

2024 IMPACT REPORT

HEALTH RESEARCH ALLIANCE

A collaborative member organization of nonprofit research funders committed to maximizing the impact of biomedical research to improve human health.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear HRA Members,

What a year it has been! 2024 brought transitions for the Health Research Alliance. The most significant change was the retirement of long-time Executive Director, Maryrose Franko, and my start in the position in June 2024. Despite this adjustment, the HRA community continued to thrive without interruption thanks to our excellent Board of Directors, amazing staff and interns, and active members and volunteers. In this Impact Report, we highlight our 2024 Learning Communities and their Co-Chairs to recognize their efforts in keeping our alliance strong and at the forefront of nonprofit biomedical research funding.

One thing I have been consistently impressed with since coming onboard with HRA is the wide variety of programs and resources HRA has to offer. Every day is exciting thanks to our members' intellect, professional skills, vision, and drive to advance biomedical science. This community is not content with the status quo but consistently volunteers time and expertise to make HRA's resources useful, accessible, and up to date. This year, we have added trainings, professional development sessions, an incredible number of collaboration opportunities through Learning Community speakers and calls, real-time Listserv conversations and advice, CEO Roundtables, and in-person and virtual Members Meetings to the resources available to our 115+ member organizations.

In 2025, we will continue to offer all these benefits and will focus on continuing to increase the value of HRA membership. Over the next year, HRA will make updates to and debut an updated website with improved navigation and additional self-serve features for members. We will work to transform more of our critical conversations and collaborations into concrete resources such as fact sheets and toolkits that will be housed in an improved resource library. We will conduct the first full Members' Survey since 2021 to solicit your feedback on current programs and ideas for the future. These are just some of the exciting initiatives to come in 2025!

I look forward to another outstanding year for HRA and encourage you all to become even more involved in our many programs, activities, and resources.

CHRISTINE RIORDAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



CONVENING CONVERSATIONS

In 2024, the Health Research Alliance convened more than 40 virtual conversations, bringing together 1500+ attendees to discuss a wide range of topics that are important to nonprofit funders. In addition to these virtual conversations, HRA hosted multiple opportunities for members to gather in-person.

CONVENING ON BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

The [HRA Convening on Bullying and Harassment](#) on February 26, 2024 brought together key stakeholders from nonprofit and federal funding organizations, academia, and the policy advisory sector to explore ways in which funders can prevent and address inappropriate behaviors (including bullying, harassment, and discrimination), both independently and in partnership with other sectors. This convening was generously hosted by the [Doris Duke Foundation](#). The Misconduct & Ethics and Research Workforce & Early Career Development learning communities supported the planning of the convening.

NEW YORK REGIONAL MEETING

The [New York Stem Cell Foundation](#) hosted a regional HRA meeting on February 27, 2024, providing an opportunity for more than 30 HRA members to connect in-person. The event included an exciting panel on “Accelerating the Next Generation of Therapies” featuring perspectives from the biotech,

venture capital, and academic sectors to explore where the gaps and bottlenecks are in accelerating therapeutics.

2024 MEMBERS MEETINGS


Following recommendations from the 2023 Members Meeting Task Force to leverage virtual meetings to increase meeting accessibility, HRA’s [Spring 2024 Members Meeting](#) was entirely virtual! Our 15-person Program Committee organized an exciting meeting agenda and incorporated multiple methods by which virtual participants could engage with other attendees. Session topics included partnering with other funders, the impact of awardee career choice on funders’ missions, measuring success, open science, and innovative methods for choosing among competing grant applications.

The [Fall 2024 Members Meeting](#) was hosted in-person in Alexandria, VA, and online via Zoom. The 21 Program Committee volunteers organized a thought-provoking agenda with topics including career advancement and partnering with other entities to achieve lofty goals, as well as the impact of anti-DEI legislation and artificial intelligence on nonprofit funders. Thank you to the member organizations who generously sponsored this meeting: [Conquer Cancer](#), [the ASCO Foundation](#), [Foundation Fighting Blindness](#), [Melanoma Research Alliance](#), and [BrightFocus Foundation](#).


THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

HRA's Learning Communities are interest-based groups co-chaired by members of the HRA community. Each Learning Community meets virtually throughout the year to host open discussions, expert presentations, working sessions, and more. We are grateful to the volunteers who donate their time, energy, and expertise to chair these groups and attend group activities, and we're proud to highlight the communities' accomplishments in 2024!


Co-Chairs **AI & LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS**



Jen Hall, American Heart Association



Lee Nunley, American Federation for Aging Research




Ashok Srinivasan, Lipedema Foundation


2024 Accomplishments

- Hosted 3 interactive webinars focused on policies, guidelines, and current usage of AI in grant applications and review
- Partnered with the Fall Program Committee to support the 'AI in Grant Application & Management' session
- Hosted a webinar with guest speaker Dr. Michael Pencina from Coalition for Health AI


Co-Chairs **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**



Kavita Bhalla, Conquer Cancer



Zoë Fuchs, TSC Alliance




Lindsay Redman Rivera, Health Resources in Action


2024 Accomplishments

- Held 3 community calls focused on improving diversity in clinical research (May, June, and November 2024)
- Liaised with the Program Committee to support organization of the 'Impact of Anti-DEI Legislation on Nonprofit Funders' at the Fall Members Meeting


Co-Chairs **GRANTS ADMINISTRATION**



Orlando Green, Crohn's & Colitis Foundation



Christy Hudson, Pershing Square



Sonia McStay, Conquer Cancer

2024 Accomplishments

- Hosted 7 open mic webinars and meetings on grants administration topics of HRA member interest, with average attendance rate of >60% of those registered
- Conducted a Grants Management Software survey and shared results with the membership
- Hosted an informal meet and greet at the 2024 Fall Members' Meeting

Co-Chairs **MISCONDUCT & ETHICS**



Tammy Collins, Burroughs Wellcome Fund



Kara Coleman, V Foundation




Kim Lezak, Health Resources in Action

2024 Accomplishments

- Facilitated a convening with representatives from multiple sectors to explore ways in which funders can prevent and address inappropriate behaviors, including bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- Shared a draft Theory of Change model for discussion and feedback from the HRA community during an April 2024 call

Chair



Britta Magnuson,
Health Resources
in Action


OPEN SCIENCE

2024 Accomplishments


- Conducted a [survey of HRA members' open science policies](#) and presented findings at the Spring Members Meeting
- Hosted 2 community calls in partnership with the Open Research Community Accelerator (ORCA)
- Collaborated with ORCA to develop [template open science policy language](#) and guidance for use

*Interested in co-chairing?
Email Jenna Hicks to learn more! (jenna@healthra.org)*

Co-Chairs



Brent Dolezalek,
James S.
McDonnell
Foundation




Orna Ehrlich, Crohn's
& Colitis Foundation

PROGRAM EVALUATION


2024 Accomplishments

- Created an [Evaluation Toolbox](#) for HRA Members, which captures information and resources related to platform-based evaluation, survey-based evaluation, and other tools to facilitate evaluation
- Supported a "Measures of Success" survey as part of the HRA Spring 2024 Members Meeting
- Held 3 webinars during the year with an average of 30-50 attendees per session

Co-Chairs



Angela Dobes,
Crohn's & Colitis
Foundation



Elise Hoover,
Foundation for
Sarcoidosis
Research

REGISTRY & BIOREPOSITORY

2024 Accomplishments

- Held a productive [open mic](#) session where members shared common challenges and solutions, on topics such as data governance
- Co-hosted a [speaker from the NIH All of Us program](#) focusing on strategies to engage underrepresented populations in research
- Solicited detailed topic requests from attendees for future planning

Co-Chairs



Stefania Forner,
Alzheimer's
Association



Alycia Halladay,
Autism Science
Foundation




Anita Pepper, Jane
Coffin Childs Fund

RESEARCH WORKFORCE & EARLY CAREER DEVELOPMENT


2024 Accomplishments

- Held 2 community calls with high attendance and robust discussion ([Building Funding Programs that Create Community for Long Term Impact](#); [Early Career Researchers & Mentorship](#))
- Supported the planning process for the [2024 HRA Convening on Bullying and Harassment](#) in collaboration with the Misconduct & Ethics Community


Co-Chairs



Raeka Aiyar,
The New York
Stem Cell
Foundation



Maaiké
Everts,
Critical Path
Institute



Mary
O'Reilly,
Flinn
Foundation

THERAPEUTIC DEVELOPMENT

2024 Accomplishments

- Re-energized the community with the introduction of 2 new co-chairs and hosting an initial kickoff call, gathering input and excitement from our community members
- Planned and hosted a session during the Fall HRA Members Meeting: '[Enhancing the Role of Nonprofits in Accelerating Therapeutic Development](#)'

Engaging with HRA's Learning Communities as a co-chair or a participant is a wonderful strategy for connecting with other members' of the HRA community. Here are some ways that Learning Community participation has had an impact on our members, in the words of community co-chairs. We invite all of you to participate in HRA's Learning Communities and reap the benefits!

"I volunteered to co-chair because I see great potential in using AI to streamline grant-making operations, especially in nonprofit settings where staff resources are often stretched thin. I'm particularly interested in exploring how we can structure grants that empower researchers to leverage cutting-edge AI and large language models (LLMs) to accelerate progress in scientific research."



Lee Nunley,
American Federation
for Aging Research

"The learning community has provided me with the opportunity to network and learn from peers across the HRA network, which adds significant value to my work as VP Research at the Flinn Foundation."



Mary O'Reilly, Flinn
Foundation

"The Ethics and Misconduct Community has provided resources to our organization and others regarding how we can promote research environments free of bullying and harassment. I am eager to see how this community can continue to engage with funders and other sectors to push for progress."



Kim Lezak, Health
Resources in Action

"Being a Co-chair of the Grants Administration Community (GAC) has greatly enhanced my relationship with and experience as a member of the HRA Community. Not only have I been able to make new and deeper connections with other HRA members through the GAC activities, but I have been able to actively continue to learn more about my field and the best practices of other organizations. These learnings and relationships have benefitted me both personally and professionally, as well as the organizations that I support."



Christy Hudson,
Pershing Square

"It has been invaluable to my organization, the Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research, to be able to access the insights of a community of peers experiencing similar challenges and who are piloting solutions. Registry and biorepository programs have many similarities in common despite the variety of diseases involved, and learning from each other has helped me to better serve FSR's patient community and return value for their participation."



Elise Hoover,
Foundation for
Sarcoidosis Research

"It is an honor to be one of the co-chairs for the Research Workforce and Early Career Development Community for HRA. Together, we strive to foster discussion about an environment where emerging researchers are supported, mentored, and empowered by their funders to shape the future of health research, ensuring that innovation and excellence thrive at every stage of their careers."



Alycia Halladay,
Autism Science
Foundation

ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS

HRA aims to enhance the effectiveness of our member organizations by providing resources, programming, and opportunities for community connection. We're proud to highlight three ways in which HRA delivered on this goal of enhancing effectiveness in 2024!

BIAS MITIGATION TRAINING RESOURCES

HRA has expanded the suite of [Bias Mitigation in Peer Review Training resources](#) to include trainings in multiple formats for varied audiences. In 2024, a [Bias Mitigation Training for Reviewers](#) was added to complement the [existing training for Program Staff](#). This reviewer training is publicly available to maximize ease of access for scientific reviewers. In addition to the asynchronous eLearning versions of the trainings, both trainings are now available as downloadable facilitator toolkits. The toolkits include a slide deck containing visuals, case study videos, and a facilitator script; handouts; and a detailed facilitator guide with supplemental discussion activities. Members can use these materials as is or customize them to suit your needs!

Bias Mitigation Training Resources

Multiple versions are available!

Asynchronous

Facilitator Toolkit

Program Staff



Reviewers



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

HRA facilitated multiple professional development events to enhance the professional skills and career advancement of individual HRA members. In 2024, HRA hosted three "Leading Up, Down, and Across" workshops facilitated by Molly Grisham, during which 100+ HRA members explored how to navigate influence across all levels of a team hierarchy. The Fall Members Meeting program included a session on "[Career Advancement: Aligning Passion with Prosperity](#)," during which speaker Shannon Bowen presented actionable strategies for career growth that integrate one's values and talents.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION

HRA organized several opportunities to connect with like-minded community members in 2024, both virtually and in-person. The [Peer Circles program](#) continued this year, with the third cohort kicking off in Fall 2024. The Peer Circles program introduces individuals with similar career roles from different HRA member organizations, who then meet monthly for the duration of the program to discuss shared interests, work challenges, and goals. HRA also organized opportunities for in-person connection, including two networking events associated with the Fall 2024 Members Meeting and regional meetings (New York in February, and an informal meetup in San Diego in April at AACR).

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2025

SAVE THE DATE: SPRING 2025 MEMBERS MEETING

HRA will hold one virtual and one hybrid Members Meeting in 2025. The Spring Members Meeting will be all-virtual! We will host multiple sessions during the **week of March 10, 2025**, spread out over several days to minimize Zoom fatigue. The Fall 2025 meeting will be hybrid (in-person, and live streamed virtually) with the location to be determined. ***Is your organization interested in donating a host site for the Fall 2025 HRA Members Meeting? Contact Christine Riordan at christine@healthra.org***

SELECT PRIORITIES FOR 2025

- Completing an HRA website update and improvements to functionality
- Improving Learning Community goal-setting and metrics
- Creating tangible resources for members following collaborative opportunities
- Conducting a Member Survey to collect perceptions of current programs and ideas for the future
- Beginning to evaluate the outcomes from the 2021 Strategic Plan
- Assessing the value of HRA platforms such as HRA Analyzer and HRA Open

THANK YOU!

We are grateful for support provided by member organizations above and beyond dues.



Thank you to those who serve on the Board of Directors and as learning community co-chairs.

46 EVENTS

Including Learning Community calls, Members Meetings, Regional Meetings, and webinars.

12 NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome the new members that joined HRA in 2024: American Academy for Sleep Medicine Foundation, American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation, American Parkinson Disease Association, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, Foundation for the National Institutes of Health, Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research, Global Lyme Alliance, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer, National Alopecia Areata Foundation, Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation, Pediatric Dermatology Research Alliance

1500+ ATTENDEES

Across Learning Community calls, HRA webinars, CEO Roundtables, Members Meetings, and Regional Meetings in 2024. Join us for an event in 2025!