



**O'Brien Institute  
for Public Health**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY**



# **Advancing public health through research excellence:**

**Metrics report 2022**

Table of contents

Message from the directors ..... p. 3

Story of success: population health ..... p. 4

External member awards ..... p. 5, 6

Research report

    Publications and research funding ..... p. 7

Story of success: better health care ..... p. 8

Operational excellence

    Internal peer review ..... p. 9

    Catalyst funding and post-doctoral awards ..... p. 10

    Member recognition ..... p. 11

A trusted source of knowledge to drive societal change ..... p. 12, 13

Story of success: thought leadership ..... p. 14

Financial statement..... p. 15

## Message from the directors

Communities world-wide spent much of 2022 adjusting to 'the new normal', with the field of public health among the most changed by the pandemic. We are pleased to report on the continuing dedication, academic success, and societal impact of the impressive health systems and population health researchers of the O'Brien Institute for Public Health, during 2022.

This report provides a brief update between our [Biennial report – 2020 and 2021](#) and what will be a more in-depth research impact assessment in 2024. Our report comes at a critical inflection point in the Institute's history: the transition from Dr. Tom Stelfox to a third Scientific Director.

Under Dr. Stelfox's guidance, we began to operationalize the Institute's [first strategic plan](#) in 2022, and progress in the mission to *advance public health through research excellence*. The most notable outputs and outcomes of the plan are highlighted in this document, and we are confident that such successes will continue, thanks to continuity among the Associate Scientific Directors, the Administrative Director, the Institute's devoted staff and Strategic Advisory Board, and the inspirational support of the Institute's naming donors, Gail and David O'Brien.

Thank you for your interest in the Institute. For more details, please go to our [website](#) or join us on [Twitter](#).



**Tom Stelfox, MD, PhD**  
Scientific Director  
O'Brien Institute for Public Health



**Kirsten Fiest, PhD**  
Associate Scientific Director -  
Health Systems  
O'Brien Institute for Public Health



**Jamie Day, PhD**  
Administrative Director  
O'Brien Institute for Public Health



**Katrina Milaney, PhD**  
Associate Scientific Director -  
Population Health  
O'Brien Institute for Public Health

## Improving health equity and the conditions that determine health

### Story of success: population health

The O'Brien Institute has made significant strides in promoting health equity through various initiatives and partnerships with government and community agencies.

The Institute established a Health Equity Hub that will serve as a platform for collaboration among researchers, government, and community agencies to develop innovative changes to policy and practice. In 2022, Hub researchers worked to develop an accountability framework with metrics, outputs and outcomes to quantify public health challenges that can only be solved through a focus on health equity.

In 2022, the O'Brien Institute was instrumental in recruiting a leading scholar in anti-racism and health equity. The research program of Dr. Bukola Salami focuses on immigrant wellbeing and the health of Black youth. Institute member, Dr. Pamela Roach was awarded a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Health Systems Safety. Dr. Roach is developing culturally appropriate services for Indigenous people living with dementia.

O'Brien Institute members worked with the Government of Alberta to finalize three projects to design and implement housing programs for people with complex health issues. All three projects showed important improvements in health, housing, and social outcomes. One of the projects, focused on providing housing for high-risk youth, has already received long-term funding from the tri-council Networks of Centres of Excellence program and Mitacs.



The O'Brien Institute received a significant donation to lead a national transformation project aimed at supporting emergency shelters across Canada to become housing-focused. This initiative aims to prevent homelessness on a large scale by shifting emergency shelters from crisis mode to becoming the primary portal for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness to enter the housing sector quickly.

## A year of achievement and recognition

In 2022, O'Brien Institute members continued to be recognized nationally and internationally for advancing public health through research excellence. Some of the notable awards from 2022 include:

### Order of Canada



**Dr. Michael Hill**

### Royal Society of Canada College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists



**Dr. Fiona Clement**

### Canadian Academy of Health Sciences Fellows



**Dr.  
Stephen  
Freedman**



**Dr.  
Jayna  
Holroyd-  
Leduc**



**Dr.  
Eddy  
Lang**

## Medical and scientific awards

<b>Dr. Sofia Ahmed</b>	Senior Investigator Award, Hypertension Canada
<b>Dr. Sonia Butalia</b>	Young Investigator Award, Diabetes Canada
<b>Dr. John Conly</b>	Frederic Newton Gisborne Starr Award, Canadian Medical Association
<b>Dr. Christine Friedenreich</b>	Rosalind E. Franklin Award for Women in Science, National Cancer Institute
<b>Dr. Aravind Ganesh</b>	Panmure House Prize, Panmure House
<b>Dr. Sumantra 'Monty' Ghosh</b>	Early Career Leadership (Professional Practice & Patient Care), Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
<b>Dr. Gilaad Kaplan</b>	Killam Annual Professorship
<b>Dr. Carly McMorris</b>	Killam Emerging Research Leader Award
<b>Dr. Amy Metcalfe</b>	Joe Doupe Young Investigator Award, Canadian Society for Clinical Investigation
<b>Dr. Christopher Naugler</b>	Leadership in Patient Safety & Quality Assurance Award, Canadian Association of Pathologists
<b>Dr. David Nicholas</b>	Killam Annual Professorship
<b>Dr. Dana Olstad</b>	Early Career Researcher Partnership, Canadian Nutrition Society
<b>Dr. Kannin Osei-Tutu</b>	Calgary Black Achievement Award for Medicine and Health, Calgary Black Chambers
<b>Dr. Shannon Ruzyski</b>	Award for Young Leaders (Early Career), Canadian Medical Association
<b>Dr. Suzanne Tough</b>	Killam Research Excellence Award
<b>Dr. Christine Walsh</b>	Killam Graduate Supervision and Mentorship Award
<b>Dr. Samuel Wiebe</b>	Wilder Penfield Gold Medal Award, Canadian League Against Epilepsy

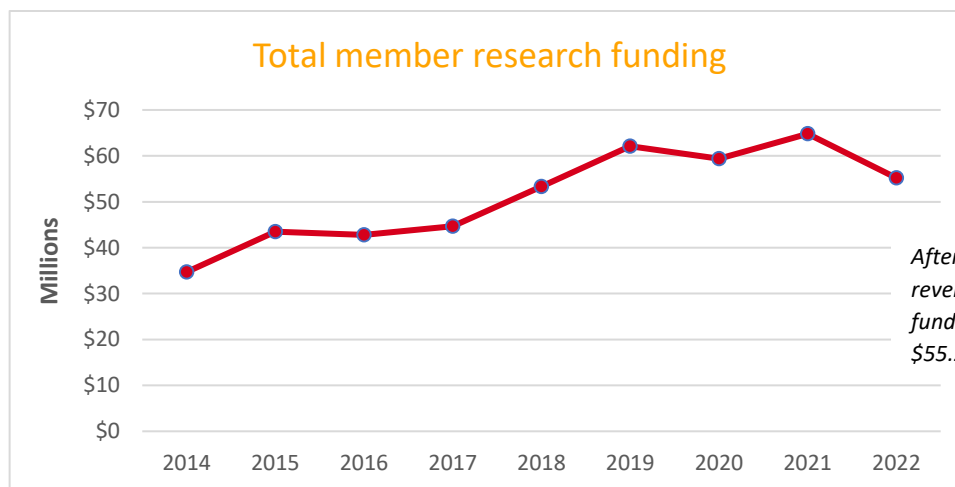
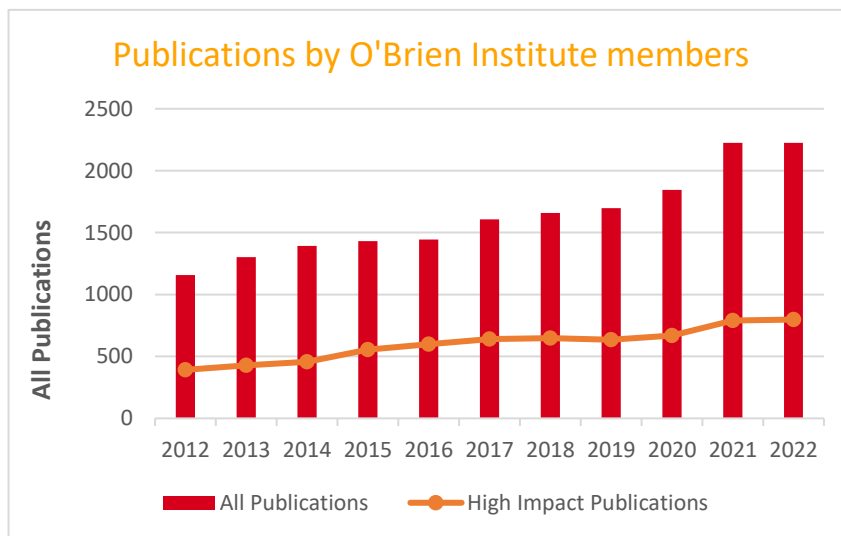
## Service awards

<b>Dr. Aleem Bharwani</b>	Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal, Government of Alberta
<b>Dr. Rachel Ellaway</b>	Meredith Marks Mentorship Award, Memorial University
<b>Dr. Gabriel Fabreau</b>	Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal, Government of Alberta
<b>Dr. Jim Kellner</b>	Distinguished Service Award, Alberta Medical Association
<b>Dr. Jane Lemaire</b>	Dr. Léo-Paul Landry Medal of Service, Canadian Medical Association
<b>Dr. Alexander Leung</b>	Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal, Government of Alberta
<b>Dr. Zack Marshall</b>	The Farah Jamal Award, Campbell Collaboration
<b>Dr. Ann Toohey</b>	Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal, Government of Alberta

## Research excellence

In 2022, the volume and quality of research outputs from O'Brien Institute for Public Health members remained high, as indicated by peer-reviewed research publications and external research funding.

*Four out of every 10 publications by Institute members were published in the top 10% of journals, as defined by Elsevier's SciVal.*



*After the record-breaking level of research revenue received by members in 2021, total funding for 2022 was still an impressive \$55.2 million.*

## Transforming health care through research excellence

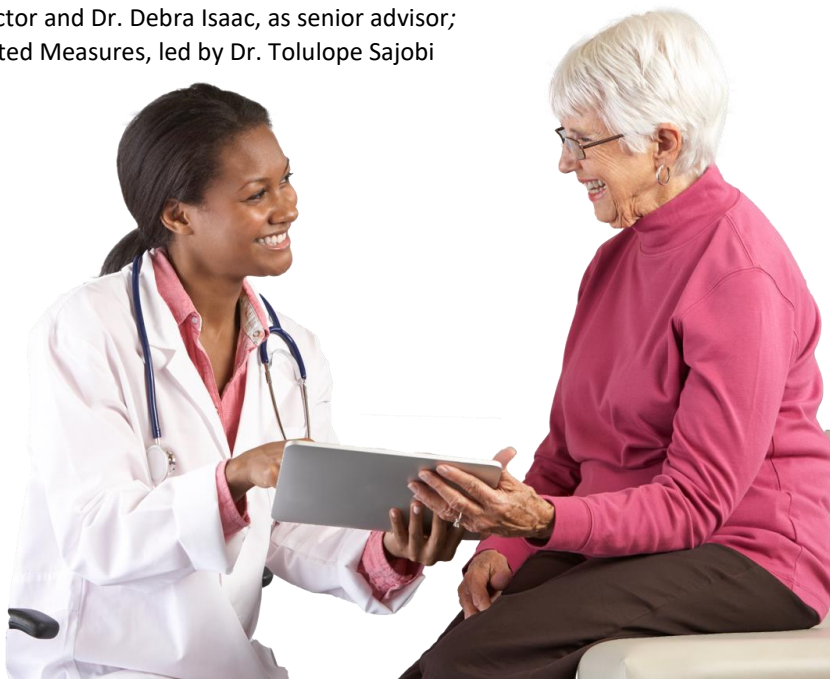
### Story of success: better health care

In 2022, the W21C Research and Innovation Centre at the O'Brien Institute compiled an impressive application for the Alberta Major Innovation Fund competition. The application included 10 post-secondary institutions, seven academic-based programs, one Indigenous community, two health system organizations, 19 non-profit organizations, 21 industry partners, and a team of 47 members. We anticipate the results for the \$6,336,500 (\$22,085,609 total including matching) funding opportunity, which will be released in spring 2023.

The recruitment process was launched for a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Digital Health through the Department of Community Health Sciences and the O'Brien Institute, along with a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Data Integration & Information Visualization in Digital Health through the Department of Computer Science and the W21C.

In 2022, the Institute welcomed three new subgroups working to transform health care:

- the Sex, Gender and Women's Health Research Unit, led by Dr. Erin Brennand;
- the Transplant Wellness Program, led by Dr. Stefan Mustata, as the medical director, Dr. Kelly Burak, as Scientific Director and Dr. Debra Isaac, as senior advisor;
- and the Group for Patient-Reported Measures, led by Dr. Tolulope Sajobi and Dr. Samuel Wiebe.

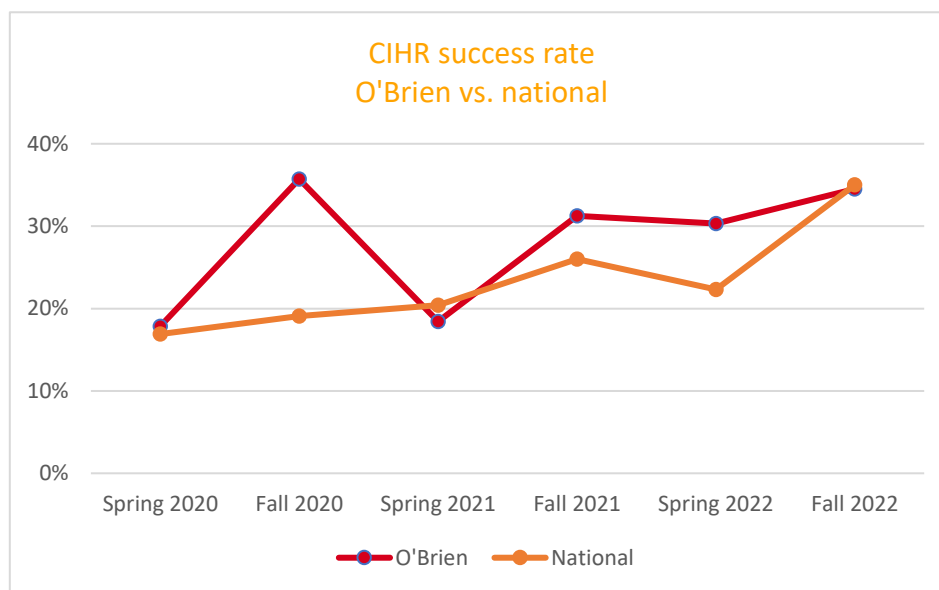




## Optimizing member programs and services

### Internal peer review

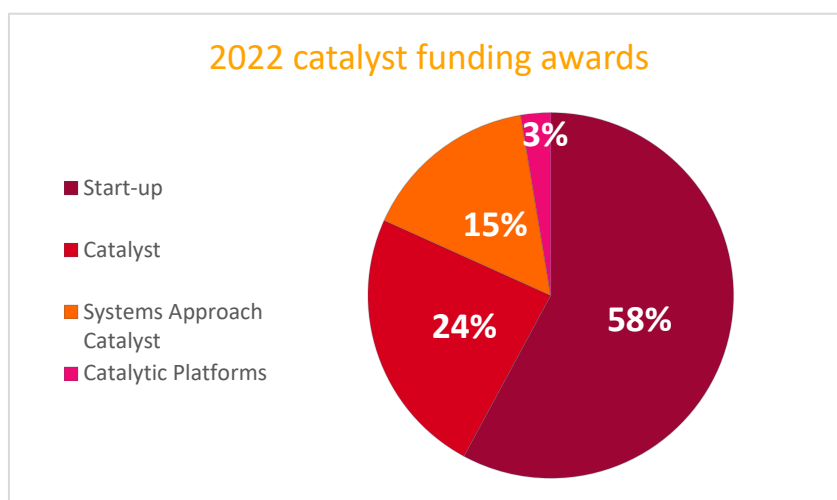
Internal Peer Review (IPR) programs continue to be the Institute's most valued support system for members developing research programs, planning projects, and preparing external funding applications. In 2022, 36 members used one or more of the IPR programs, and 72 members shared their expertise as peer reviewers.



*In most CIHR competitions, O'Brien members are more successful than their national counterparts, and those who use IPR have a higher success rate than those who do not.*

## Catalyst funding

Small financial awards are made to catalyze early stages of research projects and platforms that will launch promising new programs or strategic capacity within the membership. Previous assessments of return on investment from these awards have demonstrated ten-fold leveraging. In 2022, the Catalyst program was revitalized and relaunched to align with the areas of focus identified in the O'Brien Institute's 2022-2027 strategic plan. The O'Brien Institute administered more than \$50,000 of funding to help members catalyze research projects, and to create a new Catalytic Platform. In addition, the Institute manages philanthropic funding dedicated to a Systems Approach (toward addressing social vulnerability), and Catalyst Awards from that source increased the total funding allocation to over \$80,000.



Similarly, start-up awards are offered to newly recruited, often early-career investigators, to help launch their programs of research. The O'Brien Institute often partners with faculties, departments, divisions, and other research stakeholders to create a meaningful funding package, and in 2022, \$110,000 was allocated to start-up awards for three new faculty members.

## Post-doctoral awards

The O'Brien Institute is dedicated to building research capacity by providing support for post-doctoral scholars. In 2022, the Institute awarded four post-doctoral awards valued at \$25,000 each, spanning a breadth of topics. These trainees have since earned competitive national awards including the Banting Fellowship, the Health System Impact Fellowship, and a CIHR Fellowship, bringing in over \$400,000 in salary support.

## Member recognition

The 2022 O'Brien Institute Awards were presented to members who are advancing public health through research excellence at various stages of their careers.

The winners are:



**Dr. Nauzer Forbes,**  
The O'Brien Institute  
Emerging Research  
Leader Award



**Dr. Tolulope Sajobi,**  
The O'Brien Institute  
Mid-Career Research  
Leader Award



**Dr. Irene Ma,**  
The O'Brien Institute  
Research Excellence  
Award



**Dr. Lara Nixon,**  
The O'Brien Institute  
Societal Impact Award



**Dr. Ronald Sigal,**  
The Lynn McIntyre  
Outstanding Service  
Award

## A trusted source of knowledge to drive societal change

In 2022, **O'Brien Institute members appeared in more than 700 news stories** — amplifying the impact of their work and informing public discourse on critical public health issues.

### THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

PMN Politics / PMN News

**Canada's trust divide is growing, and that could spell bad news for the future**

**NATIONAL POST**



Dr. Alex Bierman, co-author

### POPULATION HEALTH

**TIME**

**These Environmental Factors Increase the Risk of IBD**

"Following World War II, we've seen a rapid rise in IBD incidence throughout the developed world," says Dr. Gilaad Kaplan, a professor and gastroenterologist at the University of Calgary in Canada.



**NEWS**

**HEALTH SYSTEMS**

**Alberta's ambulance response times have worsened from the start of the pandemic, data shows**

'What this data shows is that these aren't just anecdotes,' health policy professor Dr. Lorian Hardcastle

# COMMUNITY EVENTS & SEMINARS

EVENTS &  
SEMINARS  
HOSTED:  
**23**



TOTAL  
ATTENDEES:  
**1504**



IN-PERSON  
ATTENDEES:  
**577**



REMOTE  
ATTENDEES:  
**927**



In 2022, the O'Brien Institute fostered meaningful connections and opportunities for knowledge exchange through engaging events and seminars. Highlights included a national health system sustainability forum hosted by the Centre for Health Policy on June 26, and the annual members forum on October 11 which explored social innovation for public health.

The Institute also worked with the Department of Community Health Sciences to re-imagine and re-format the seminar series to better align with audience needs.



*A panel discussion on social innovation at the annual O'Brien Institute Members Forum on Oct. 11, 2022.*

## Making health care across Canada more sustainable

### Story of success: thought leadership

Seizing an opportunity to engage researchers and health-policy decision-makers to help address a crucial need for health care reform, the O'Brien Institute officially launched the Centre for Health Policy in the summer of 2022.

Under consideration since 2016, the Centre for Health Policy actively identifies strategies to advance evidence-informed decision-making for health in all policies. The new centre's first major project, the Health System Sustainability Initiative (HSSI), serves as the backbone of the collaborative centre. Driven by research and engagement, the HSSI seeks to achieve health system reform with a focus on improving population health, value for money, and patient and provider experiences.

In 2022, the Centre for Health Policy also launched a Health Policy Trials Unit (HPTU) to help close the gap between evidence and public health policies. The HPTU was funded as part of the pan-Canadian Accelerating Clinical Trials (ACT) Canada Consortium. The goal of ACT Canada is to create a new platform to strengthen co-ordination between domestic and international clinical trial networks and units. Led by researchers from McMaster and McGill University, ACT Canada was awarded \$39 million for three years from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to advance equitable access to, build capacity in, and improve the impact of clinical trials.



*Attendees at the Centre for Health Policy forum on June 26, 2022.*

In 2023, the Centre for Health Policy will continue to build relationships with policymakers locally, provincially and nationally.

This critical work in health policy will continue to enable the O'Brien Institute to bridge the gap between research and impact, ultimately making tangible improvements to health outcomes for Canadians.

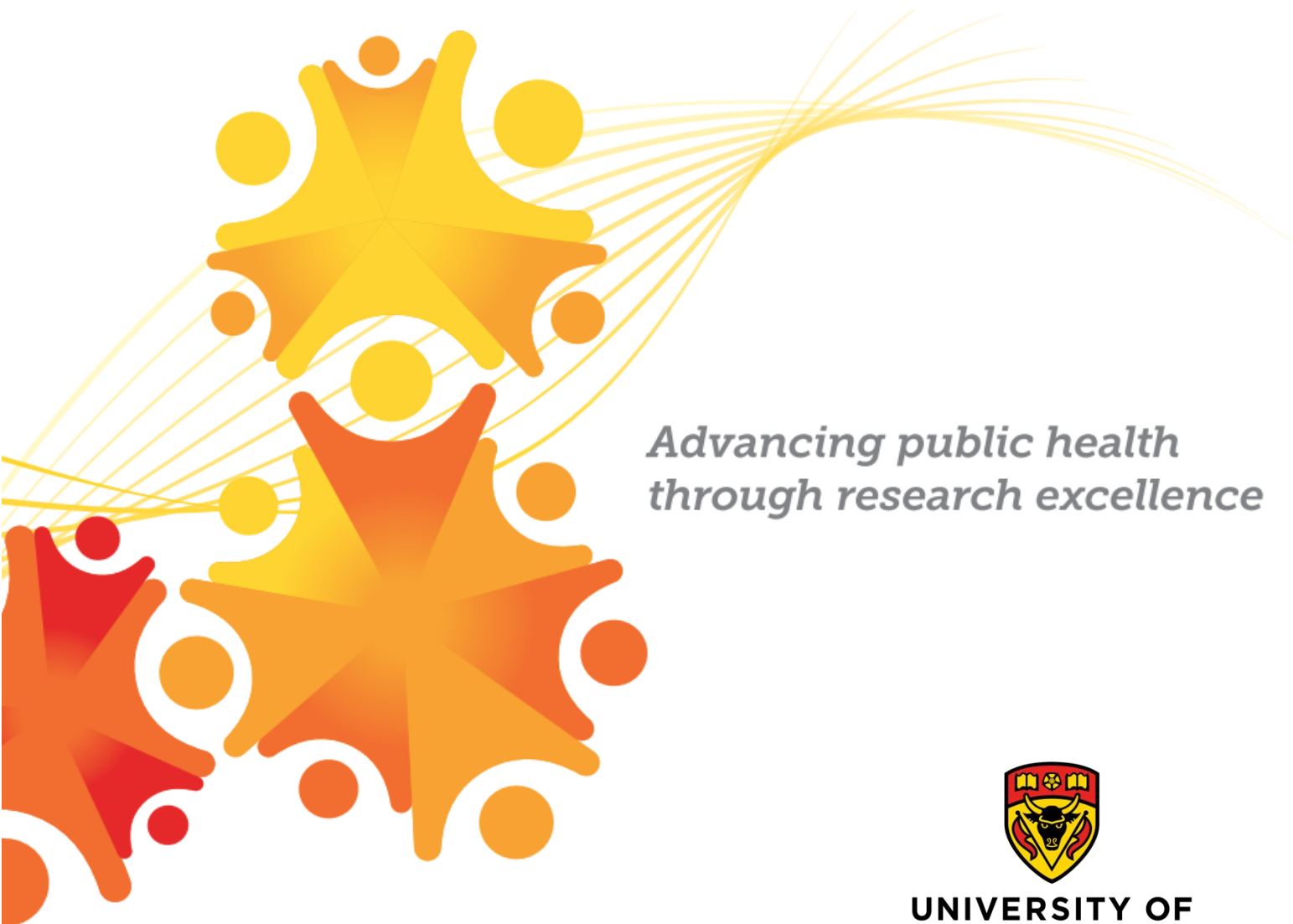
## Financial statement

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS		April 2022 – March 2023
<b>Revenue</b>		
O'Brien Institute Endowment Interest		\$246,800
Giving Day Donations		\$52,921
Other Donations		\$5,000
Salary Recovery		\$40,000
Other		\$7,378
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>\$352,099</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Research allocations		
Catalyst awards		\$26,128
Start-up awards		\$160,000
Fellowships		\$88,541
Knowledge engagement events and sponsorships		\$6,626
Support team salaries and stipends, general operating expenses		\$465,650
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$746,945</b>

*A summary of the 2022/23 fiscal year for the O'Brien Institute within its major categories of expenditures.*



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