Executive Director, Canadian Cancer Research Alliance (CCRA)

Background

The Canadian Cancer Research Alliance (CCRA) is an alliance of over 30 organizations that collectively fund most of the cancer research conducted in Canada – research that will lead to better ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat cancer and improve survivor outcomes. Our members include federal research funding programs/agencies, provincial research agencies, provincial cancer care agencies, cancer charities, and other voluntary associations.

The CCRA fosters the development of partnerships amongst cancer research funding agencies in Canada, to promote the development of national cancer research priorities and strategies, to report back to donors and the public on the nature and impact of the investment in cancer research funding in Canada, and to work together to achieve the overarching goals of effective and timely cancer control in Canada.

The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer ("CPAC or the Partnership") is a member organization of CCRA and it provides secretariat support to the Executive Office of the CCRA. Supporting the activities of the CCRA is an important element benefiting the overall strategic goals of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer.

Created in 2007, the Partnership is an independent organization funded by the federal government to accelerate action on a national cancer control strategy. CPAC collaborates with a variety of experts, organizations and stakeholders across the country to harness the best of what is working well to control cancer and to effectively implement this strategy coast to coast. With its partners, CPAC shares the common goals of reducing the risk of cancer, lessening the likelihood of Canadians dying from cancer and enhancing quality of life for those affected by cancer.

With funding for a second five-year mandate to 2017, CPAC's vision is to continue to lead, learn and take action on the growing body of evidence and knowledge about cancer prevention and care. With a focused approach, the Partnership will execute its strategic priorities, tangibly measure and demonstrate the impact of how its pan-Canadian cancer control strategy has reduced the burden of cancer on Canadians. Work to secure funding for a third five year mandate is underway.

Overview of the Cancer Control Division of the Partnership

The position of CCRA Executive Director is situated within the Cancer Control Division of the Partnership. This Division is responsible for overall delivery of the Strategic Priorities in the Partnership's mandate, with a focus on the Partnership's Programs and the development of effective and strategically salient initiatives through effective working relationships with clinical, medical, professional and stakeholder partners to reduce the impact of cancer on Canadians. This division drives the Partnership's core mandate of reducing the risk of cancer, lowering mortality, and improving the experience of Canadians affected by cancer through collaboration with system partners. It works in close collaboration with the other divisions to develop, deliver and report ongoing progress on an effective cancer control strategy.

Overview of the Role

Reporting through the Cancer Control Division for operational accountabilities, and to the CCRA Board for establishing and executing strategic priorities and for ensuring the effective functioning of CCRA, the Executive Director works to foster collaboration among research funding agencies to successfully implement CCRA's Pan-Canadian Cancer Research Strategy *Target 2020: A Strategy for Collaborative Action, 2015-2020 leads the Partnership's role in fostering alignment with relevant aspects of the CCRA's strategy.* The Executive Director is mainly responsible for monitoring the implementation of the CCRA national strategy, providing regular reports to the CCRA Board and providing leadership in refreshing the strategic plan in future. The position provides oversight of CCRA programs such as the planning of the Canadian Cancer Research Conference and the regular publication of cancer research investment reports. An additional role of the Executive Director is to advise the Partnership on cancer research and oversee the planning, development and implementation of any new related research activities that the Partnership may create.

Specific Accountabilities

- Provide strategic leadership, management and coordination of CCRA activities demonstrated by:
    - Working closely with the CCRA Board of Directors and the Expert Lead, Research to oversee the effective development, planning, implementation and evaluation of the CCRA strategic plan
    - Fostering collaboration among research funding agencies and stakeholders to successfully implement CCRA's 5 year strategy
    - Overseeing the effective implementation of the CCRA's operational plan including monitoring of project timelines, deliverables and budget in collaboration with partners
    - Preparing all reporting including annual, project and status reports required for the CCRA Board and CPAC quarterly reporting
    - Organizing CCRA Board meetings, annual member's meetings and working group meetings
    - Managing the biannual Canadian Cancer Research Conference (up to 1,000 participants) and funding
    - Overseeing the development and publication of the cancer research investment reports
    - Directing and contributing to various publications and journals on relevant matters

- Implement and drive work linking CCRA strategies and activities within the Partnership by:
    - Working closely with the Senior Scientific Leader, Research to lead the Partnership's role in CCRA strategic initiatives and further the Partnership's contribution to CCRA strategic initiatives
    - Leading and/or contributing to the development and implementation of any new strategic Partnership research initiatives
    - Integrating research knowledge and capacity in the Partnership's Strategic Framework and assisting in the development and tracking of outcomes to show impact

- o Providing a strategic research perspective to other activities of other Partnership divisions
  - o Providing input to the Partnership's Knowledge Mobilization Strategy while working with the Partnership's Knowledge Mobilization Team
  - o Managing large scale initiatives from CCRA strategic plan and directly contribute to the work, e.g. palliative and end-of-life research framework, Canadian Cancer Clinical Trials Network

- Provide strategic support to the Partnership's research advisory group (or equivalent) to optimize research synthesis, act as a liaison with members and oversee the coordination of meetings, agenda setting and driving action items forward

- Ensure appropriate systems and structures are in place for the effective administration of the research portfolio by:
  - o Managing the CCRA office (Partnership staff)
  - o Complying with Partnership policies for financial administration and quarterly reporting on deliverables/finances
  - o Overseeing procurement of consultants and other suppliers according to the Partnership policies and procedures
  - o Developing content of Requests for Proposals and contracts for execution by CPAC Corporate Office staff
  - o Overseeing performance of selected consultants
  - o Overseeing and evaluating the performance of direct reports within the research portfolio

Additional General Accountabilities
- Drive innovation and culture change by creating empowered teams, integrating cross-function teams, delivering accelerated impact and reinforcing a collaborative culture
- Lead and coach direct reports
- Joint responsibility for staff engagement and collaboration
- Support VP Accountabilities
- Accountability for collaboration across divisions and portfolios
- Support achievement of strategic priorities and core enabling functions

Division of Time by Area of Accountability
Delivering Core Mandate: 25-30%
Driving Collaboration: 25-30%
Supervising and Mentoring direct reports and key support staff: 15-20%
Supporting Vice President, Cancer Control: 5-10%
External Relationships: 5-10%

Essential Skills and Attributes

- Strong relationship management acumen
- Demonstrated strategic leadership and management skills
- Ability to proactively lead and respond to change
- A commitment to collaboration and a joint-accountability approach
- Strong internal and external stakeholder relationship management skills
- Strong mentoring, coaching and knowledge-sharing skills, ability to interact and work effectively with staff
- Adaptability, flexibility, diplomacy and tact
- Excellent analytical, interpretive and problem solving skills; detail oriented
- Self-motivation and initiative
- Ability to prioritize and multi-task within a fast-paced environment
- Ability to communicate effectively in both official languages is advantageous, but not required as an employment condition

Experience and Education

- University graduate degree, PhD or MD desirable; with graduate training and a record of success in administration of research programs
- Minimum 5 - 7 years progressive experience in a leadership role with strong people management skills, health research environments preferred
- Excellent knowledge of the Canadian cancer research environment including cancer research funding organizations
- Previous experience in collaborative research and fostering relationships with collaborators
- Established track record of publication in leading journals
- Demonstrated ability to oversee and execute complex programs, with a track record of achieving deliverables
- Ability to analyze emerging issues and develop strategic responses
- Extensive experience in the development of comprehensive business plans and budgets
- Experience working with and delivering against detailed project management documentation (e.g. charters, work plans, status reports), monitoring project performance and initiating corrective action where required)
- Experience in identifying and resolving conflicts related to resources, schedule, and costs
- Excellent knowledge and demonstrated experience of health sector issues/challenges in the area of cancer
- Experience in a not-for-profit sector is an asset, particularly the Canadian Cancer Strategy environment