

University
of Windsor



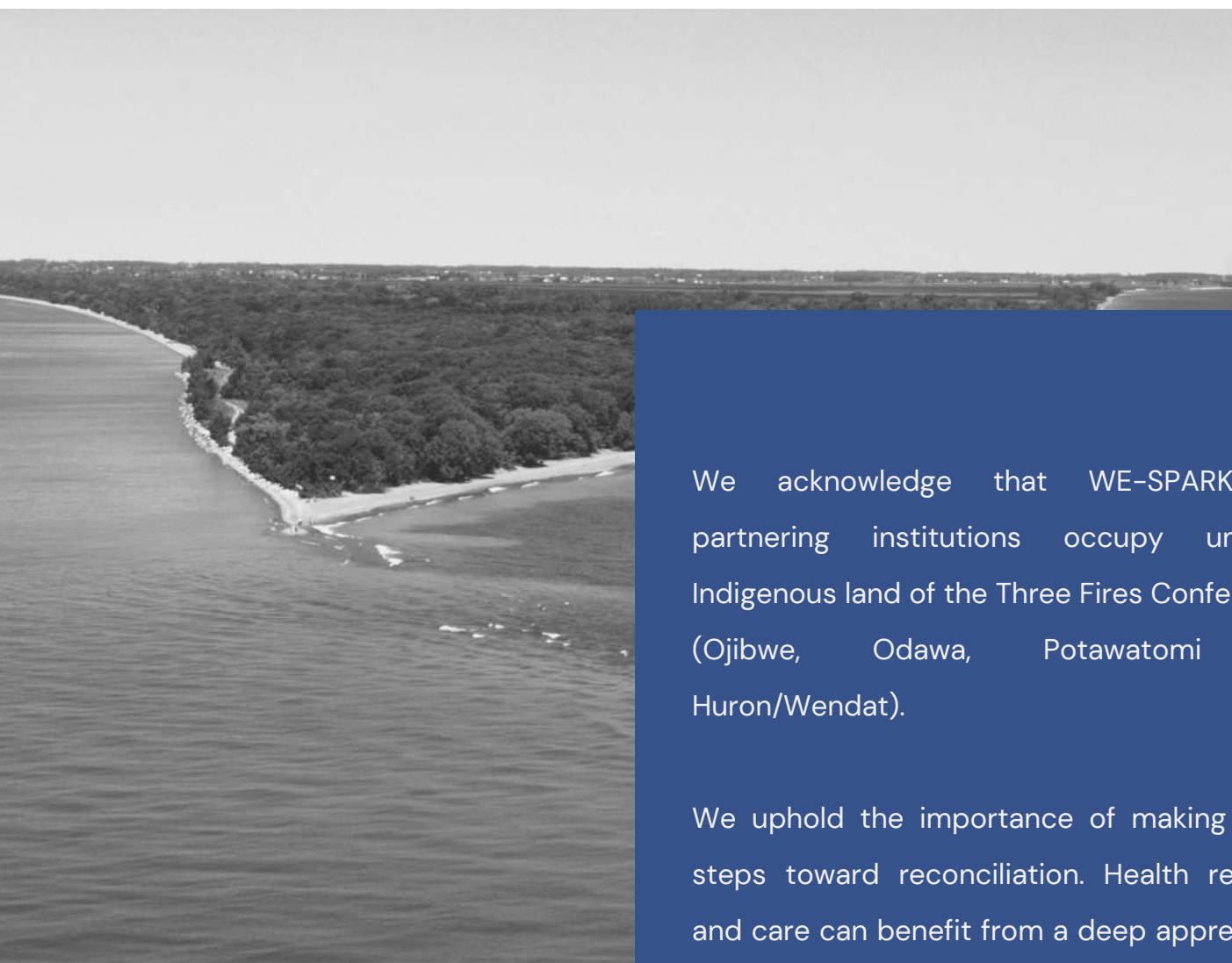
ST. CLAIR
COLLEGE



HÔTEL-DIEU GRACE
HÉLÈNE HEALTHCARE 1886



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT



We acknowledge that WE-SPARK and partnering institutions occupy unceded Indigenous land of the Three Fires Confederacy (Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi and Huron/Wendat).

We uphold the importance of making active steps toward reconciliation. Health research and care can benefit from a deep appreciation of the past and present healing practises of Indigenous people. There is urgency for health research, care and training to meet the needs of Indigenous communities in Canada.

ABOUT WE-SPARK



Igniting Discovery, Living Better

WE-SPARK Health Institute is supported by an innovative partnership between the University of Windsor and Erie Shores HealthCare, Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare, St. Clair College, and Windsor Regional Hospital that brings together health research strengths, expertise, and infrastructure from across the Windsor-Essex region of Ontario, Canada.

What We Do

Enhance the health, well-being and care of people through transformative research and knowledge translation. We accomplish this by:

- accelerating research activities and facilitating connections
- building critical mass of health researchers
- providing local research funding opportunities
- offering research workshops, services, and consultations
- engaging student volunteers
- hosting events to engage community members in research
- establishing infrastructure capacity

Budget and Funding

The WE-SPARK office and operating budget is funded by the University of Windsor, with yearly contributions from partner institutions. The WE-SPARK grants program is also supported by donations from organizations and individual community members.

WHY LOCAL RESEARCH MATTERS



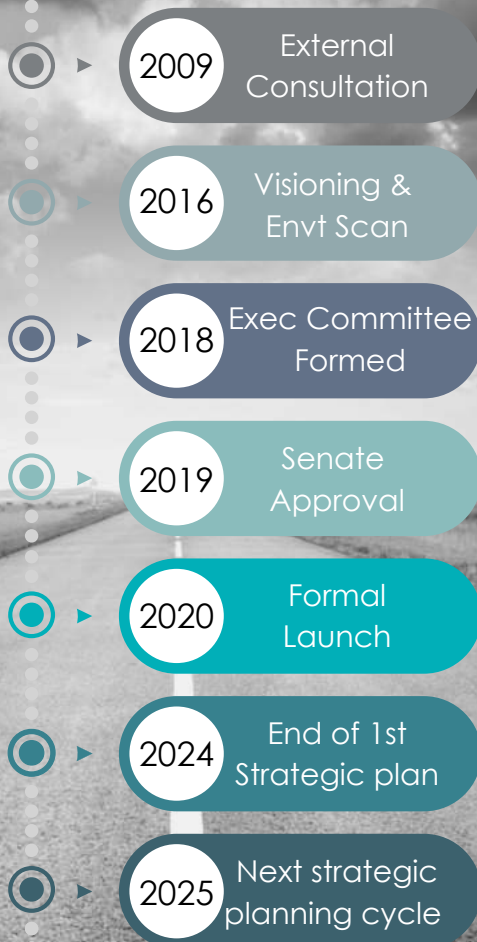
Research outcomes have a global benefit, but there are additional impacts felt when research is funded locally. Local research:

- keeps our health professionals and educators current
- attracts and retains the brightest students and professionals
- brings cutting edge infrastructure, diagnostics and treatments to our region
- increases access to clinical trials in Windsor–Essex
- reduces the number of patients that have to travel out of town for care
- improves health outcomes for our community
- saves lives



“Without research, hope is just a word
~ Dr. Michael Dufresne, Ambassador of Hope

THE ROAD TO WE-SPARK



"We are in a unique position in Windsor to come together and raise the bar for innovation, training and healthcare delivery that directly impacts the health of our community." ~ Dr. Lisa Porter

In March 2009, stakeholders from the Windsor-Essex region formed a steering committee to begin exploring opportunities for enhancing regional health research capacity. A formal study concluded that there was a significant appetite for a collaborative and integrative health research enterprise. Following a series of regional visioning days and consultations spanning a decade, in the Fall of 2018 an Executive Committee was established and tasked with putting plans into action, including a proposal for a new health institute.

WE-SPARK Health Institute received senate approval in May 2019 and chartered as an official institute under the University of Windsor. After 11 years of planning, WE-SPARK celebrated our official launch in March 2020 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between its four founding partner institutions Hotel-Dieu Grace Healthcare, St. Clair College, the University of Windsor, and Windsor Regional Hospital. Erie Shores HealthCare joined WE-SPARK on November 16, 2022 as an official partner.

MISSION VISION VALUES



ACCOUNTABILITY
EXCELLENCE
SUSTAINABILITY
COLLABORATION
INNOVATION

Vision

A thriving and engaged research community driving advancements in health.

Mission

Enhance the health, well-being and care of people through transformative research and knowledge translation.

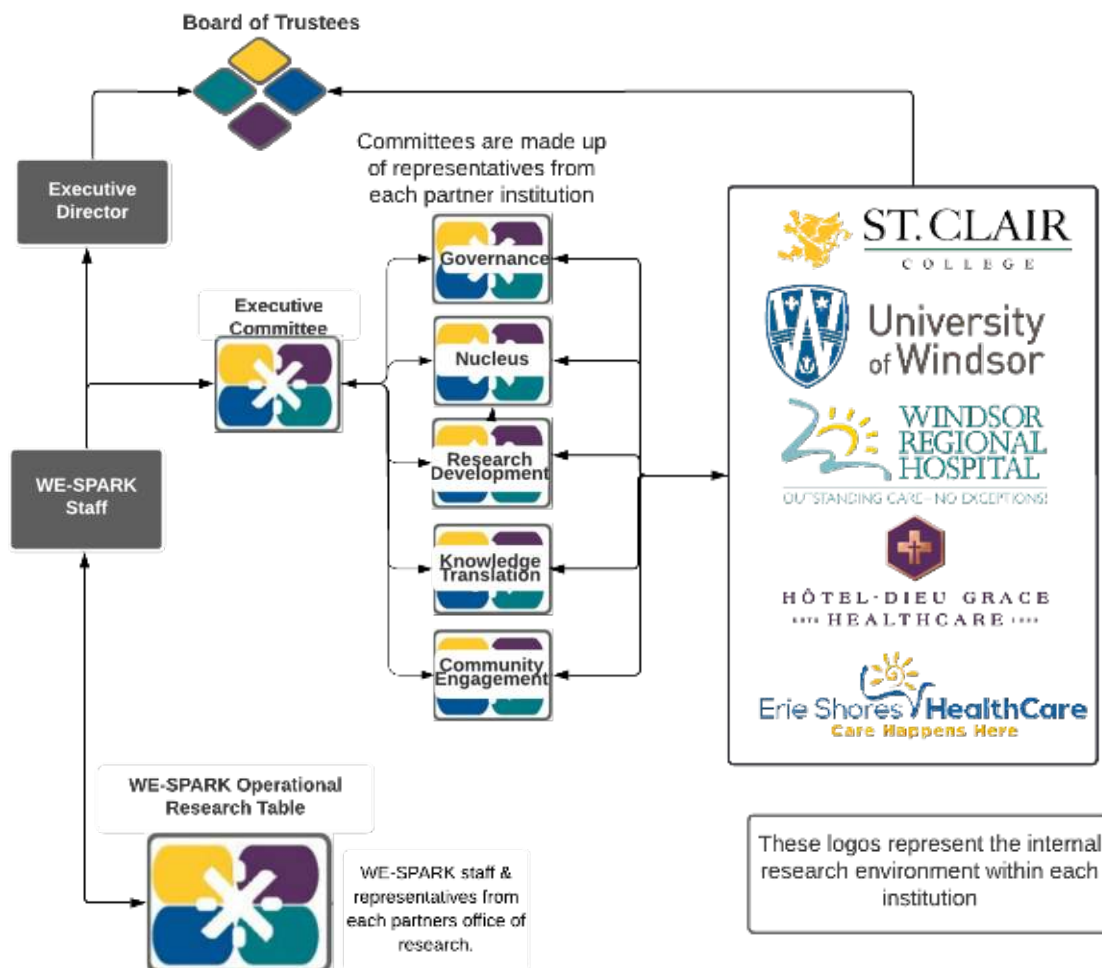
GOVERNANCE



The WE-SPARK Governance Committee oversees all policies and reporting to ensure the Institute functions appropriately and efficiently. Committees and the WE-SPARK staff work collaboratively to drive strategic priorities forward.

The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chairs of each committee and at least one member from each partner. This committee approves quarterly metrics reports, including budget, prior to final approval of the Board of Trustees. Every Fall, an Annual General Meeting is hosted. Reports highlighting our metrics and impact can be found on our website.

www.wesparkhealth.com/our-impact



BOARD OF TRUSTEES



HÔTEL-DIEU GRACE
HEALTHCARE

"Today, patients live longer because of advancements stemming from research. Partnerships are key to driving quality improvement and ensuring we are responsive to the needs of our patients. We are excited to build and strengthen our current research program by working in collaboration with the University of Windsor, St. Clair College and Windsor Regional Hospital to better serve the patients in our region."

BILL MARRA
PRESIDENT & CEO



ST. CLAIR
COLLEGE

"The college is looking forward to very extensive participation in this valuable new endeavour. It is the most far-reaching and far-sighted collaboration we've had in the health field during our decades-long partnerships with the university, the hospitals, and a number of local clinics, agencies and medical practitioners. Our professors are looking forward to their expanded research role, and it opens up a whole new vista of knowledge and experience for our students."


PATTI FRANCE
PRESIDENT



WINDSOR REGIONAL HOSPITAL
OUTSTANDING CARE - NO EXCEPTIONS

"Research and education are among the main drivers of the new Windsor-Essex Hospitals System. Through this unique partnership we have a chance to think big, build collaboration into the new system and position the region as a leader in medical research. This will have a huge impact on our patients and improve our ability to recruit and retain top physicians, professional healthcare staff and medical leaders".

DAVID MUSYJ
PRESIDENT & CEO



University of Windsor

"We are thrilled to be part of this innovative health initiative that will support our regional commitment to vibrant, healthy and resilient communities throughout Windsor-Essex. I truly believe that the training opportunities, research outcomes and health benefits of WE-SPARK will demonstrate the impact and need for partnerships throughout our region".

ROBERT GORDON
PRESIDENT & VICE-CHANCELLOR



Erie Shores HealthCare
Care Happens Here

"As our region continues to grow and evolve, it is imperative that Erie Shores HealthCare continues to grow and evolve as it relates to research and education in healthcare. Key to this outcome is continued close collaboration with our regional healthcare and education partners, with joining WE-SPARK Health Institute being an exciting next step in our efforts to drive best practices and foster an environment that helps attract and retain top healthcare professionals."

KRISTIN KENNEDY
PRESIDENT & CEO



STRATEGIC OVERVIEW



Ongoing Consultation



WE-SPARK has continuous consultation mechanisms through meetings, evaluations and stakeholder interviews

Spring 2023

Prepare Environmental Scan Report

Report will include analysis of input and revised SWOT



Fall 2023

Review and Approve Draft Plan

Identify action items and implementation strategies. Prepare for review by the Board of Trustees



January- March 2024

Create Operational/ Action and Communication Plans

Work with staff and committees to finalize the operational plan with a corresponding communications plan

Fall 2022- Winter 2023

Conduct Environmental Scan

Evaluate what is working well, what new opportunities can be optimized and innovative future directions



Summer 2023

Strategic Planning Session

Invite an external facilitator to lead the executive committee for a planning session, including future budget considerations

December 2023

Finalize 5 Year Strategy

Present to Board of Trustees for final approval



May 2024

Share

Disseminate and share plan with all stakeholders



2019-2024

On July 11, 2019, after consultations with hundreds of individuals and community organizations, the WE-SPARK Executive Committee met for a one day strategic planning session. Along with our mission, vision and values, we developed our first strategic plan. with the following strategic priorities:

- Research Excellence
- Knowledge Transfer
- Building Capacity
- Identity and Community Engagement
- Organizational Effectiveness

2025-2030

WE-SPARK is currently undergoing a strategic planning process focused on identifying its next steps as an institute and creating a roadmap for the future of regional health research. WE-SPARK has engaged [Stiletto: Make a Point](#), a strategic planning and market research consultant to lead the stakeholder engagement and planning process.



OUR MEMBERS



Everyone in our community has a role to play in health research. WE-SPARK members are a network of people dedicated to improving the health and wellness of our region. Our research activities are driven by our Principal and Associate Core Members who are actively engaged in the research field on a daily basis. Essential to our progress are those working behind the scenes to elevate research activities including healthcare providers, research associates and technicians, educators, students, volunteers and supporters.



Core Principal: funded by provincial or national health projects, or lead a clinical trial

Core Associate: actively engaged in research but do not yet hold provincially or nationally funded projects or are leading clinical trials.

Affiliate Researcher: associated with health research or healthcare locally or beyond; including administrative support

Affiliate Student: post-secondary students in any discipline with an interest in health research

Community/Ambassadors: individuals or organizations interested in the health research

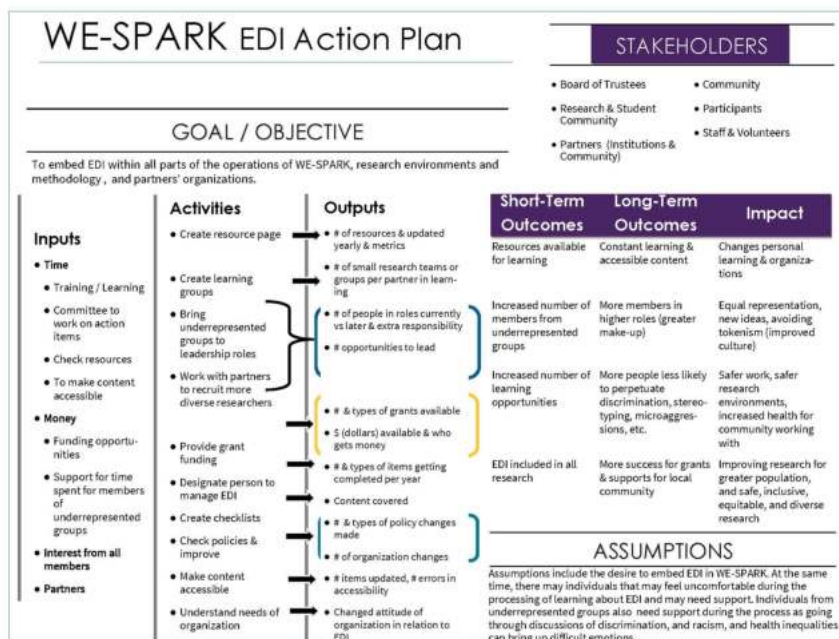
DIVERSITY INCLUSION



WE-SPARK Health Institute is committed to provide a diverse, inclusive, and supportive environment for underrepresented minority groups. "Evidence clearly shows that increasing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in research environments enhances excellence, innovation and creativity. EDI policies and practices strengthen the research community, as well as the quality, social relevance, outcomes and impacts of research." (University of Windsor, Office of Research and Innovation Services)

In May 2021, WE-SPARK completed a Health Research Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Environmental Scan that included recommendations for embedding EDI within all parts of the operations of WE-SPARK, research environments and methodology and partners' organizations.

www.wesparkhealth.com/diversity-and-inclusion



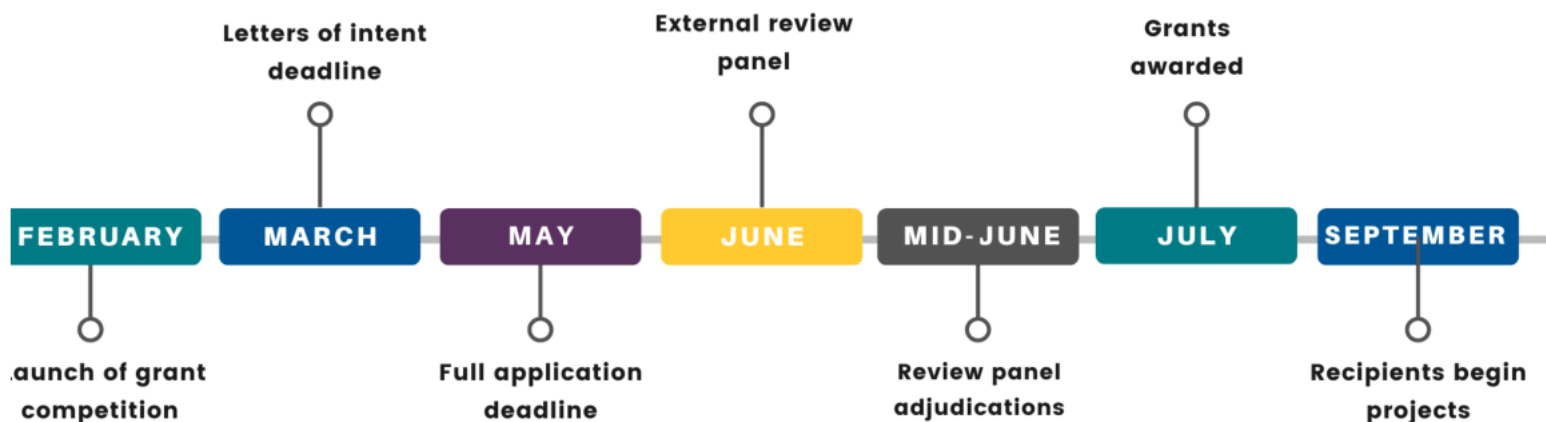


FUNDING RESEARCH

The WE-SPARK Grants Program is designed to support local health researchers at all stages of their career. Igniting Discovery Grants funds early-stage, novel and innovative health research projects throughout Windsor-Essex. Incentive Grants funds projects that are close to being successfully funded in large, national competitions. All grants are adjudicated by a rigorous external peer review process

Incentive
GRANT

Igniting
Discovery
GRANT



All donor dollars, including money raised at Cheers to Hope (our annual fundraising event), supports the grants program.

DRIVING RESEARCH



WE-SPARK creates a dynamic research environment that enables, supports and promotes excellence. One way this is achieved is by offering signature events that:

- advance novel health research ideas & establish interdisciplinary teams
- engage in meaningful conversations that enhance connections between members
- provide a forum to showcase, connect and strengthen health research



“It has been **amazing** to see the **collaborative nature** of researchers, health care professionals, students and community partners as they share their latest research findings. Their **continued dedication** to moving health research forward is remarkable and will lead to **better health outcomes** for our patients locally and around the world.

~ Dr. Caroline Hamm

TRANSLATING KNOWLEDGE



In Windsor-Essex, our multidisciplinary health training landscape includes undergraduate, medical students, graduate and post doctoral fellows. An important focus that underlies all the work we do is to develop and support opportunities for knowledge translation and exchange by:

- supporting the development and success of unique training programs
- identifying and supporting opportunities for commercialization and business development



“WE-SPARK has been one of the **most rewarding experiences** as an undergrad student. I have had the opportunity to work alongside many of our community’s most celebrated leaders in order to promote and strengthen the link between local health care and research. I witnessed first-hand the **positive impact** that collaboration between researchers and health care professionals has had on our community.

Vanessa Montemuri
BSc 2019, MD 2023

BUILDING CAPACITY



A key strategic priority of WE-SPARK is to create efficiencies across the health research ecosystem, increase the critical mass of health researchers and create an environment that allows the health research environment to grow. Critical steps are to:

- bring together and expand health research infrastructure that enables and accelerates research in Windsor-Essex
- support and expand research data management strategies and data sharing platforms for our researchers





STAY CONNECTED



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WE-SPARK Health Institute