



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024-2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Report from the Chair of the Advisory Council for Veterans</u>	3
<u>Report from the CEO</u>	5
<u>Report from the Chair of the Board</u>	7
<u>Project Highlight</u>	9
<u>Impact of the CPCoE</u>	10
Research	
• <u>Report from the Chief Scientific Officer</u>	12
• <u>2024-2025 Research Competition Results</u>	14
• <u>2024-2025 Capacity Building Initiative Recipients</u>	17
<u>Responding to Invisible No More: The Experiences of</u>	18
<u>Canadian Women Veterans</u>	
<u>Partnerships</u>	19
<u>Veteran Engagement in Research</u>	20
<u>Knowledge Mobilization</u>	26
<u>The Most Painful Podcast</u>	33
<u>Le Balado le Plus Douloureux</u>	34
<u>Engagement</u>	35
<u>Financials</u>	36
<u>Contact</u>	37

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR VETERANS

The 2024-2025 year has been a period of growth, collaboration, and impactful engagement for the Advisory Council for Veterans (ACV) within the Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans (CPCoE). With an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of Canadian Veterans living with chronic pain, the ACV has continued to advance its mission through developing programs, meaningful discussions, and a strengthened Veteran engagement strategy. Our team has brought diverse perspectives and expertise, enriching our efforts to address the unique challenges faced by Veterans and their families.

Annual Stakeholders Workshop

In September 2024, the ACV actively participated in the CPCoE Annual Workshop held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The theme, Pathways to Impact for Research Related to Veterans Living with Chronic Pain, underscored our focus on translating research into tangible outcomes for Veterans. The two-day event brought together Veterans, researchers, clinicians, and CPCoE staff for dynamic presentations and collaborative discussions. The workshop fostered candid and impactful conversations, reinforcing the CPCoE's role as a leader in advancing Veteran-centered chronic pain research and care.

Military Veterans Alpine Challenge (MVAC)

Held August 23–25, 2024, in Whistler, BC, the Military Veterans Alpine Challenge (MVAC), led by Tom Hoppe, continued its success as a cornerstone CPCoE event. This eight-month program provided Veterans living with chronic pain a transformative experience combining outdoor challenges with practical tools for managing pain—such as breathwork, sleep strategies, and strength training—while also addressing the transition to civilian life. The MVAC fostered camaraderie, explored military identity, and raised awareness of CPCoE's mission, showcasing our commitment to empowering Veterans through innovative, community-driven support.

Annual Advisory Council Meeting

On November 4, 2024, the ACV held its annual meeting to advance the CPCoE's Veteran Engagement Plan, under the theme *Continuing to Build Our Veteran Engagement Plan*. The agenda focused on integrating Veteran perspectives into research and strengthening cultural competence between Veterans and researchers. Highlights included individual reflections on lessons learned, breakout sessions to review the upcoming Research 101 and Veteran 101 courses, a Knowledge Mobilization update to improve research accessibility, and forward-looking discussions emphasizing inclusiveness, communication, and long-term collaboration.

Strategic Progress and Commitment

The CPCoE has advanced its Veteran Engagement Plan through three strategic pillars:

- Priority Setting Process
- Veteran Engagement in Research
- ACV Ambassadorship

The 2024 meeting discussions focused on the Veteran Engagement in Research pillar, particularly the development of the Research 101 and Veteran 101 courses. These courses, set to launch in 2025, aim to equip Veterans and researchers with the tools to collaborate effectively, fostering mutual understanding and meaningful partnerships. The ACV remains dedicated to advocating for Canadian Veterans and their families, ensuring their voices shape research and care. Our commitment to candid, inclusive, and impactful engagement drives us to address uncomfortable truths and pursue innovative solutions. Together, we are making significant strides in understanding and managing chronic pain, reinforcing the CPCoE's role as a global leader in Veteran-centered research and support.



Allison Gaudet, MScPT, CISCPT, BScKin

Chair of the Advisory Council for Veterans

REPORT FROM THE CEO

As we concluded the fifth fiscal year of the Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans (CPCoE) on March 31, 2025, we reflect with pride on the progress made in supporting research that improves the well-being of Veterans and their families. We are especially grateful to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) for renewing our contribution agreement through March 31, 2028. This continued investment ensures our ability to fund innovative research, mobilize knowledge into practice, and promote Veteran-centered care.

Over the past year, three strategic initiatives have significantly advanced our mission:

1. Evidence Support Mechanism (ESM) for Decision-Making

Launched in 2022 and facilitated by the McMaster Health Forum, the ESM initiative supports the translation of research into policy and practice. In collaboration with the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families, the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR), McMaster Health Forum, Canadian Armed Forces Health Services (CAFHS), Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPPRA), and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), we established a robust process to provide evidence summaries for over 25 topic areas. These reviews are informing clinical and policy decisions and reflect international best practices in evidence-based decision-making.

Our September 2024 Workshop in Halifax, led by Director of Knowledge Mobilization Deb Denman, exemplified the impact of this initiative. The event brought together Veterans, researchers, clinicians, and policymakers to highlight the real-world outcomes of CPCoE-funded research, with Veterans sharing firsthand accounts of how their voices have shaped research design and outcomes.

2. Research Priority Setting Process (PSP)

In January 2023, CPCoE adopted the James Lind Alliance framework to guide our Research Priority Setting Process. With over 80 suggestions from Veterans, and the thoughtful deliberation of our Advisory Council for Veterans (ACV), we identified 20 priority research topics. These topics informed our international Request for Proposals (RFP), receiving 29 submissions from Canada, the UK, and Australia. The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)—with members from Canada, the United States,

and the UK—met in person at the Halifax Workshop in June 2024 to adjudicate the submissions. Nine research projects aligned with Veteran-identified priorities received funding. Our PSP approach has gained international recognition, with presentations delivered by Chief Scientific Officer Dr. Abhimanyu Sud at the Office of Veterans Affairs Conference (UK, Nov 2023) and King's College Conference (London, May 2024).

3. Veteran Engagement

In summer 2023, CPCoE reaffirmed its commitment to meaningful Veteran Engagement. Under the leadership of Chelsea White, our new Director of Veteran Engagement, and following 18 months of consultation with Veterans, researchers, and clinicians, we launched a new three-phase model for Veteran Engagement in March 2025. This model draws on national and international best practices to ensure Veterans are active and empowered partners across all aspects of our work.

We were also honoured to contribute to the national conversation on the unique experiences of women Veterans. In May 2023, CPCoE was invited to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. Dr. Joy MacDermid, Hélène Le Scelleur, Capt (Ret'd), and I presented research on chronic pain in women Veterans. The Committee's landmark report, *Invisible No More: The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans*, released in June 2024, is the most comprehensive of its kind since the Committee's inception. In response, CPCoE has established a Female Veterans Advisory Group to help guide our support of the report's recommendations and ensure ongoing focus on this critical issue.

As we move forward, CPCoE remains deeply committed to honouring the voices, experiences, and needs of Veterans. Our work is only possible because of their trust and participation. We look ahead to the next chapter with renewed purpose and enduring gratitude.



Dr. Ramesh Zacharias

President, CEO & Medical Director

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

As Chair of the Board of Directors, it is my privilege to present the Annual Impact Report for the Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans (CPCoE) for the fiscal year March 2024 to April 2025. Over the past year, the CPCoE has continued to grow and evolve, advancing our mission to improve the lives of Canadian Veterans and their families living with chronic pain.

This year has been marked by continued progress, new partnerships, and a strong focus on innovation and collaboration. I am incredibly proud of the resilience and dedication shown by our team and partners as we expanded our reach and deepened our impact. The milestones detailed in this report demonstrate our commitment to evidence-based practice, Veteran-informed research, and inclusive knowledge mobilization.

Notable accomplishments this year include:

- Expanding our Evidence Support System, streamlining the path from research to practice to better serve Veterans and health care providers.
- Establishing new national and international research collaborations, increasing awareness of Veteran chronic pain and extending the CPCoE's influence beyond our borders.
- Launching a fully bilingual podcast series, amplifying Veteran voices and translating research into accessible, engaging content for the Veteran community and interest users.
- Enhancing our knowledge mobilization initiatives, ensuring that the findings from funded research are understandable, shareable, and actionable.

These achievements reflect the dedication of our staff, researchers, Veteran collaborators, and partners. Our financial position remains sound, supported by careful stewardship and a commitment to responsible growth. The financial statements included in this report outline our continued investment in strategic priorities, innovation, and long-term sustainability.

Looking ahead, the CPCoE remains focused on the following strategic objectives:

- Cultivating diverse and mutually beneficial partnerships to enhance services, inform policies, and improve care for Veterans and their families.
- Funding research aligned with the lived experiences and expressed priorities of Veterans, families, the Canadian Armed Forces, Veterans Affairs Canada, and other critical interest users.
- Empowering knowledge users across Canada by increasing the accessibility, uptake, and implementation of research-based best practices.

The year ahead holds immense potential. With the strength of our team, the guidance of our Board, and the passion of our Veteran community, I am confident that the CPCoE will continue to lead meaningful change in the field of chronic pain.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to our dedicated staff, engaged Board members, collaborative researchers, and especially the Veterans and families who shape and inform everything we do. Your commitment, insight, and trust are the foundation of our success.

It is an honour to serve as Chair of the Board for this vital and impactful organization. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to improve chronic pain outcomes for Canada's Veterans and their families.



Dr. Jonathan Bramson

Chair of the Board of Directors

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT -

DR. ALYSON MAHAR



Dr. Alyson Mahar is tackling a critical gap in Veteran healthcare: the lack of Routine Administrative Health Care Data that identifies the patient as a Veteran. Noting that *Canadian Armed Forces* Veterans are often excluded from national health datasets, Dr. Mahar launched a project to explore how existing health data can be used to research and better understand their health and wellbeing. Her work highlights the importance of identifying Veterans in the system and

linking their Veteran status to health data to study conditions like chronic pain and PTSD, and to inform stronger, evidence-based policies.

The result of this project included a detailed **report** that highlights the findings, offers recommendations for improved data practices, and underscores the value of integrating Veteran identifiers to better support their health outcomes.

Knowledge Mobilization Materials

To broaden the reach and impact of this work, Dr. Mahar collaborated with the CPCoE team to develop two targeted knowledge mobilization products: a **one-page**

infographic and a **short explainer video**.

These resources were created to communicate the importance of Veteran identifiers in health data in a clear, accessible format for diverse audiences, including policymakers, clinicians, researchers, and the Veteran community.



The infographic presents key findings and policy implications at a glance, while the video tells a compelling story of why identifying Veterans in healthcare systems is critical for improving outcomes. Both tools are available in English and French and support CPCoE's broader mission to make research more actionable and inclusive.

IMPACT OF THE CPCOE

**76**

Number of research
projects to date

25

Number of research
projects active in
2024-2025

14

Number of newly
initiated research
projects in 2024-
2025

**30**

Number of
institutions to date

4

Number of new
institutions in 2024-
2025

**50**

Number of
researchers and
students funded to
date

10

Number of new
researchers and
students funded in
2024-2025

**\$8,608,649.68**

Amount of money funded to
research projects to date

\$1,687,858.53

Amount of money committed to
new research projects in 2024-
2025

IMPACT OF THE CPCOE



\$460,000

Amount of funding for students
given to date

\$60,000

Amount of funding for students
given in 2024-2025



10

Number of Capacity Building
Initiatives funded to date

2

Number of new CBIs
funded in 2024-2025

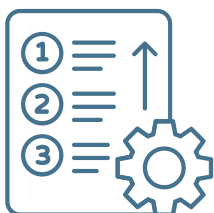


8

Number of Canadian
provinces funded to
date

18

Number of cities
funded to date



19/20

Number of research
priorities with related
funded research

REPORT FROM THE CHIEF SCIENTIFIC OFFICER

Engagement, transparency, rigour, and credibility – these are the principles that guide research at CPCoE and I am heartened to see these continue to be expressed in all our activities.

In 2024–2025, we successfully executed another research competition, funding 13 applicants from diverse institutions, employing a range of research methodologies, and addressing a broad spectrum of CPCoE's research priorities. Through this competition, and with more than \$1.3 million in funding, we have once again struck an excellent balance between competitiveness, that ensures we are funding the highest quality science, and accessibility, that ensures that we are continuing to grow the field of researchers and institutions that are engaged in Veteran chronic pain research.

At the CPCoE, we aim not to be just a passive research funder, but to be active in supporting a vibrant and dynamic community of practice around chronic pain and Veteran well-being. As a funder, and through our competitive processes, we can set the bar for scientific standards in these fields. But we also have the opportunity, and I would argue the responsibility, for supporting members of our community in reaching that bar. In this spirit, I am very proud of the work that Chelsea White, as our Director of Veteran Engagement, has led regarding effective and authentic Veteran engagement in research. Consistently, researchers have told us they are keen to find ways to engage Veterans as partners in research. Likewise, there is a large cadre of Veterans and family members who are keen to use their knowledge and expertise to inform research processes from inception to implementation. Knowing this kind of engagement to be essential for relevant and impactful research, the CPCoE has developed a suite of tools and best practices to address this gap. Just over a month since their launch, we've already received overwhelmingly positive feedback on the value of these tools—both within the CPCoE ecosystem and for their potential impact across the broader Veterans health research landscape.

Looking forward, 2025-2026 will be another important year for research at CPCoE. Our latest research competition focuses on three streams in the areas of chronic pain and suicide, health services and policy research, and women Veterans' health.

While we have funded several projects focused on the intersection of chronic pain and mental health, none have yet focused specifically on the intersection with suicidality, and this has been identified as an important research priority for CPCoE and others to address.

We take our role in building capacity in pain-focused health services and policy research seriously—recognizing that what benefits Veterans living with chronic pain will also benefit civilians accessing pain care through the same provincial and territorial health systems.

2024 marked the release of the landmark “*Invisible No More. The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans*” Report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. It was imperative that the CPCoE be responsive to the research needs identified in this report especially since there is a known paucity of research on the experiences, needs, and outcomes of women Veterans living with pain in Canada and internationally. In addition to previous landmark research funded by the CPCoE, research funded through this competition will help to continue to advance this important and previously neglected field.

Finally, 2025-2026 will also mark a refresh of our research priorities as we engage in a formal James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership. I would like to thank members of the Steering Committee including Veterans, family members, clinicians, and health administrators who are helping steward this partnership which will determine CPCoE’s research priorities for the next three to five years.

Pain research and pain care are at transformative moments in Canada. Through our research and related activities, CPCoE can proudly say that it is playing an essential and supportive role in achieving positive transformations for Veterans, and all people in Canada, living with pain.



Dr. Abhimanyu Sud, MD, CCFP, PhD

Chief Scientific Officer

2024-2025 RESEARCH COMPETITION RESULTS

Recording and finding patterns among Veteran generated qualitative narratives on pain and comorbidities through MyMissionMyRecord

TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Dr. Deborah Fels

The aim of this project is to develop an application that can assist Canadian Veterans with chronic pain and comorbid conditions in using subjective audio/video self-recordings and the AI-supported analysis of those recordings to learn about, reflect on and mitigate their current situation.

Silent Battles: Exploring the diverse experiences of Canadian Veterans living with chronic pain

UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

Dr. Amédée Gogovor

The aim of this project is to explore disparities in experience among Canadian Veterans living with chronic pain.

Enhancing the effects of psychologically informed physiotherapy using non-invasive brain stimulation to improve physical functioning in Canadian Veterans living with chronic low back pain

UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

Dr. Hugo Massé-Alarie

The aim of this project is to determine if the combination of PiP and rTMS is superior to PiP and UP to improve physical functioning in Veterans suffering from CLBP and comorbid psychological factors.

Making Sense of Veteran's Pain and Healthcare Experiences: Veteran and implementation science informed research-to-action through a lens of intersectionality

OTTAWA HOSPITAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Dr. Justin Presseau

The aim of this project is to equitably and sustainably improve quality of life and healthcare accessibility for Veterans.

Co-construction of CALM-Pain, a trauma-informed mindfulness-based chronic pain management program for Veterans to improve quality of life: A pilot mixed methods study

CENTRE HOSPITALIER DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL

Dr. Gabrielle Pagé

The aim of this project is to co-construct with Veterans and clinicians CALM-Pain (Cultivating Awareness and Living Mindfully for Veterans - Pain), a mindfulness-based chronic pain management program for Veterans living with chronic pain and analyze the feasibility and acceptability of CALM-Pain using the ORBIT framework.

Chronic Pain and Substance Use among Women Veterans: Co-creating resources with women and health care providers

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Dr. Nancy Poole

The aim of this project is to create sex, gender, trauma, violence, and equity-informed resources for women Veterans and healthcare providers that reflect women Veterans lived and living experience with chronic pain, trauma, and substance use, and their agency in accessing multi-component supports.

Exploring Possibilities in Provincial Health Programs: Immersive stepped care to transform chronic pain management for Canadian Veterans

LAWSON HEALTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Dr. J. Don Richardson

The broad goal of this research is to take an ecosystem approach in exploring potential improvements for Canadian Veterans with chronic pain seeking care through an innovative community-based stepped care model that has the potential to tailor the intensity of care to the magnitude of needs.

Testing the feasibility, tolerability and potential efficacy of ketamine assisted psychotherapy for treating comorbid chronic pain and posttraumatic stress disorder in Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Dr. Tim Salomons

The aim of this project is to develop a non-trauma focused psychotherapy protocol to address factors that mutually maintain chronic pain and PTSD and evaluate the feasibility and tolerability of implementing a brief outpatient ketamine protocol to enhance the effects of psychotherapy on the quality of life of Veterans with pain and PTSD.

Non-invasive neuromodulation to treat chronic pain in Veterans living with chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder

UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

Dr. Shirley Fecteau

The aim of this project is to evaluate the effects of tDCS as a therapeutic intervention for chronic pain in Veterans with chronic pain and PTSD.

Virtual reality and cranial nerve non-invasive neuromodulation to enhance quality of life for Veterans living with PTSD and chronic pain

UNIVERSITÉ DE SHERBROOKE

Dr. Guillaume Léonard

The aim of this project is to document the feasibility of an intervention combining virtual reality with active (experimental group) and "sham" (control group) CN-NINM in Veterans with PTSD and chronic pain after their military service.

2024-2025 CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE (CBI) RECIPIENTS



How do chronic pain and PTSD maintain each other?

A qualitative inquiry in Canadian Veterans

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Gina Vaillancourt

The aim of this project is to improve understanding of the experiences of Canadian Veterans living with comorbid chronic pain and PTSD.



Defining impacts and functional correlates of brain fog in persons with chronic pain

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY

Ronessa Dass

The aim of this project is to develop conceptual sex and gender framework for brain fog for Veterans with chronic pain, and to validate a self-report assessment of brain fog.

RESPONDING TO INVISIBLE NO MORE: THE EXPERIENCES OF CANADIAN WOMEN VETERANS

In response to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) report *Invisible No More: The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans*, the CPCoE established a dedicated working group. This group was tasked with examining the report's recommendations and identifying opportunities to align them with the CPCoE's mandate and research priorities. The following actions reflect our ongoing efforts:

Research Highlights

As part of our 2025 research funding competition, two projects focused specifically on the needs and experiences of women Veterans were selected for funding:

Making Sense of Veteran's Pain and Healthcare Experiences: Veteran and implementation science informed research-to-action through a lens of intersectionality

OTTAWA HOSPITAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Dr. Justin Presseau

Chronic Pain and Substance Use among Women Veterans: Co-creating resources with women and health care providers

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Dr. Nancy Poole

Dedicated Funding Stream

In 2026, the CPCoE has earmarked \$300,000 in dedicated research funding to advance knowledge on chronic pain in Canadian women Veterans.

Upcoming Engagement

To further support education and awareness for Veterans, family members, clinicians, researchers, and policymakers, the CPCoE will continue to amplify the voices and perspectives of women Veterans. As part of this commitment, a June 2025 webinar will feature the lived experience of a female RCMP Veteran.

PARTNERSHIPS

At the Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans, collaboration is at the heart of our work. We are proud to work alongside a growing network of partners across Canada and beyond who share our commitment to improving the lives of Veterans and their families.

These partnerships allow us to amplify our reach, deepen our research, and translate knowledge into meaningful action. Together, we are driving innovation in chronic pain care, education, and policy.



**Canadian Institute for
Military and Veteran
Health Research
(CIMVHR)**



**Atlas Institute for
Veterans and
Families**



**Canadian Pain
Society**



Pain BC



**Quebec Pain
Research
Network QPRN**



**Pepper
Pod**



**Power over
Pain Portal**



**Actim
Health**



**Honour
House**



**RCMP Veteran's
Association**



**Royal Canadian
Legion**



**Office of Veterans
Affairs England**



**Phoenix
Australia**



Bayshore Health



**Forces in
Mind Trust**



**McMaster
Health Forum**



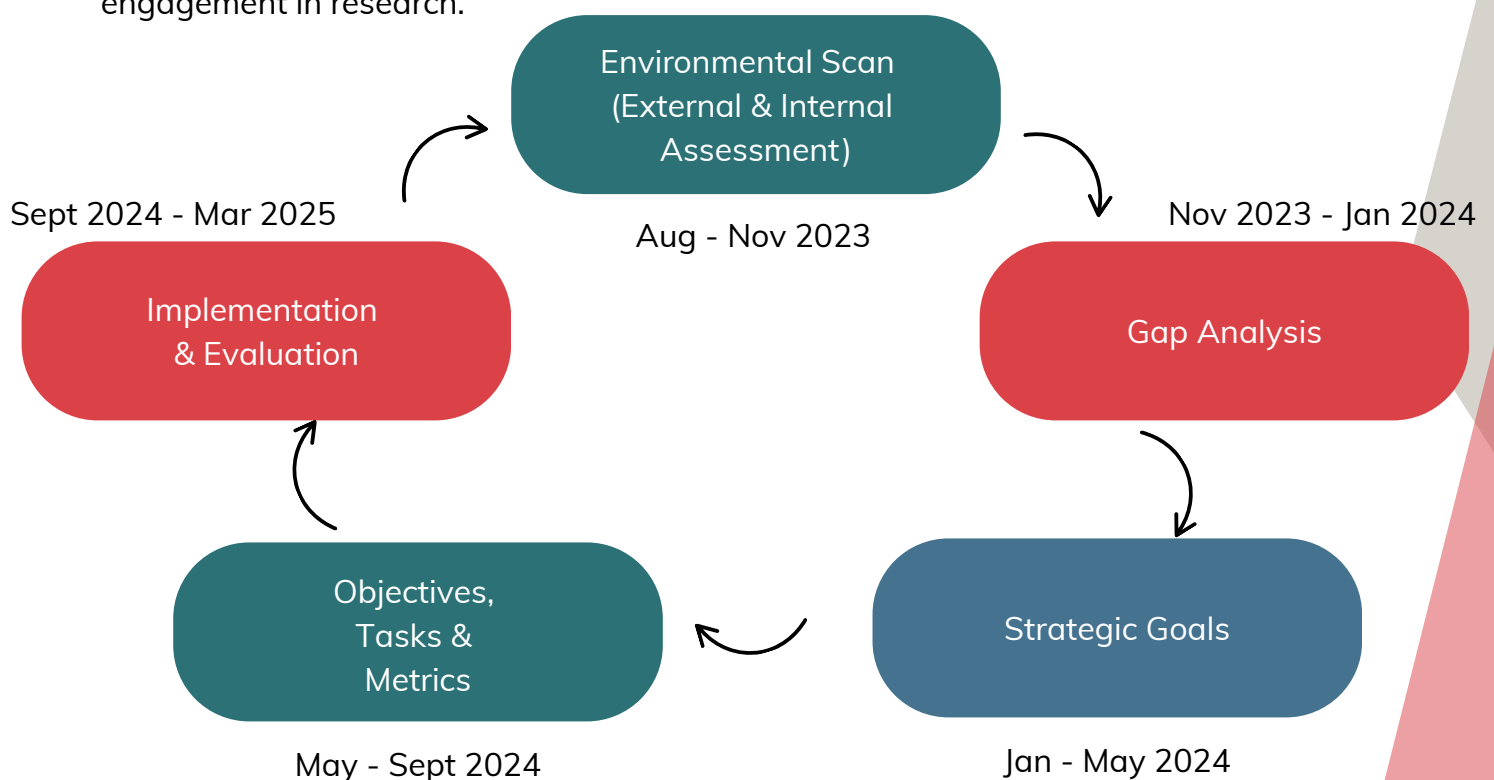
VETERAN ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH

Background

Since the CPCoE was launched, Veteran engagement in research has been at the heart of everything we do. In the early days, we went coast to coast talking with Veterans and their families about their hopes for the CPCoE. We then established an Advisory Council for Veterans (ACV) to have the living experience of Veterans shape our work, along with a Priority Setting Partnership with our ACV to ensure Veterans directly inform all the research that we fund. We also ensured that our research funding application and adjudication processes have a strong focus on Veteran engagement.

While we are very proud of the work we have done in laying the foundations to be a leader in Veteran engagement in research, we always want to keep raising the bar. We know patient (and especially Veteran) engagement in research is a newer concept, and Veterans and researchers may not be equipped with the knowledge, tools, and resources to respond.

To address this, in 2023, we launched a comprehensive, multi-year Veteran Engagement Plan, as seen below. We worked together with Veterans, families, researchers, clinicians, and others in the CPCoE community to bring awareness and innovation to Veteran engagement in research.



Veteran Engagement Plan

We began with an Environmental Scan, looking closely at the current patient engagement landscape in Canada, as well as our own Veteran engagement at the CPCoE. We sat down with the CPCoE community to talk about what successful Veteran engagement meant to them, what aspects of our Veteran engagement were working well, and where we could improve.

We took everything we learned from those consultations and asked ourselves where we currently were versus where we wanted to be with Veteran engagement in research. We learned that we were very authentic and genuine in our engagement, and that we had strong foundations of engagement at the start of our research cycle with our ACV and Priority Setting Partnership. However, it became clear that we needed to develop a common understanding of the definition, guiding principles, roles, and support mechanisms for engagement, and we needed to embed engagement across the entire research cycle. This Gap Analysis formed our Strategic Goals, as seen below.

1

Priority Setting Process

Vision

To have Veterans living with chronic pain inform research.

Goals

1. Establish a process.
2. Implement priorities.
3. Influence others.

2

Veteran Engagement in Research

Vision

To be the industry leader in Veteran-researcher engagement.

Goals

1. Develop educational resources.
2. Facilitate connections.
3. Establish evaluations metrics.

3

Advisory Council Ambassadorship

Vision

To enable Advisory Council members to represent CPCoE and its research and KM.

Goals

1. Define ambassador role.
2. Educate on organizational stewardship.
3. Share resources.

Meaningful Veteran engagement across the entire research cycle.

Strategic Goals

To ensure we captured the lived experiences and expertise of Veterans, we turned to our ACV. We dedicated our 2023 and 2024 ACV Annual Meetings to determine core areas, guiding principles, and tools and resources for Veteran engagement in research to guide this work.

Given that we already established a transparent, equitable, and rigorous process to bring the expertise of Veterans living with chronic pain together with the best available scientific knowledge to determine research priorities using the James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership, much of our subsequent work has been spent on pillar two (Veteran Engagement in Research).

Veteran Engagement Education

Our first goal for Veteran Engagement in Research focused on improving cultural competence and understanding between Veteran and researcher communities. Veterans and researchers told us that they needed to better understand one another, and they felt this would be best addressed with education—that is, what do Veterans need to know about research, and what do researchers need to know about Veterans.

To address this need for education, we established a Working Group of Veterans from our ACV and spent the next eight months working closely together to develop new educational modules for Veteran engagement in research. In the spirit of Veteran engagement, it was very important to us that we called on the experiences and expertise of Veterans to co-create these educational modules. We are proud to say that the Working Group of Veterans informed every aspect of these educational modules, including design, content, tools and resources, narration, characters, knowledge checks and scenarios, the learning management system, and accessibility (making the content inclusive for those with visual, auditory, cognitive, or motor impairments).

For further information on the CPCoE's Veteran engagement education, visit [CPCoE's Learning Centre](#).

The new educational modules are as follows (please see next page):

Research Foundations for Veterans:

Designed to provide Veterans with knowledge and tools about research.



Click the titles to be
directed to our
education portal



Veteran Foundations for Researchers:

Designed to provide researchers with knowledge and tools about the Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans.



Engagement Foundations for Veterans and Researchers:

Designed to provide Veterans and researchers with knowledge and tools about principles of engagement and how to work together as a team.



Veteran Engagement Database

Another goal for Veteran Engagement in Research was to establish a process to facilitate connections between Veterans and researchers interested in engaging together in research. Through our consultations, it became apparent that Veterans who were interested in partnering in research did not know how to connect with researchers, and researchers who were interested in finding Veteran partners for their research did not know how to connect with Veterans.

As a result, we worked closely with Veterans and researchers to develop a new Veteran engagement database. Interested researchers and Veterans each fill out forms online, and where criteria match, CPCoE facilitates connections.

Further information on CPCoE's Veteran engagement database can be found [here](#).

Veteran Engagement Toolkit

In June 2025, the CPCoE will also be launching a new Veteran Engagement in Research Toolkit, which will provide research teams with everything they need to know about meaningful and successful Veteran engagement in research. This will include information about the CPCoE's new educational modules and database, as well as definitions, guiding principles, compensation and acknowledgement recommendations, and other tools and resources for getting started on the Veteran engagement in research journey.

Our Impact

By introducing this new Veteran engagement in research products, the CPCoE is helping to break down barriers for Veterans and researchers to partner together in research, build their capacity, and foster a community to help generate awareness about the need for, and positive impacts of, Veteran engagement in the chronic pain research ecosystem.

Looking ahead, we look forward to continuing to share these products, as well as implementing the remainder of the Veteran Engagement Plan. In the coming year, we will be working closely with our ACV to develop an ambassador program where ACV members can help bring awareness for the CPCoE, as well as share our research findings to their Veteran networks across Canada.

Acknowledgments

The CPCoE wishes to extend a sincere thank you to the following Veterans, families, researchers, clinicians, and others in the CPCoE community who provided their time and expertise to create the products resulting from CPCoE's Veteran Engagement Plan.



CPCoE Advisory Council for Veterans

Ellexo Bailey
Anouk Beauvais
Ruby Brydges
Al Dunham
Gary Foster
Allison Gaudet
Conrad Heegsma
Tom Hoppe
Hélène Le Scelleur
Gordon MacEachern
Mindy Pearson
Keven Phinney
Duncan Redburn
Andrew Thomas
Arron Victory

CPCoE Staff Team

Veteran Working Group

Ruby Brydges
Tom Hoppe
Hélène Le Scelleur
Duncan Redburn

Veterans and Families

John Brown
Chris Tracey

Patient Engagement

Dr. Dawn Richards

Researchers and Clinicians

Dr. Jason Busse
Dr. Umair Majid
Dr. Pascale Marier-Deschênes
Sarah Versteeg
Dr. Rob Whitley

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION



Knowledge Mobilization at the CPCoE: Driving Change from the Start

At the CPCoE, Knowledge Mobilization (Kmb) is more than just sharing research, it's about engagement, collaboration, and communication that begins at the very start of the research process. We believe Kmb should be embedded from day one, ensuring that researchers include the voices of Veterans, which shapes the work we do and how it's shared.

Knowledge Mobilization is central to our mission at the CPCoE; to improve the health and well-being of Veterans living with chronic pain, and to support their families and caregivers on this journey. By translating evidence into action, Kmb helps ensure that research leads to real-world improvements in care, policy, and quality of life for Veterans and their families.

Annual Workshop - Pathways to Impact for Research Related to Veterans Living with Chronic Pain



In September 2024, the CPCoE proudly hosted its Annual Workshop in Halifax, focused on the theme: *Pathways to Impact for Research Related to Veterans Living with Chronic Pain*.

The workshop convened a diverse group of Veterans, researchers, clinicians, policymakers, and other interest holders to exchange ideas and strengthen collaboration.

Our key note speaker David Phipps, the director of Research Impact Canada opened the workshop by providing insights into the multiple pathways to impact that research could take.



Community Engagement and Partnerships with Knowledge Mobilization

Research Impact Canada (RIC).

As part of our collaboration with **RIC**, the Knowledge Mobilization team contributed to the design and delivery of a global KMb course; **MobilizeU**. This included developing content and assignments, engaging expert speakers, supporting participants, and providing feedback. We were also honored to present at the March edition of the Dr. RIC session; a monthly online forum that brings together leading experts in the field of KMb from across Canada and around the world.

Our involvement has strengthened internal KMb capacity and expanded our impact across the broader KMb community.

RIC's bi-annual "Knowledge Mobilization Forum", June 2024



The CPCoE's KMb and Communications teams attended the forum as a gold sponsor, hosting a booth to showcase tools and strategies for effective knowledge sharing. We also delivered a workshop presentation titled "Amplifying Impact: Insights from a Research Funder's Perspective" during one of the Catalyst Roundtable sessions.

The forum provided valuable opportunities for learning, development, and networking within the KMb and communications field.

In addition, the CPCoE is being recognized across this international network as a pioneer in the funder's role in supporting and building KMb into research.

World Health Organization (WHO) Global Research Agenda on Knowledge Translation and Evidence-Informed Policy Making

As part of the WHO's Expert Panel on Knowledge Translation (KT), we had the privilege of contributing to the development of the **Global Research Agenda on Knowledge Translation and Evidence-Informed Policy Making**. This collaborative effort brought together global experts to identify key priorities for advancing KT research and practice worldwide.

The agenda was officially launched on May 15, 2025, with delegates from around the world in attendance, marking a significant milestone in strengthening the global evidence-to-policy ecosystem.

Knowledge Mobilization Champion Group

This year, the Knowledge Mobilization Champion Group spotlighted innovative research and collaboration to support Veterans living with chronic pain. The topics explored include:

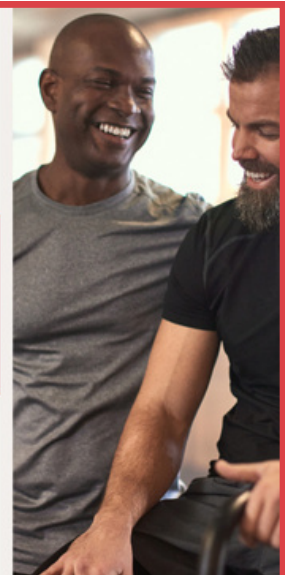
- Redesigning self-management of chronic pain for Veterans: Empowerment through tailored support
- Optimizing self-education for Veterans managing chronic pain
- Decision-making tool for Veterans using cannabis for chronic pain
- Combining sound therapy and cardiac coherence for the management of chronic pain and tinnitus in Canadian Veterans
- Breaking intergenerational pain and trauma: Co-designing a family program with Veterans, spouses, youth and care providers

The group also launched the **Well-Being Measurement Tools Directory**, featuring over 200 tools aligned with Veterans Affairs Canada's well-being domains. These sessions explored Veteran-informed self-management and education strategies for chronic pain, reinforcing our commitment to meaningful, evidence-based impact.

HOW DO YOU MEASURE VETERAN WELL-BEING?

Access the Well-Being Measurement Tools Directory and find surveys, questionnaires and scales to measure well-being:
atlasveterans.ca/well-being-measurement

The Well-Being Measurement Tools Directory supports vital research on the quality of life for Canadian Veterans.



Progress with Veteran Research

Advancing Women Veteran Research

A major milestone in Veteran research this year has been the growing focus on women Veterans, with significant contributions from Dr. Joy MacDermid, one of our funded researchers. Joy's project, "Reporting of Sex and Gender in Military and Veteran Chronic Pain Research," addressed a critical gap in how sex and gender are considered in chronic pain studies involving Veteran populations.

This work emerged from our Priority Research Setting Process and has led to several impactful outputs:

- **Peer-Reviewed Publications:** This research was featured in the Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health, with subsequent related projects also published.
- **Knowledge Mobilization Products:** The development of a lay summary, an infographic and an explainer video in both French and English to make findings accessible and actionable.
- **Global Engagement:** This research has been presented at conferences across the UK, Canada, and the United States, including poster presentations that sparked international dialogue on this important topic.



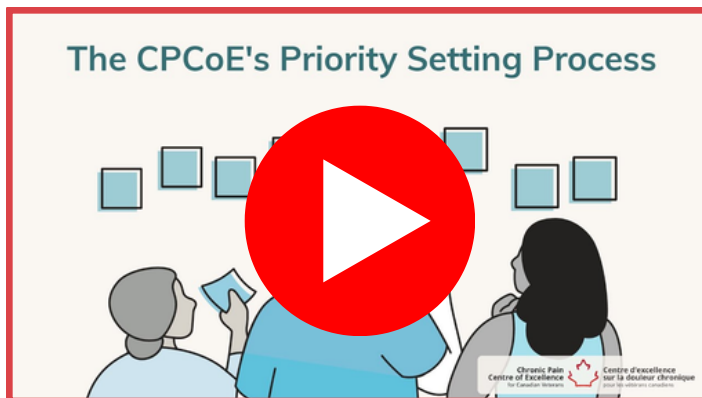
This initiative reflects our commitment to inclusive, evidence-informed research that addresses the unique experiences of all Veterans.

Resources & Knowledge Products

Over the past year, the KMb team has collaborated closely with researchers while also developing original knowledge products to share key findings in clear and accessible ways. Our commitment remains strong: to mobilize research knowledge effectively, foster meaningful knowledge exchange, support evidence-informed decision-making and assess the impact and reach of shared knowledge.



Awareness Video – A short two minute video that highlights who the CPCoE is and what we do to build awareness.



CPCoE's Priority Setting Process (video) – A one minute video that highlights our priority setting process and how Veterans are engaged in selecting our research funding priorities.

A **one-page lay summary** on the creation of a cannabis self-education tool for Canadian Veterans.

An infographic summarizing the research on **the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on a sample of patients with chronic pain.**

An infographic summarizing the research exploring **the experiences of Veteran and civilian patients in exploratory yoga sessions.**

An infographic for healthcare professionals summarizing **brain fog and its effect on Veterans.**

To see more of our knowledge resources, please visit the CPCoE website.

Knowledge Mobilization in Action: Driving Impact Through Collaboration

This year, we brought Knowledge mobilization to life by strengthening partnerships with Veterans, researchers, and key interest holders—all in support of the health and well-being of Veterans and their families living with chronic pain.

A central focus has been on measuring impact, ensuring the knowledge we generate, and share leads to real-world change. Through collaborative initiatives, we are bridging the gap between research, practice, and policy to drive meaningful improvements in care, support, and outcomes for the Veteran community.

We are currently piloting the use of Research fish, with 28 project submissions showcasing diverse Kmb strategies used to reach both academic and non-academic audiences.

Early results are promising! We've seen an increase in publications, deeper Veteran engagement throughout the research process, and expanded national and international collaboration, including with partners in Canada, the UK, and the US

Now in our second submission period, we're excited to gather even more data to inform and enhance future collaborations.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, our Kmb strategy will focus on the following priorities:

- Developing a robust impact framework to guide how we evaluate and report the outcomes of our work in Veteran chronic pain research.
- Sharing compelling stories of real-world impact that highlight how research is improving the lives of Veterans and their families living with chronic pain, through various means.
- Strengthening partnerships and expanding knowledge dissemination to amplify our reach and drive meaningful change in Veteran chronic pain research.

THE MOST PAINFUL PODCAST

In 2023, the CPCoE launched “The Most Painful Podcast”—a national platform dedicated to chronic pain in the Veteran community. Through interviews with Veterans, clinicians, and researchers, the podcast brings forward real experiences and evidence-based insights to inform, educate, and spark conversation around the realities of living with and treating chronic pain. Each episode focuses on a different theme, from navigating the health system without a family doctor to exploring the links between brain health, menopause, and chronic pain.



Throughout 2024–2025, the podcast continued to grow as a knowledge mobilization tool and outreach channel. It has helped strengthen connections across sectors and amplify the voices of those with lived experience. By blending clinical perspectives with personal stories, “The Most Painful Podcast” supports CPCoE’s broader mission to advance understanding and improve care for Veterans living with chronic pain.

[Listen Now](#)

24
Episodes



Hosted by
Tom
Hoppe

3,538
Downloads



Produced by
Story Studio
Network

LE BALADO LE PLUS DOULOUREUX



As part of our commitment to bilingual outreach and Veteran engagement, CPCoE continued to support and grow its French-language podcast, “Le Balado Le Plus Dououreux”, throughout the 2024–2025 fiscal year.

Between April 2024 and March 31, 2025, two new episodes were released, focusing on the lived experiences of French-speaking Veterans living with chronic pain. These episodes were downloaded 166 times, reflecting a growing interest in accessible, relevant content for Francophone Veterans and their families.

The podcast features expert insights, personal narratives, and evidence-based information to help reduce stigma, promote understanding, and highlight available supports. Through “Le Balado Le Plus Dououreux,” CPCoE continues to ensure its knowledge mobilization efforts are inclusive and impactful in both official languages.

[Listen Now](#)

2
Episodes

166
Downloads



Hosted by
Luc J.
Hébert



Produced by
Story Studio
Network

ENGAGEMENT



54,375

Website
visits



4,512

Email
Subscribers



153K

Google Search
Impressions



795

Facebook
Likes



355

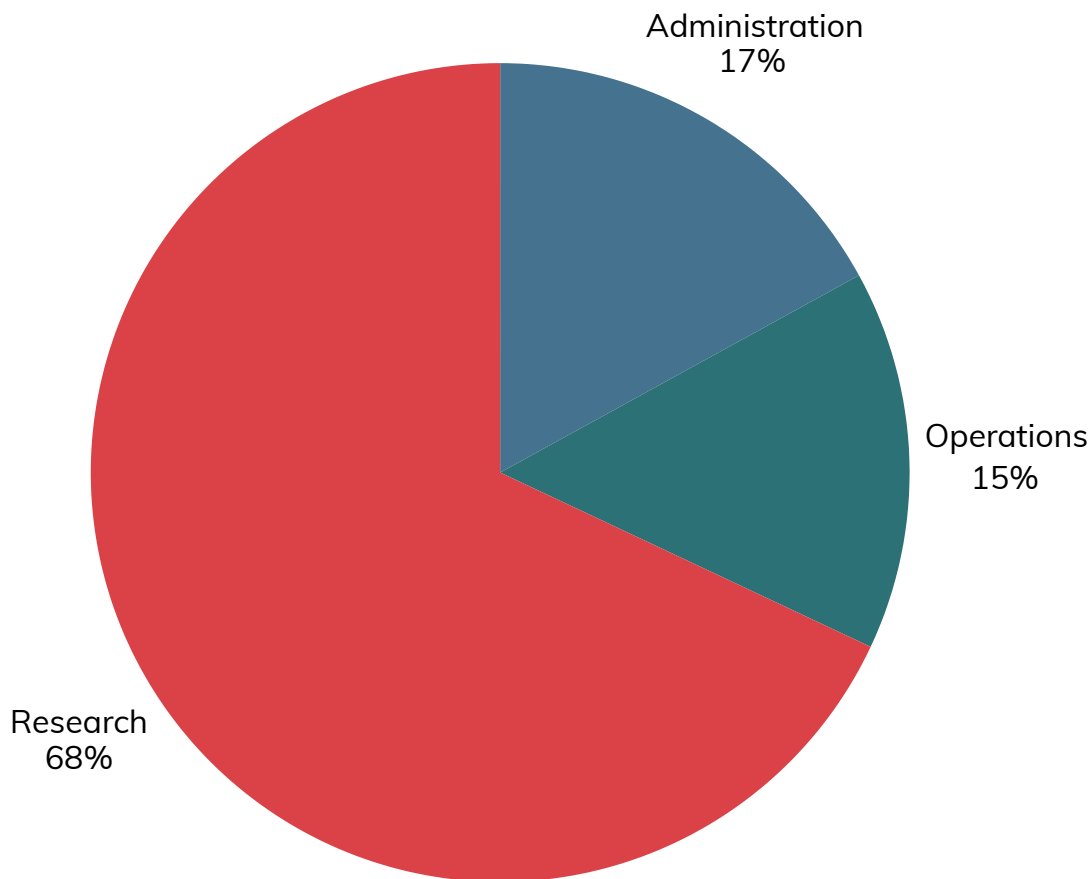
Instagram
Followers



712

LinkedIn
Followers

FINANCIALS



Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025

Revenue	Funding Through VAC Contributions Agreement	\$ 4,661,679
Expenses	Administration	\$ 798,982
	Operations	\$ 715,713
	Research	\$ 3,146,985
		<hr/>
		\$ 4,661,679

In the fifth year of operations, the CPCoE received a contribution of \$4,661,679 from Veterans Affairs Canada to support its research mission impacting the Canadian Veterans and their families. During the fiscal year, we advanced funds to 14 research collaborations with various institutions across Canada and the research budget accounted for 68% of the CPCoE's total annual cost.



CONTACT

Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans
McMaster Innovation Park
Suite 413A – 175 Longwood Road South
Hamilton, ON L8P 0A1
T: 1-833-644-HOPE (4673)
E: info@vcp-vdc.ca

