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Studentships further knowledge of patient-oriented research

Applications are now being accepted for Alberta SPOR Graduate Studentships in Patient Oriented Research, a program designed to help students further their knowledge, skills and competency in patient-oriented research. Students receive a one-year award of \$30,000 toward their health related thesis-based graduate project which demonstrates a patient-oriented approach. Recipients also take part in learning opportunities throughout the year and present their research at the Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit Summer Institute which takes place May 14-16, 2018, in Calgary. “The financial assistance I received through this program along with the amazing learning opportunities I received allowed me to be an ambassador for engaging patients and their caregivers in my research,” says Maoliosa Donald, 2016 studentship recipient. The deadline for applications is October 2, 2017. This is the third year of the program. To date, 23 students have received awards totalling \$600,000. [Learn more and apply](#) for Alberta SPOR Graduate Studentships in Patient-Oriented Research.

Priorities set for depression research

Albertans with lived experience of depression, those who care for them, and clinicians have had their say in setting the top 11 priorities for depression research. The Alberta Depression Research Priority Project, a collaboration between the Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit Patient Engagement Platform, the Addictions and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network and the Canadian Depression Research Intervention Network, received over 900 responses to a survey issued last fall. The survey asked for input on what was thought to be missing or unknown in depression research. 900 responses were received and distilled down to the top 11 research questions including “what are the long term physical implications of medication used for treating depression?” and “can diet and exercise affect the development of depression?” “Our hope is that these questions drive depression research. That researchers will seek to answer these questions knowing that they are important to people with lived experience of depression and that funders will focus on these areas of research because they are patient driven,” says Kelly Hartle, PhD, Research Associate at the University of Alberta and member of the project planning committee. [Learn more](#) about the 11 priorities for depression research and the Alberta Depression Research Priority Setting Project.

AbSPORU helps researchers advance patient-focused cancer care

For health researchers, letters of support, access to experts in patient engagement or knowledge translation and other resources are critical to advancing a research project. Recently the Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit assisted Dr. Michael J. Monument (Principal Investigator), Dr. Shannon Puloski and their team advance his research on the surgical management of metastatic bone disease (MBD). The focus of this research centers on matching patient expectations between surgical goals and patient expectations and bridging the gap between them.

Dr. Monument’s team received assistance from the AbSPORU Knowledge Translation, Patient Engagement and Consultation and Research Services Platforms who helped with obtaining a letter of support, end user engagement and implementation strategy

and patient-engagement plan and evaluation. “With AbSPORU support, we have connections to a network of services and access to expertise and resources from Consultation & Research Service Platform, Knowledge Translation Platform and Patient Engagement Platform to inform our project and accelerate our research” says Olesja Hazenbiller, MSc Research Coordinator, University of Calgary who is part of Dr. Monument’s research team. “We are excited to engage patients from the first research idea to its conclusion and thus explore a research question that matters to patients.” Researchers who are interested in learning more about the variety of Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit services are encouraged to [visit our website](#). If you would like to learn more about the MBD Project contact [Olesja Hazenbiller](#).