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**AHRQ-PCORI SPIRIT K12 POSTDOCTORAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM  
CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

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**TO:** ALL K12 PROGRAM STAKEHOLDERS/POTENTIAL CANDIDATES

**FROM:** PROGRAM CO-DIRECTORS:  
MICHAEL K. ONG, MD, PHD – DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE (GIM-HSR), UCLA AND  
VA GREATER LOS ANGELES HEALTHCARE SYSTEM  
  
MICHAEL K. GOULD, MD, MS – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SYSTEMS SCIENCE,  
KAISER PERMANENTE BERNARD J. TYSON SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

**SUBJECT:** CALL FOR LETTERS OF INTENT TO APPLY, INAUGURAL K12 COHORT

**DATE:** JANUARY 31, 2021

Dear SPIRIT K12 Program Stakeholders:

As Co-Directors of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)-funded **Stakeholder-Partnered Implementation Research and Innovation Translation (SPIRIT) K12 Program**, we are pleased to announce our Call for Applications for Cohort II. The SPIRIT K12 Program constitutes a unique partnership among UCLA, Kaiser Permanente Southern California, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, and Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, bringing into alignment four distinctive health care systems that will collaboratively support mentored postdoctoral research career development of the next generation of interdisciplinary team members, leaders, and innovators in patient-centered outcomes research within learning health systems, with a focus on bridging the gap between research and practice for improved patient outcomes and health care system performance, and an additional special focus on historically underserved minority and low-income populations, who evidence wide disparities in care access and outcomes. The program is designed to advance knowledge of care design, delivery, and implementation strategies for sustainable uptake of scientifically proven interventions across diverse real-world health care settings and populations.

Toward fulfillment of this mission, the SPIRIT K12 Program is seeking applications for its second cohort of four postdoctoral scholars, one per each partner institution/health care system, for a consecutive 2--year appointment period in which the scholars conduct mentored health system-partnered and -embedded research projects. We anticipate that the SPIRIT K12 Program will appoint Scholars in Spring 2021. At this time, we are requesting interested individuals to submit applications by 5pm PST on February 28, 2021 to Esther Lan at [elan@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:elan@mednet.ucla.edu). Additional information on application requisites are below.

**Additional details for the SPIRIT K12 Program**

**Program Support of Scholars and Primary Mentors**

The SPIRIT K12 Program provides salary support for the appointees of up to \$90,000 direct costs annually, per scholar, plus associated fringe benefits. The K12 requires the appointed scholar to devote a minimum of 75 percent of annual full-time effort to the grant (i.e., at least 30 hours per week). In addition, the program provides up to \$25,000 per scholar per year for research-development support

costs such as travel to scientific meetings; consultant costs; research supplies; reimbursement of patient participation costs; equipment, tuition, fees, and books related to didactic courses or career development.

The SPIRIT K12 Program provides up to \$5,000 direct costs annually in salary and fringe benefit support solely for the primary research mentor of each appointed scholar. Our program recommends a multiple-mentor model, the Scholarship Oversight Committee (SOC), composed of the primary research mentor, and an executive or C-Suite mentor/adviser from the health care system in which the project will be conducted who will provide career advice and counsel. The latter mentor (if not already identified in the application) will be assigned to the scholar in collaborative deliberation with the SPIRIT K12 Executive Steering Committee, the main governing body of the program, on which the two Program Co-Directors, Drs. Michael Ong and Michael Gould, serve as co-chairs. Additional mentors may also be recommended or included, such as an additional research mentor from outside of the scholar's home department to foster interdisciplinary perspective on learning health system research,

### **Program Eligibility**

In keeping with general Health and Human Services requirements for federally funded institutional postdoctoral training and career development programs, the SPIRIT K12 Program is open to any scholar (1) who holds one or more clinical or non-clinical doctoral degrees (including but not limited to MD, PhD, MD/PhD, ScD, DrPH, PsyD, PharmD, DO, DC, ND, DDS, DMD, DNS, DVM, OD, DPM, EngD, DPT, OTD, DSW, or equivalent doctoral degree at the time of appointment); (2) who can document a commitment to a research career in health services and patient-centered outcomes, clinical epidemiology, and/or dissemination and implementation and to conducting research within learning health systems focused on translation of findings into patient-centered care; and (3) who is a U.S. citizen or non-citizen national, or lawfully admitted for permanent residence (i.e., in possession of a currently valid Alien Registration Receipt Card I-155 or other legal verification of such status). Individuals on temporary visas are not eligible. Candidates from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, those with disabilities, and/or individuals from economically or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.

The research experience of the candidates selected for support under this program should resemble, in career level, those supported by the individual Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Award (K08), the Mentored Research Scientist Development Award (K01), the Mentored Patient-Oriented Career Development Award (K23), or postdoctoral trainees and fellows appointed to F32 or T32 grants or eligible for K99 grants. Candidates must be able to commit a minimum of nine person-months (75% of full-time professional effort) conducting research career development activities associated with this award for a 2- or 3-year period. The remaining three months (25% effort) can be divided among other research, clinical, and teaching activities but only if these activities are consistent with the goals of the candidate's development into an independent investigator. All scholars appointed to the SPIRIT K12 can move on to individual mentored career development support grants upon completion of their 2- or 3-year appointment on the K12 grant. Any scholar appointed to an AHRQ-supported K12 program or an AHRQ-supported individual mentored career development may not exceed a total of five years of AHRQ mentored career development support. Scholars are NOT allowed to reduce their level of effort below 75% over the course of their respective K12 appointment periods.

Individuals are eligible for appointment as a K12 scholar if they have been, or currently are the PD/PI of a NIH or AHRQ R36, F31, or F32 grant, or a federal or non-federal award that duplicates the provisions or research goals of these grants, and otherwise meet all other eligibility criteria. The scholar will have to terminate the existing award before being appointed to the K12. Individuals are also eligible to be scholar candidates if they have been or currently are the PD/PI of a NIH or AHRQ R03 or R21 grant, or a federal or non-federal award that duplicates the provisions or research goals of a R03 or R21 grant.

Individuals are NOT eligible to be K12 scholar candidates if they:

- Have simultaneously submitted or have an application pending peer review for any other federal career development award (e.g., K08, K23, CTSA KL2), or a research project grant (R01). However, individuals may concurrently submit an application for an AHRQ or NIH Small Grant (R03) or Exploratory/Developmental Grants (R21);
- Have simultaneously submitted or have an application pending peer review for any non-federal research grant, contract, or cooperative agreement over \$100,000 direct costs per year;
- Have been or are currently a PD/PI on any other federal mentored career development awards;
- Have been or are currently supported on another institutional K12 grant or KL2 (or similar grant);
- Have been or are currently a PD/PI on a federal research grant (such as R01, R29, P01) or subproject leaders on Program Project (P01) and Center Grants (P50); and/or
- Have been or are currently a PD/PI on peer-reviewed non-federal research grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements over \$100,000 direct costs per year.

**Please Note:** once the SPIRIT K12 Program Executive Steering Committee has identified all four scholars for Cohort II, the candidates must be approved by the AHRQ K12 program officer prior to making/finalizing any appointment to the grant. The purpose of the AHRQ-PCORI K12 Program is to train scholars to have the skills to support and lead efforts to apply patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR) methods and conduct PCOR research in a learning health system and to facilitate rapid implementation of evidence that will improve quality of care and patient outcomes. As such, the AHRQ K12 program officer must verify, for each selected SPIRIT K12 applicant, that both (a) the training/career development plan and (b) the proposed research project have a focus on patient-centered outcomes research and conducting research within a learning health system.

### **Application Requisites**

The following elements are required for the application:

- (1) SPIRIT K12 application front sheet (supplied as an interactive PDF form) for applicant identification and contact information, identification of the Primary Mentor of the proposed research project and two other professional references who will be providing Letters of Support, and statement of non-delinquency on federal debt
- (2) Current NIH format Biosketches of applicant and primary research mentor
- (3) Current CV, with educational background and work history not otherwise covered in the Biosketch
- (4) Other Support documentation for candidate and primary mentor
- (5) Short research proposal, utilizing NIH font and type point specifications as well as half-inch margins, and including no more than a half-page for Specific Aims and a maximum 3-page overview of the Research Strategy: Significance, Innovation, and Approach. The scholar's research proposal *must have a focus on patient-centered outcomes and conducting research within a learning health system*. If accepted into the SPIRIT K12 Program, each appointee will further refine and develop the research proposal in collaboration with his/her Scholarship Oversight Committee (SOC) and the Executive Steering Committee within the initial 6 months of the appointment period, and then proceed to project execution for the duration of the appointment period. SPIRIT K12-appointed scholars will be strongly encouraged to apply for independent research grant support (e.g., R01, R21, R03), as next-generation K12 projects, before the end of their final year of appointment to the program.
- (6) Individual Development Plan (IDP) and Career Goals. Each scholar must summarize his or her short-term (IDP covering the period of the K12 appointment period) and long-term (5–10 years

post SPIRIT K12 appointment) scholarship and career goals in the realm of learning health systems. The IDP must address self-mastery and application of the AHRQ-PCORI-endorsed LHS Researcher Core Competencies [Forrest, CB, et al., Development of the Learning Health System Researcher Core Competencies, HSR 2018;53(4, Part I):2615-2632], as a centerpiece of the SPIRIT K12 core curriculum, and how patient and other stakeholder engagement and working within a LHS will be pursued over the course of the appointment period. For the IDP, scholars may utilize MyIDP, a free, online resource at the American Association for the Advancement of Science/Science Careers web site. This interactive tool is designed specifically for scientists to help them understand their skills, values, and interests and how those align with potential career choices <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org>. This should also be a maximum of 3 pages.

- (7) Letter of Support from the primary research mentor on his/her institutional letterhead, in which he/she states a commitment to serve in that capacity for the full duration of the mentee's SPIRIT K12 appointment period (2 years).

Should you have any questions about the SPIRIT K12 career development agenda, please do not hesitate to contact either SPIRIT K12 Program Co-Director:

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