Clemson University School of Health Research, Clemson University Research Foundation, the Prisma Health-Clemson Center for Human Factors in Health Care and the Clemson Center for Safety, Health, and Ergonomics Research for Performance Augmentation (SHERPA) announce a call for Seed Grants related to human factors engineering in the health care environment.

Purpose | Human Factors Engineering holds great promise to improve the processes and experience of giving and receiving care, and to improve patient and provider safety, health, and wellness outcomes. This area of health research is emerging as a synergistic collaboration between Prisma Health and Clemson University. A strategic focus on the application of Human Factors Engineering (HFE) solutions to challenges in clinical operations requires collaboration between universities and health systems and will prove to be mutually beneficial and a tremendous resource for the state.

The Human Factors Engineering Research Investment Initiative (HFE-RII) facilitates collaborative pilot research and scholarly activities supporting HFE projects that address **improvements in clinical operations, healthcare quality, ergonomics, patient safety, provider satisfaction, and patient experience**. Investigators are encouraged to align projects with the focus areas of Prisma Health's Clinical Advancement Program (CAP) and the Clinical Specialty Councils (CSCs)*.

Topics addressed by proposals may include, but are not limited to:

1. Usability, human-centered design, and ergonomics improvements of health care technologies such as medical imaging devices, patient monitors, electronic medical records, or other patient care devices;

2. Workplace interventions addressing improvements in worker physical/cognitive performance, health and/or safety;

3. Human-system approaches to help in developing targeted process improvement initiatives such as telehealth and integration of AI into health care technologies;

4. Development of training materials/guidelines to aid with better technology adoption, clinical performance, patient-provider communication, reduction in medical errors, and/or patient safety.

Some examples of ongoing and/or recent initiatives at Prisma Health are: ED check-in/triage process redesign, evaluating clinician workload/burden, assessing outpatient clinical decision support systems, inpatient rounding process redesign, and implementing a safer inpatient early mobility program.

HFE-RII recipients are required to disseminate their work locally, regionally, and/or nationally. Funded investigators are expected to subsequently submit an extramural grant application informed by seed grant study findings.

![Clemson University logo]

Key Dates

RFA Release	February 19, 2026
Applications Due (by 5:00 pm)	April 15, 2026
Recommendation for Funding Notification	May 15, 2026
Start	July 1, 2026

Funding | HFE-RII are supported through funding from Clemson University and Prisma Health (up to 6 will be awarded). Applicants may request a funding amount up to $50,000. Applicants may cite matching funds from their respective units or from other sources, but cost-share is not required.

Eligibility | All applications must include an investigative partnership between Clemson University and a clinical collaborator from Prisma Health (Upstate and/or Midlands). Investigators are encouraged to include trainees on their research teams.

Applicant Agreement | Principal Investigators accepting HFE-RII agree to the following:
- Secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (or exemption) prior to receipt of any award dollars, or the initiation of project-related work.
- Spend award dollars only on the proposed research-related activities specified in the budget (see Allowable Expenditures below).
- Complete a status report at 9 months and submit a final report within 30 days after the project end date.
- Provide a presentation to the CU / PH HFE Strategic Coordination Group within 60 days after the project end date or as requested by the SCG.
- Submit at least one manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal any time during the funding period and no later than six months after the project end date.
- Apply to present a poster at the Prisma Health Education and Research Institute Showcase and/or Clemson Research Symposium.
- Submit an extramural grant application informed by the findings any time during the funding period and no later than nine months after the project end date.

Period of Support | The committee will award support for a maximum of 18 months. No cost extensions are not permitted for this funding opportunity.

Allowable Expenditures | Allowable expenditures include participant incentives, equipment, project supplies, pilot data collection, research-related travel (up to 10% of total budget), publication fees, contract, and user fees. Travel funding may be used to facilitate meetings between primary academic partner collaborators. Applicants should justify requests for equipment and travel to conferences and presentations. This award does not support indirect costs or full-time faculty salary; however, applicants may use funds for consultants, research staff, post-doctoral fellows, or other research assistant support from primary academic partner institutions (e.g., undergraduate students and graduate students). The proposed budget should not include items departments typically support for active researchers, travel unrelated to project execution, or a request to bridge a funding gap between grants.

Selection Process | The HFE-RII applications will be reviewed by the HFE Executive Committee composed of Clemson University and Prisma Health representatives. Additional Prisma Health team members may be consulted to verify clinical relevance. Only complete applications compliant with submission directions will be considered for funding.

Scoring Criteria for applications will be evaluated in the following categories:

- *Significance:* Does the project address an important opportunity for improvement in clinical operations, healthcare quality, ergonomics, patient safety, provider satisfaction, and/or patient experience?
- *Innovation:* Does the application challenge and seek to shift current practice paradigms by utilizing novel HFE approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?
- *Approach and Feasibility:* Are the overall strategy, methodology and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project?
- *Investigators:* Does the investigative team have the requisite background, training, and relationship and access, to advance the project goals? Does the team have depth of collaborative experience or potential to advance the project?
- *Overall impact:* What is the likelihood that the project will have a sustained powerful impact on the Prisma Health system?

Projects that involve secondary data analysis from Prisma Health data will require a data approval agreement (e.g., DUA or DSA) and IRB submission. For data approval, investigators must meet with the Prisma Health Data Support Core. (Budgetary Note: some data extraction activities may require funding in the proposed Seed Grant budget.)

Application, Formatting, and Submission Instructions | The submission deadline for applications is April 15, 2026, at 5:00 pm (EST). Principal Investigators should notify their institution's sponsored programs/grants office regarding their intent to apply. Applicants will submit the application to CUSHR@clemson.edu and upload the additional components outlined below:

- Background/justification, aim(s), and methods using single-spacing and 12-point Calibri font with 1-inch margins (3 pages).
- Literature Cited (if applicable – does not count toward page limit).
- Timeline (in table format) and plan for extramural grant applications, publication, dissemination, and/or implementation of findings (1 page).
- Biographical Sketch of all investigators (3 page maximum for each investigator).
- Completed Budget and Budget Justification utilizing your college pre-award office budget template.
- Letters of Support are accepted only if they reference specific additional financial support for the project. General letters of support should not be included with the application.

Virtual Information Sessions for Questions Related to Proposals | CUSHR is providing two Zoom drop-in sessions for questions related to this request for proposals. Investigators are encouraged to join these sessions to learn more about the call as well as the focus areas of the Prisma CAP and CSCs*. The dates and times of the sessions, along with the Zoom links, are as follows:

- March 3rd, 9:00am-10:00am, https://clemson.zoom.us/j/92591046878 Passcode: 891120
- March 10th, 10:00am-11:00am, https://clemson.zoom.us/j/92609119924 Passcode: 413443