of clinical data to drive research, learning and quality improvement
- Develop a standardized and easy-to-implement intake and end-point data gathering scheme within the clinical setting to enable both research and clinical investigation
- Prioritize data management strategies and practices within the research enterprise to adhere to funding requirements and maximize opportunities for open science
- Enhance data interoperability and rapid data sharing between the research and healthcare arms of The Royal and with external partners
- Advance efforts in AI and computational psychiatry to mine data, generate clinically-relevant insights and support clinical decision-making
- Create systems for speedy synthesis and communication of high-quality evidence to inform clinical decision-making

### 3 Reduce the gap between discovery and impact for clients, families, the community and society at large

- Maximize meaningful engagement of clients and families in research by increasing their involvement as participants, advisors and experts in the design, execution of research studies, and the mobilization of study findings.
- Enhance clients and families' awareness of Royal's integrated continuum of care, how research contributes to it and how clients and families can participate and benefit
- Increase research capacity and the number of studies and clinical trials that focused on developing new provide new diagnostic and treatment possibilities for clients
- Amplify knowledge mobilization supports for scientists and clinician scientists to facilitate the integration of research evidence into clinical practice and decision-making
- Strengthen expertise in evidence-based policy development with a focus on translating evidence into clearly actionable workforce, service delivery and funding policy recommendations

### 4 Become a globally renowned academic health science centre for mental health research and innovation

- Increase the scientific eminence and presence of The Royal in our declared specialty areas
- Expand partnerships with communities, community-based organizations and service providers as well as provincial and federal entities to co-design, spread and scale mental health solutions beyond the walls of The Royal
- Lead and catalyze new multi-institutional, multi-sectoral partnerships focused on addressing mental health as a major societal challenge
- Enhance targeted outreach and public education activities to crystalize The Royal's research impact, contributions and brand
- Serve as an incubator for Ottawa-region start-up companies advancing innovations in mental health
- Become a first-line validation site and adopter of novel methodologies, technologies and tools for diagnosis and treatment of mental illness and substance use, including digital health solutions

# Cross-cutting Strategic Initiatives and Enablers

A number of cross-cutting strategic initiatives in five key areas will be deployed to advance our objectives and achieve our goals

## Talent

- Develop a talent recruitment and retention strategy in accordance with specialty areas - for clinician scientists and scientists, graduate and clinical trainees, and technical and operational staff
- Expand local affiliations and The Royal/IMHR appointments in priority focus areas (with uOttawa, Carleton U, UQO researchers across all relevant faculties)
- Strengthen research and technical expertise in AI and informatics within the context of mental health
- Explore the expertise and talent requirements for the establishment of a mental health policy think tank
- Re-establish a mentorship program for early career researchers at The Royal/IMHR, leveraging global expertise
- Further develop a sense of belonging and psychological safety in The Royal's research environment culture
- Medicine, Social Sciences, Health Sciences and others) and Academic Health Science Centers (e.g., OAHN (7), CAMH, etc)
- Solidify and fine-tune the affiliation model for the IMHR (different types and levels of appointment at the IMHR and associated benefits)
- Build capability among clinicians to be involved in research, including expanding clinician-oriented research support offerings
- Establish incentives and rewards (protected time, clinical backfill, compensation, career progression) to enhance clinician-led research (e.g. clinical research chairs in collaboration with university partners in priority areas)
- Enhance communication and synergy between researchers and clinicians
- Embed continuous evaluation and quality improvement into programs
- Scale and spread existing integrated research and care programs at The Royal

## Academic Culture

- Enhance partnerships with uOttawa Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (OVPRI), Faculties of

## OPERATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Strategically align mandates of corporate services such as communications, IT and human resources with research, in order to significantly enhance the brand and profile of the research enterprise
- Invest in implied consent as well as systematic communication and outreach mechanisms to increase meaningful engagement of The Royal's clients and families in our research programs
- Invest in the development of foundational informatics infrastructure to support data management, interoperability and sharing within the research enterprise, to maintain privacy, and to provide appropriate, secure, and de-identified linkages to clinical, extra-institutional and government data repositories
- Enhance core equipment and expertise at the Clinical Brain Research Center (CBRC) including the Brain Imaging Center (BIC), with an eye to promoting its distinct offerings in the context of multi-institutional large-scale research programs and clinical trials
- Develop and maintain equipment and technical expertise across other key platforms (including the sleep lab, neuromodulation, wet lab, music) to advance integrative research programs within our specialty areas

## PARTNERSHIPS

- Champion the development of a regional coordinated mental health research ecosystem amongst key institutions in Ottawa
- Build capability and provide education across the research enterprise on effective and respectful community partnership and participatory research methods to co-lead and co-develop mental health solutions
- Explore and establish systems and mechanisms to make The Royal an attractive partner to industry
- Further enhance and increase intersectoral partnerships in provincial, federal and international spheres

## FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Solidify a funding model for research on the part of the Hospital and the Foundation, including an on-going fundraising commitment for both existing and new programs and infrastructure
- Develop funding models to support talent
- Increase funding from Tri-Agencies and large-scale grants-based institutional funding programs
- Further develop revenue generation strategies related to unique research services (e.g., through the CBRC)
- Develop a strategy for attracting industry-led, revenue generating trials
- Develop a strategy and mechanisms for innovation, commercialization and entrepreneurship

# What will success look like?

## The vision for our research enterprise at 5 - 10 years

We will establish a number of short-, mid- and long-term indicators of success to be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure we are on track with achieving our goals.

Specific and corresponding metrics will also be added, and will be reported quarterly and/or yearly, stemming from these indicators of success.

1

### Propel The Royal's impact and profile by focusing on distinctive research in specialty areas

#### TALENT

- The number of top-performing researchers working within The Royal's declared specialty areas has increased due to recruitment and retention success
- The Royal has demonstrated increased success in attracting and retaining top clinician scientist talent within our declared specialty areas
- There is a marked increase in diversity (sex and gender, race and ethnicity, and other identities) across The Royal's research and innovation community; staff, researchers and trainees report a sense of belonging and support in relation to The Royal/IMHR as a work environment

#### FUNDRAISING

- In each of our specialty areas, we have aligned hospital fundraising activities with our research priorities, engaging The Royal's donor community in the significance and impact of our research
- Research grant dollars (direct and indirect costs) have increased year over year
- We have successfully financed new high-profile initiatives within each of our specialty areas

#### RESEARCH IMPACT

- Our research is increasingly communicated, featured and used in advocacy
- The Royal is identified as the regional centre of excellence in human brain imaging
- The number of impactful publications has increased notably
- By 2034, we are among the top 20 research hospitals in Canada

2

### Advance the evolution of The Royal into a rapid learning health system

#### INTERNAL CULTURE

- The Royal's Boards agendas include a regular focus on research
- There are an increasing number of well-attended pan-organizational events (e.g. research days or symposia) focused on research and innovation
- There is increased research capability, participation, support and understanding for research amongst front-line, administrative and technical staff at The Royal
- There are new systematic or increased instances of protected time measures, career progression pathways enabled by research performance, as well as compensation mechanisms to reward and incentivize clinician-led research

- There is an increase in appointments to the IMHR from various health professions across The Royal and the portion of The Royal community members actively conducting research is markedly enhanced
- IMHR researchers and staff report higher levels of work satisfaction as a result of increased engagement in the clinic and The Royal's staff and physicians report higher levels of work satisfaction as a result of increased engagement in research

### INFORMATICS CAPABILITIES AND CAPACITIES

- We have designed and deployed a robust implied consent model and research participant registry at the clinical interface in partnership with clients, families and community members
- We have established robust integrated institutional informatics infrastructure to allow for multi-dimensional use of data collected at the clinical setting
- Research data management systems are in place and enabling small scale local and large scale international programs
- We have identified and validated high-value use cases for leverage of clinical data and application of advanced analytics tools to enable research, to facilitate clinical-decision making and to make service delivery and hospital operations more efficient and streamlined
- There is proliferation of mechanisms for rapid knowledge and evidence sharing and access within the clinical setting; all maintaining privacy

### LEARNING HEALTH SYSTEM IMPACT

- Program reviews and future-looking performance goals for clinical units corresponding to our research specialty areas encompass research and innovation productivity and results

- The number of program-embedded short-turn-around research studies is enhanced
- The number of quality initiatives led by interprofessional staff is enhanced
- The number of new clinically-based innovations/practice changes that have been initiated and successfully adopted at The Royal is enhanced
- Research will inform the continuous quality improvement and innovation in care

### GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

- Our research enterprise is governed according to best practices at all levels of the organization and across the tripartite

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## 3 Reduce the gap between discovery and impact for clients, families, the community and society at large

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### CLIENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- There is increased awareness of the role of research in contribution to The Royal's integrated continuum of care and
- There is a marked increase in the proportion of clients and family and caregivers who engage meaningfully in research studies at The Royal
- Clients and families feel they are receiving tangible value when they engage in our research studies

### RESEARCH CAPACITY AND INTENSITY

- The number of clinical trials or research studies at The Royal, as well as clinical trials and research studies offered as treatment to The Royal clients has grown
- Research competences have increased across all professions

## KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

- The number of new standards of care implemented at The Royal has grown substantially
- There are increased instances of translation of short- and long-term research findings into clinical practice at The Royal
- There is evidence for discovery and the subsequent successful implementation/ adoption of novel clinical practices and treatments within clinical units that correspond to our declared specialty areas

## CLIENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- There is a marked improvement in client outcomes in priority programs that correspond to our declared specialty areas
- The number of instances where our research has directly influenced mental health and substance use policies (at the provincial or federal levels) has increase

## 4 Become a globally renowned academic health science centre for mental health research and innovation

### PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

- Community partners feel they are meaningfully involved and receiving tangible value in the context of research partnerships with The Royal

### MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL AND MULTI-SECTORAL PARTNERSHIPS

- The Royal has led the conceptualization and development of more than one large-scale research partnership in mental health and substance use health with Ottawa-area and Ontario institutions
- We have expanded our reach and depth with external partners (governments, industry, community organizations and academic collaborators) - globally

## INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS

- There is an increase in number of industry-led trials at The Royal
- The Royal is taking on significantly more pilot studies to validate new innovations, particularly from start-ups and growing companies in the Ottawa and surrounding area
- There are increased instances of The Royal becoming an early adopter of externally-developed innovative mental health solutions
- There are increased instances of partner organizations successfully adopting innovations pioneered by The Royal
- The number of patents as well as commercial and entrepreneurial ventures stemming out of The Royal has increased significantly

## RECOGNITION

- Brand awareness for The Royal's research enterprise and the IMHR has increased significantly in Ottawa, Ontario and across Canada
- By 2034, we are among the top 20 research hospitals in Canada (cross referenced in Goal 1)
- The number of impactful publications has increased notably (cross referenced in Goal 1)
- The Royal is identified as the regional centre of excellence in human brain imaging (cross referenced in Goal 1)
- Our research is increasingly communicated, featured and used in advocacy (cross referenced in Goal 1)

# Summary

The Royal's Strategic Research Plan, *Empowering lives through mental health solutions for all (2024)*, outlines a comprehensive blueprint for advancing mental health research and integrating these advancements into client care, thereby embodying the mantra "Research is Care." This ambitious plan, developed through extensive consultation with partners, positions The Royal and its University of Ottawa Institute of Mental Health Research (IMHR) at the forefront of tackling the complex challenges of mental illness and substance use disorders in a rapidly evolving world.

The plan articulates clear goals, strategic initiatives, and cross-cutting enablers aimed at propelling The Royal's impact, advancing its evolution into a rapid learning health system, reducing the gap between discovery and impact, and achieving global recognition in the field of mental health research and innovation. *We will accelerate prevention, diagnosis and treatment through world-class collaborative and interdisciplinary research and innovation, creating equitable, integrated, whole-person, and precision mental health solutions for all.*





## KEY COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

### FOCUS AREAS:

The plan emphasizes distinctive research areas such as Depression and Anxiety, Trauma and Stress-related Disorders, Severe and Complex Mental Illness, Intersection of Substance Use and Mental Health, and Mental Health in Equity-deserving and At-risk Populations, with cross-cutting elements including Sleep, Cognition, Suicide Prevention, and Culture/Gender.

### RAPID LEARNING HEALTH SYSTEM:

A commitment to integrating data and research insights directly into clinical practice, with a vision of continuously improving client care and outcomes.

### DISCOVERY-IMPACT GAP:

Efforts to enhance the translation of research findings into tangible benefits for clients, families, and society, aiming to reduce the typical 17-year lag between innovation and implementation.

### GLOBAL RECOGNITION:

The plan sets out to position The Royal as a leader in mental health research and innovation, recognized for its contributions to the field both nationally and internationally.

### INTERDISCIPLINARY AND INTERPROFESSIONAL APPROACH:

Leveraging a combination of expertise from psychiatry, psychology, neuroscience, and social sciences to advance mental health solutions.

### TECHNOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP:

A focus on pioneering new prevention, diagnostic, and treatment options through advanced technology and brain imaging.

### PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION:

Strengthening cross-sectoral partnerships and advocating for evidence-based treatment and policy, with a new commitment to advocacy.

### TALENT AND CULTURE:

Attracting, retaining, and empowering talented researchers and clinicians, fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration.

### FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY:

Ensuring the financial stability and continued growth of The Royal's research enterprise through strategic funding models and partnerships.

### KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION:

Emphasizing the importance of sharing research findings widely and effectively to influence practice, policy, and societal understanding of mental health issues.

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## CONCLUSION

Our Strategic Research Plan marks a significant step forward in The Royal's commitment to improving mental health care through research. By focusing on specific areas of excellence, fostering an interdisciplinary approach, integrating research with client care, and building strong partnerships, The Royal aims to drive substantial progress in the understanding and treatment of mental health disorders. This document not only outlines a clear path forward but also reflects a deep commitment to the well-being of clients, families, and communities, ensuring that The Royal remains a beacon of hope and innovation in the field of mental health.

**PARTNER  
ENGAGEMENT  
OVERVIEW**

# Appendix

Partner engagement was conducted by a third party organization, Spindle, and included 54 consultation sessions engaging 74 people:

## THE ROYAL & IMHR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Dr. Florence Dzierszinski**, IMHR President & VP Research, The Royal

**Dr. Jennifer Phillips**, Scientist, Interim Scientific Director, IMHR

**Tammy Beaudoin**, Director, Clinical Research Administration, IMHR

**Katie Dinelle**, Director, Integrated Brain Imaging Center, IMHR

**Pierre Noel**, Interim President and CEO, The Royal

**Dr. Gail Beck**, Interim Psychiatrist-in-Chief and Chief of Staff, The Royal

**Cal Crocker**, COO / CFO, The Royal

**Esther Millar**, Former VP Client Care Services, Professional Practice and Chief Nursing Executive, The Royal

**Peter Kennedy**, Interim VP. Client Care Services and Community Mental Health, The Royal; interim CNE

**Dr. Kim Corace**, Former VP Innovation and Transformation

**Karen Monaghan**, Director, Communications and Partnerships, The Royal

**Chris Ide**, President, Foundation and VP, Brand & Marketing, The Royal

**Dr. Anou Banghit**, CIO, The Royal

**Dr. David Attwood**, Associate Chief, Ottawa, The Royal

## IMHR, FOUNDATION AND ROHCG BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Steve West**, Chair, IMHR Board

**Cara Vaccarino**, President and CEO, ROHCG

**Sonya Shorey**, Member, IMHR Board & Chair, Integrative Research Committee (IRC)

**Michael von Herff**, Member & Vice Chair / incoming Chair, IMHR Board

**Dr. Lewis Leikin**, Member, IMHR Board and IRC

**Dr. Martine Lagacé**, Member, IMHR Board; Member, IRC; AVP, Research, Promotion & Development, University of Ottawa

**Sharon Squire**, Chair, ROHCG Board of Trustees

**Jane Duchsher**, Chair, Foundation Board of Directors

**Glenda O'Hara**, Chair, Client Advisory Council, The Royal; Member, IRC

**Brian Ludlow**, Family Advisory Council, IRC member

**Dr. Diana Sarakbi**, Associate, Major Initiatives, Canadian Institutes of Health Research

**Kevin Fitzgibbons**, Former Senior Executive, Science, Technology Innovation Policy and Strategy

## IMHR SCIENTISTS, CLINICIAN SCIENTISTS

**Dr. Michael Seto**, Senior Scientist, Director of the Forensic Mental Health Research, IMHR

**Dr. Kimberly Matheson**, Senior Scientist, Culture and Gender Mental Health Research Chair, IMHR & Carleton University

**Dr. Pierre Blier**, FRSC, Senior Scientist, Chair in Mood Disorders, IMHR

**Dr. Georg Northoff**, FRSC, Senior Scientist, Chair Mind, Brain Imaging and Neuroethics, IMHR

**Dr. Zachary Kaminsky**, Scientist, Mach Gaensslen/DIFD Chair in Suicide Prevention Research, IMHR

**Dr. Gilles Comeau**, FRSC, Senior Scientist, IMHR

## THE ROYAL CLINICIANS, CLINICIAN SCIENTISTS

**Dr. Jakov Shlik**, Psychiatrist, The Royal;  
Physician Lead of Research, IMHR/The Royal  
**Dr. Alexandra Baines**, Psychiatrist, The Royal;  
Clinical Investigator, IMHR  
**Dr. Naista Zhand**, Junior Clinical Research  
Chair in Schizophrenia; Psychiatrist, The Royal;  
Clinical Investigator, IMHR  
**Dr. Sabrina Paterniti**, Psychiatrist, The Royal;  
Clinical Investigator, IMHR  
**Dr. Ram Brender**, Psychiatrist, The Royal;  
Clinical Investigator, IMHR  
**Dr. Kelsey Collimore**, Psychologist, PPL;  
Clinical Investigator, IMHR

## NEUME-TN REPRESENTATIVES

**Zacharie Saint-Georges**, Co-Chair, NeuME-  
TN, & MD/PhD Candidate

## INTERPROFESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

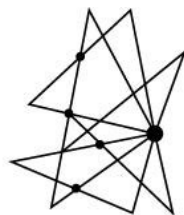
**Dr. Alexandra Baines**  
**Dr. Anou Banghit**  
**Dr. Caroline Wallace**  
**Chris Ide**  
**Dr. Florence Dzierszinski**  
**Glenda O'Hara**  
**Dr. Jakov Shlik**  
**Dr. Jennifer Phillips**  
**Karen Monaghan**  
**Katie Dinelle**  
**Dr. Michael Seto**  
**Peter Kennedy**  
**Dr. Pierre Blier**  
**Shruti Patel**  
**Tammy Beaudoin**  
**Zacharie Saint-George**

## EXTERNAL PARTNERS

**Dr. Sylvain Charbonneau**, Vice-President  
Research & Innovation, University of Ottawa  
**Dr. Martine Lagacé**, Member, IMHR Board;  
Member, IRC; AVP, Research, Promotion &  
Development, University of Ottawa  
**Dr. Bernard Jasmin**, Dean, Faculty of  
Medicine, University of Ottawa  
**Dr. Jocelyn Côté**, Vice-Dean of Research,  
Faculty of Medicine, University of Ottawa  
**Dr. Claire Kendall**, Vice-Dean, Social  
Accountability, Faculty of Medicine, University  
of Ottawa  
**Dr. Brian Ray**, Vice-Dean of Research, Faculty  
of Arts, University of Ottawa  
**Dr. Rafik Goubran**, VP Research and  
International, Carleton University  
**Dr. Jason Berman**, CEO & Scientific Director  
of the CHEO Research Institute, VP, Research  
at CHEO  
**Dr. Kumanan Wilson**, CEO/CSO, Bruyère  
Research Institute; VP, Research at Bruyère  
**Dr. Sharon Johnston**, Scientific Director, AVP  
of Research at Institute du Savoir Montfort  
**Deborah Ross**, Provincial Director, Strategic  
Initiatives, BC Mental Health and Substance  
Use Services  
**Dr. Allison Sekuler**, President & Chief  
Scientist, Baycrest Academy for Research and  
Education; President & Chief Scientist, Centre  
for Aging & Brain Health Innovation  
**Dr. Bernard LeFoll**, VP Research, Waypoint  
**Dr. David Hill**, Scientific Director, Lawson  
Health Research Institute  
**Dr. Damian Jankowicz**, Former CIO, CAMH  
**Gord Garner**, Past Executive Director, CAPSA

A survey to ~1600 members of The Royal community  
was designed and distributed in the Fall 2023.





Research  
is Care

## CONTACT

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