

HEALTH RESEARCH ALLIANCE MEMBERS MEETING

March 10-13, 2025



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

March 10 | Monday

12:00 – 1:30pm ET
[Register here](#)

Welcome to the Members Meeting

Speaker

Christine Riordan, PhD

Executive Director | Health Research Alliance

Funder Initiatives to Foster Investigator and Community Research Partnerships

This session will provide lessons learned from the development of funding initiatives to promote and support investigator and community partnerships. Speakers will discuss specific tips for developing funding opportunities, novel programmatic elements, how to foster equal and mutually beneficial partnerships, and where feasible, the results of the partnerships. The session will demonstrate patient/community-driven organization value to institutions, gather a take-away tool kit for best practices and resources for partnership, and provide community perspectives on what communities need from funders and academic institutions.

Moderator

Amber Haley, PhD, MPH

Associate Director, Systems Comparative Clinical Effectiveness Research, PCORI

Speakers

Stefânia Forner, PhD

Director, Medical & Scientific Relations | Alzheimer's Association

Shireen Javandel

Assistant Director for Operations & Impact | Global Brain Health Institute, UC San Francisco

Heather Caine

National Director, Research and Grants Administration | American Heart Association

Lisa Puglisi, MD

Associate Professor of Medicine, Yale University

William Basel

Vice President of Program Strategy and Impact, JustLeadershipUSA

Kim Lezak, PhD

Managing Director of Biomedical Research Grantmaking | Health Resources in Action

1:30 – 3:00pm ET

Break

(agenda continues on next page)

3:00 – 4:00pm ET

[Register here](#)

Please note: due to the nature of this topic, the recording of this session will not be posted. Instead, a written summary of the session will be posted as a members-only download.

Navigating Change: Preparing for Policy Shifts and Their Impact on Research Funding

Changes that result from new administrations present an opportunity to assess, strengthen, or rethink approaches in support of your organization's mission. The impact of political transitions on research funding, and the entire research enterprise, as well as the regulatory environment can be complex. However, with historical trends and lessons to draw from, research funding organizations can better prepare themselves to reinforce their existing strategies or rethink their approaches. This session will use a historical perspective to inform nonprofits on the roles they can play amidst changes in federal policies and priorities. Attendees will gain insights into how changes in federal administration can affect federal funding priorities, analyze regulatory shifts and any changes in the public perception/trust of science.

Moderators

David Leyden, MPA, CRA

Senior Director, Finance and Administration, SFARI, Neuroscience, and Informatics | Simons Foundation

Kevin Sia, PhD

Program Officer for Medical Research | Doris Duke Foundation

Speakers

Aaron Blumberg

Partner | Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy, LLP

Ellie Dehoney

Senior Vice President of Policy and Advocacy | Research!America

Joshua Gordon, MD, PhD

Former NIMH Director, Chair of the Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, Executive Director of the New York State Psychiatric Institute, and Psychiatrist-in-Chief at New York-Presbyterian Hospital-Columbia University Irving Medical Center

Vince Sampson

Special Counsel | Cooley LLP

March 11 | Tuesday

2:00 – 3:00pm ET

[Register here](#)

Professional Development in the Nonprofit Sphere: How to Advance and Grow in Your Position

Engage with other HRA members and learn from your peers strategies for moving up in your organization! This session will feature panelists at various career stages and different professional backgrounds such as HR representatives and government officials. In this session, we plan to discuss how you can navigate the promotion ladder without having a scientific background, how to help support the professional growth of those working on your team, and how to transition from the lab to grants management administration.

Moderator

Jennifer Chang, PhD

Science Manager | American Brain Tumor Association

Speakers

Kara Coleman, PhD

Vice President of Grants Administration | The V Foundation for Cancer Research

Mary McGowan, MA

CEO | Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research

Linda Sikora, PHR, SHRM-CP

Senior Director, Human Resources | American Brain Tumor Association

Shawna Strickland, PhD, CAE, RRT

Associate Executive Director – Programs | American Epilepsy Society

3:00 – 3:30pm ET

Break

3:30 – 4:30pm ET

[Register here](#)

Learning Community Open House

All members are invited to join HRA for this informal session to hear about HRA's learning communities and their goals, meet the community co-chairs and other community members, and discuss what is in store for these groups in 2025. We'll open the session with a quick overview of [HRA's 9 learning communities](#), and then invite attendees to discuss their ideas and questions with community co-chairs and other community members in Zoom breakout rooms. This session is designed to provide space for discussion and networking; your active participation is encouraged!

March 12 | Wednesday

12:00 – 1:00pm ET

[Register here](#)

The Translational Research Pipeline: Strategies for Funders to Facilitate Bench-to-Bedside Research

Many non-profit organizations fund biomedical research that ultimately aims to improve human health. This session will provide an overview of the translational science pipeline and explore ways in which non-profit funders can support and facilitate the translation of basic science research into clinical application.

Moderator

Angela McCarty

Associate Research & Grant Administrator | American Heart Association

Speakers

David Groppe, PhD

Clinical Data Scientist | Persyst Development Corporation

Maya Bader, PhD

Director of Research | Lupus Research Alliance

Zimle Kurlawala, MD, PhD

Senior Scientific Portfolio Manager, Translational Research | Michael J. Fox Foundation

Arjan Quist, PhD

Executive Director of Innovation Management, Office of Innovation + New Ventures, Northwestern University

March 13 | Thursday

12:00 – 1:00pm ET

[Register here](#)

The Potential for AI in Discovery Science

Artificial Intelligence (AI), including powerful large language models (LLMs), is reshaping how scientific research is conducted. From generating insights through data analysis to assisting in the identification of research questions, AI is becoming an essential tool for discovery science. This session will explore the transformative potential of AI and highlight how it accelerates the pace of scientific discovery. Our panelists will discuss real-world applications of AI, illustrating how these tools go beyond traditional methods to support hypothesis generation, refine experimental design, and uncover patterns hidden within massive datasets. Join us to learn how AI is not only enhancing discovery but also paving the way toward tangible outcomes, such as improved diagnostics, innovative treatments, and ultimately, cures for diseases.

Moderator

Ashok Srinivasan, PhD

Chief Scientific Officer | Lipedema Foundation

Speakers

Andrew White, PhD

Co-Founder and Head of Science | Future House

Cathy Higgins, PhD

Senior Vice President, Science Programs | Stand Up To Cancer