$2.5 million now available for fast-tracked heart and brain focused scientific research of COVID-19

*The American Heart Association issues an unprecedented rapid response call for cardiovascular/cerebrovascular research proposals to address the growing crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic*

DALLAS, March 24, 2020 — As part of its global response to the growing COVID-19 pandemic, the American Heart Association, the world’s leading voluntary organization focused on heart and brain health and research, is committing $2.5 million to research efforts to better understand this unique coronavirus and its interaction with the body’s cardiovascular and cerebrovascular systems.

Specifically, the Association will be offering fast-tracked research grants for short-term projects that can turn around results within 9-12 month to better understand the diagnosis, prevention, treatment and clinical management of COVID-19 as it relates to heart and brain health. There will also be additional funding made available to the Association’s new Health Technologies & Innovation Strategically Focused Research Centers to develop rapid technology solutions to aid in dealing with the COVID 19 pandemic.

“Approximately 120 million people in the U.S. have one or more cardiovascular diseases, which may place them at higher risk for contracting COVID-19 and experiencing complications of the virus, making it even more critical that we find out all we can about this disease and urgently work on reducing its impact,” said American Heart Association president Robert A. Harrington, M.D., FAHA, Arthur L. Bloomfield Professor of Medicine and chair of the department of medicine at Stanford University. “Research is the very foundation of the American Heart Association and, given our global mission, this rapid response grant is an unprecedented but logical move for the organization in these extraordinary times. We are committed to quickly bringing together and supporting some of the brightest minds in research science and clinical care who are shovel-ready with the laboratories, tools and data resources to immediately begin work on addressing this emergent issue.”

COVID-19, like most in the coronavirus family, is primarily a disease of the respiratory system. However, a number of reports from other countries, as well as in the U.S., have indicated that people with high blood pressure or who have heart disease or survived a stroke may be more vulnerable to its effects, with mortality rates two to three times higher than in the general population. There have been accounts of infected people without underlying complications who are developing deadly arrhythmias from infection and inflammation that damage heart muscle. Additionally, strokes and other brain diseases have been reported in COVID-19 patients in China. These findings may further illustrate a critical relationship between COVID-19 and the cardiovascular and cerebrovascular systems.

Through the **COVID-19 and Its Cardiovascular Impact Rapid Response Grant** initiative, the Association will fund one national coordinating center along with at least 10 project grants of $100,000 each. Due to the critical need, the application, review and award processes for the grants will be expedited with applications due by April 6,
awardees being announced in early May and projects underway by June. Highly impactful, short-term research projects that can be completed within nine months to a year will take precedence.

Supplemental funding grants are also being offered to the Association’s new Health Technologies & Innovation Strategically Focused Research Network centers. Those Centers have just been selected and will be announced soon. This additional funding will be focused on rapid technology solutions that could possibly provide aid for healthcare systems, doctors or care providers, first responders, patients or consumers in dealing with a pandemic crisis.

“I am extremely proud of the agility of our volunteer leadership and of the staff of the American Heart Association that allows us to pivot so quickly to initiate vital research to find much needed answer in these challenging times,” said American Heart Association CEO Nancy Brown. “What more important work can we do as an organization than activate our trusted platform to provide solutions for this global crisis.”

More information on the grants and instructions for applying can be found here.

The American Heart Association has funded more than $4.6 billion in cardiovascular research since 1949.

Additional Resources

- [American Heart Association coronavirus (COVID019) resources for health care professionals](https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/aha-financial-information)
- [Patients taking ACE-i and ARBs who contract COVID-19 should continue treatment, unless otherwise advised by their physician](https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/aha-financial-information)
- Follow AHA/ASA news on Twitter @HeartNews

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The American Heart Association receives funding primarily from individuals; foundations and corporations (including pharmaceutical, device manufacturers and other companies) also make donations and fund specific association programs and events. The Association has strict policies to prevent these relationships from influencing the science content. Revenues from pharmaceutical and device corporations and health insurance providers are available at [https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/aha-financial-information](https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/aha-financial-information).

**About the American Heart Association**

The American Heart Association is a leading force for a world of longer, healthier lives. With nearly a century of lifesaving work, the Dallas-based association is dedicated to ensuring equitable health for all. We are a trustworthy source empowering people to improve their heart health, brain health and well-being. We collaborate with numerous organizations and millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, advocate for stronger public health policies, and share lifesaving resources and information. Connect with us on [heart.org](https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/aha-financial-information), Facebook, Twitter or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

For Media Inquiries: 214-706-1173
Cathy Lewis: 214-706-1324; cathy.lewis@heart.org
For Public Inquiries: 1-800-AHA-USA1 (242-8721)
heart.org and strokeassociation.org