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## POGO RESEARCH UNIT (PRU)

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### History

The need for a research agenda addressing underemphasized but important areas of investigation was identified by POGO in 1994. In 1996, the establishment of the POGO Research Unit was approved by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to facilitate a better understanding of childhood cancer control and improve outcomes for children with cancer.

Four pillars of research were identified as the appropriate foci of PRU activity and remain relevant today.

### The Four Pillars of Research

#### **Epidemiology**

To understand patterns and trends in childhood cancer in order to ready the system for future demand for services, explore causation, and identify strategies for prevention.

#### **Health Services**

To identify methods of care delivery that optimize treatment outcomes and to assess their impact on access to services, staffing requirements, and other key measures.

#### **Economics**

To determine effective ways to deliver care, maintain quality of life, and minimize the burden of illness on children, families, and health care providers.

#### **Survivor Status/Quality of Life**

To evaluate health outcomes of survivors and identify interventions to ensure the best possible quality of life and wellness for survivors.

### PRU Projects

As of August 2010, the PRU has supported over 60 research projects, representing over 300 investigators from more than 60 institutions.

For more information about PRU projects, please visit our website at [www.pogo.ca/research](http://www.pogo.ca/research).

### POGO Chair in Childhood Cancer Control

POGO established the first POGO Chair in Childhood Cancer Control at the University of Toronto in 2000. The Chair facilitates linkage with the academic community and provides opportunities for collaboration with students. The Chair is also the Medical Director of POGO and is positioned to provide leadership both in the evolution of childhood cancer control research and in the application of research to policy development and practice.

**Training  
Opportunities**

The provision of training opportunities for clinician researchers and new academics from diverse disciplines involved in pediatric oncology is an integral component of the PRU vision, within both intramural and extramural research.

**Funding  
Opportunities**

**Fellowship Program**

Fellowships are awarded to applicants working toward a PhD or pursuing a post doctoral degree, or to clinicians and health care practitioners of any discipline working on pediatric oncology-related research.

**Joint POGO-CIHR Master's and Doctoral Research Awards**

In partnership with POGO, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), through the Small Health Organization Partnership Program (SHOPP), provides special recognition and support to students pursuing a Master's or PhD degree with a focus on childhood cancer research.

**Seed Funding Grant**

Seed Funding Grants are offered each year to facilitate or support feasibility studies, self-contained studies, or preliminary work for development of grant applications.

**Open Operating Grant**

The PRU's Open Operating Grant focuses on Ontario-based projects that involve at least three tertiary centres, may be time-sensitive, and/or fall outside of the priorities of typical funding sources.

Visit us at [www.pogo.ca](http://www.pogo.ca) for more details regarding PRU funding opportunities.

**Pediatric  
Cancer  
Outcomes  
Initiative**

In 2010, POGO and the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division formed the Pediatric Cancer Outcomes Initiative (PCOI). This initiative brings together two key players in the cancer realm to build a childhood cancer research platform to stimulate research that improves the quality of outcomes for kids with cancer and childhood cancer survivors and reduces the overall burden of cancer on families. This initiative will:

- Capture patient treatment and outcome data from 1985 to 1994 to augment POGO's database (POGONIS);
- Conduct studies directed at improving outcomes and reducing the burden of cancer on children, adolescents, and their families:
  - A *Portrait of Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer in Ontario*
  - Evaluation and development of survivor resource materials; and
- Support a request for proposal (RFP) competition focused on outcomes and impacts of pediatric cancer.



- POGONIS 2.0** Much of the PRU’s research data is provided by the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario Networked Information System (POGONIS 2.0). POGONIS 2.0 is a relational database and registry capturing selected, standardized data on all childhood cancer cases in Ontario from the tertiary centres that care for children with cancer. It is a unique resource for the study of the epidemiology of childhood cancer in the province, for surveillance and evaluation, for the study of outcomes, and for facilitating the assembly of cohorts for investigation in multiple research projects.
- Privacy** In November 2005, POGO was designated a 45.1 entity under the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004). This designation allows POGO to collect, use, and disclose personal health information for the purpose of “analysis or compiling statistical information with respect to the management of, evaluation or monitoring of, the allocation of resources to or planning for all or part of the health system, including the delivery of services” (PHIPA, 2004). This designation also enables POGO to link with other provincial databases, thereby augmenting its capacity to address research questions and supply valuable information for policy and program planning
- Governance and Management** The PRU is managed by Dr. Mark Greenberg, POGO’s Medical Director and the POGO Chair in Childhood Cancer Control, who reports to the POGO Board of Directors. The PRU Steering Committee guides the activities of the PRU.
- Funding** The PRU is funded by multiple sources: the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, POGO Fundraising, a University of Toronto endowment, the Canadian Cancer Society (Ontario Division), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and research grants.
- Media Contact** Vanessa Yakobson  
Managing Director of Development and Strategy  
416-592-1232 ext. 225  
[vyakobson@pogo.ca](mailto:vyakobson@pogo.ca)