

HEALTH RESEARCH ALLIANCE MEMBERS MEETING

March 11-14, 2024



*The meeting will be held entirely online via Zoom.
Please register for individual sessions at the links below.*

March 11 | Monday

12:00 - 1:30pm ET
[Register here](#)

Welcome to the Members Meeting

Presenter

Maryrose Franko, PhD

Executive Director | Health Research Alliance

Partnering with Other Funders

This session will explore the intricacies of supporting research through effective partnerships. Through speakers and breakout discussion, we will showcase effective models—from ongoing funder collaboratives to one-off partnerships—and identify best practices and challenges. HRA members will come away from the session with insights and tips for exploring opportunities for collaboration.

Panelists will present real-life examples of successful collaborations that have contributed to advancing biomedical research. Gain practical tips on how to find and set up successful partnerships—from defining a shared vision for success, developing strategies for leveraging resources and expertise, and evolving partnerships over time.

Following the panel discussion, we invite you to participate in smaller breakout groups for a more in-depth exploration of the various partnership examples—and to brainstorm about HRA's possible role in supporting members seeking greater collaboration.

Moderator

Stephanie Albin, PhD

Science Program Officer, Neuroscience | The Kavli Foundation

Presenters

Catriona Manville, PhD

Director of Research Policy | Association of Medical Research Charities

Julia Miglets-Nelson, PhD

Senior Manager, Research Programs & Partnerships | American Brain Foundation

Maaïke Everts, PhD

Executive Director, Translational Therapeutics Accelerator (TRxA) | Critical Path Institute

Anne Gramiak, MPH, MSLOC

Senior Manager, Epilepsy Leadership Council and Partnerships | American Epilepsy Society

Heather Calderone, PhD

Director, Research & Grants | American Brain Tumor Association

(continued on next page)

12:00 – 1:00pm ET

[Register here](#)

Awardees choosing a career in industry – Can it advance funders’ missions?

This session will discuss the potential benefits of researchers choosing a career in industry over an academic career. Do funders consider this career choice a successful outcome, and recognize that it can be another equally valuable career path? If so, are there ways funders can facilitate this transition to more effectively advance the funder’s mission?

A former grantee will share personal experience in transitioning to industry and discuss the benefits of working in industry; plus highlighting the importance of organizations supporting academic researchers as they consider a transition to a career in industry.

Other HRA panelists will share ways their organizations support this career choice from their grantees. They will address how they continue to work with/engage grantees (or other stakeholders) that are/have transitioned to industry.

Moderator

Emily Stormoen

CEO | Arthritis National Research Foundation

Presenters

Lenny Dragone, PhD

Chief Medical Officer | Abata Therapeutics

Stacy Pirro, PhD

Director | Iridian Genomes

Angela Bowman, PhD

Science Advocacy Lead | Foundation Fighting Blindness

1:00 – 2:00pm ET

Break

2:00 – 3:00pm ET

[Register here](#)

Measures of Success

This session offers an interactive exploration of the multifaceted nature of success in the context of biomedical and health research funding. Recognizing that the definition of success is not one-size-fits-all, the session will delve into how various funders, ranging from disease-specific organizations to disease-agnostic entities and spanning the spectrum from private foundations to public charities, uniquely measure their achievements. For each definition of success comes a way to measure it and this session seeks to provide an interactive avenue for sharing and discussing tools and frameworks across the HRA membership.

Moderator

Kevin Sia, PhD

Program Officer | Doris Duke Foundation

Presenters

Kevin Sia, PhD

Program Officer | Doris Duke Foundation

Mackenzie Mensch, MHA

Assistant Director of Grantee Engagement | V Foundation

Diane Bovenkamp, PhD

Vice President of Scientific Affairs | BrightFocus Foundation

Mark Drew, PhD

Director of Drug Discovery & Development | Critical Path Institute

12:00 – 1:00pm ET

[Register here](#)

The Open Science Landscape: Context & Opportunities for Nonprofit Funders

Open Science is the principle and practice of making research products and processes available to all, which fosters collaborations, reproducibility, and equity. This session will explore the ways in which funders can implement open policies that complement those of federal agencies. The session will open with an overview of current federal requirements related to open science including [guidance from the Office of Science and Technology Policy to make federally funded research freely available without delay](#). In the second part of the session, we will hear from the Open Science Learning Community and learn more about the HRA community's needs as it pertains to open science. Lastly, organizers will match organizations into smaller break out groups to discuss challenges and solutions to developing, implementing, and monitoring compliance of open science policies.

Moderator

Megan Allen, PhD

Scientific Director | Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation

Presenters

Greg Tananbaum, MSc

Executive Director | Open Research Community Accelerator (ORCA)

Al Towers, PhD

Senior AD Medical and Scientific Relations | Alzheimer's Association

1:00 – 2:00pm ET

2:00 – 3:15pm ET

[Register here](#)

Break

Innovative Methods for Choosing Among Competing Grant Applications

Most HRA members fund grants through competitive applications processes. We must sort through the proposals and make decisions on how best to spend our available dollars to achieve the strategic goals of our organization. Most of us use some variation on the process of peer reviews to rank the meritorious proposals selected by the committee into a fundable slate. Some also use an additional interview process after peer review by the committee to finalize the application for funding support, or site-visit, which in recent years may be by video-conference.

However, many people are concerned that the review processes do not always support the best decisions: committees may devolve to the average, or there may be hidden or explicit biases, or the criteria used in our review processes may not actually be good predictors of successful outcomes and career advancement. There have been many efforts to improve grant-making decisions by implementing methods such as blinding peer reviews to identity top ranking applicants, including non-academic scientists in the review process, applying bias mitigation strategies, and using random review order, among others.

In this session, three HRA members will speak on their own experiences with innovative methods for grant selection and tell us how their experiments have worked out. The presentations will be followed by an Open Mic session.

Moderators

Kavita Bhalla, PhD

Director, Scientific Review | Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation

Kristen Mueller, PhD

Vice President, Autoimmune Arthritis Research | Arthritis Foundation

(continued on next page)

Presenters

Jessica Biddinger

National Senior Director, Research and Grants Administration | American Heart Association

Anne Hultgren, PhD

Executive Director | Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation

Chad Jackson, PhD

Senior Director, Preclinical Translational Research Program | Foundation Fighting Blindness