



**Request for Proposal (RFP) for Independent Medical Education (IME)**

**Disease Prevention for Transgender Individuals**

Therapeutic Area	Oncology, HIV
Sub-area of Interest	Practice-Based Learning and Improvement; Professionalism; Medical Knowledge
Intended Learners	Medical Oncologists, Gynecologists, HIV Specialists, Primary Care Physicians, and allied healthcare professionals (HCPs) working in oncology and HIV (eg, pharmacists, nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants).
Budget	Up to \$400,000
Geographic Coverage	National, <b>United States</b>
References	Supportive citations are provided beginning on page 4.
Submission Deadline	Sunday, September 26, 2021, 11:59 pm ET
Submission	<a href="http://www.msgrant.com">www.msgrant.com</a>
Submission code	PRIDE21

## Background

Merck's values start with putting the patient first. We support quality IME for HCPs designed to improve patient health outcomes, across a variety of scientific areas. Global Professional Relations and Independent Medical Education (gPRIME) aims to be the world class industry leader collaborating with professional organizations to support innovative IME, advancing knowledge, competence, and performance of HCPs to improve patient care and health outcomes. Education which allows for reinforcement of the learning objectives is key to long-term performance optimization, as is the incorporation of tools and ongoing reminders for HCPs that help them apply their knowledge. The best way to improve patient care is through the application of relevant and appropriate medical education.

Healthy People 2030 prominently identifies cancer and preventative care as core goals. Components of these goals include reducing the overall cancer death rate, specifically inclusive of breast cancer and prostate cancer; increasing the quality of life for cancer survivors; increasing the proportion of people who discuss interventions to prevent cancer with their providers; and screening for breast cancer, cervical cancer, and ovarian cancer. However, many of these cancer types are built around binary gender identities (e.g., male or female), and do not account for individuals who do not identify as a binary gender or identify as multiple genders. Transgender individuals may present with cancer risk factors beyond what is recognized with a cisgender individual, putting them at risk for more advanced disease at the time of diagnosis. For instance, transgender people have higher rates of HIV compared with the total population, HIV is a known risk factor for the development of various types of cancers.

Given the rise in individuals identifying as transgender, HCPs need to ensure they are providing inclusive care for all patients, recognizing that transgender people are at risk for discrimination in healthcare settings and therefore may not seek care proactively. Recently, there has been increased advocacy for HCPs to develop knowledge and competency surrounding care of individuals in the LGBTQ+ community. In addition, recent publications surveying various HCPs have identified a lack of knowledge on particular topics in the care of LGBTQ+ individuals, coupled with a strong interest to further understand complexities of disease prevention for such patients who have entrusted their care to these HCPs. Numerous professional boards advocate for orienting care and prevention strategies around an anatomical checklist, regardless of how individuals self-identify for gender, as well as being respectful to the individual seeking care.

## Identified Educational Gap(s)

Merck identified several practice gaps surrounding preventative care of transgender individuals through quality measures, and published literature. These gaps can be effectively addressed through IME for HCPs working to advance patient health outcomes across a variety of disciplines. Merck would like to support the following educational gaps:

- *The need for HCPs to create a comfortable relationship with transgender individuals free of stigma, to build their trust when HCPs are making clinical recommendations.*
- *The need for HCPs to outline a preventive care plan consistent with the patient's current anatomical structure.*
- *The need for HCPs to recognize that not all persons identify as male or female and may retain organs that put them at risk for developing cancer.*
- *The need for HCPs to recognize transgender individuals as being potentially disproportionately at increased risk of contracting HIV.*
- *The need for HCPs to recognize that transgender individuals with HIV have an increased risk of several types of cancers including solid tumors (e.g., anal, liver, oral cavity/pharynx, and lung), and Hodgkin's lymphoma. Many HCPs may lack the knowledge and competence to properly screen for cancer, identify cancer early, and thus prevent advanced disease in the transgender community.*

The education Merck is looking to support will address these gaps; however, depending on the needs identified by the providers, the education may not be able to address all these educational gaps in a single proposal.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

- U.S. based professional associations and medical societies, healthcare institutions, medical education companies, and other organizations committed to improving the quality of healthcare delivered to individuals, through the education of HCPs, may apply for this grant.
- The applicant must be an accredited provider in good standing by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), American Nursing Credentialing Center (ANCC), American Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), or have Joint Accreditation for interprofessional continuing education.
- The selected grant recipient will need to attest to the terms, conditions, and purposes of the independent educational grant as described in the Merck Letter of Agreement, and comply with current ethical codes and regulations.

### **Prioritization of Grant Applications**

Merck will evaluate all complete grant applications, and will give priority to those most likely to independently validate the aforementioned educational and performance gaps specific to the needs of specific cohorts of learners. Proposals should be built around the educational or performance need (including an identification of current knowledge or practice of targeted learners contrasted with ideal knowledge and practice), supported with aligned learning objectives, constructed with appropriate instructional design and adult learning theory, and evaluated using Moore's scale of educational effectiveness. Merck recognizes the limited budget and therefore encourages application to additional commercial supporters with similar scientific interests.

Merck appreciates the complexity of education required for HCPs to improve patient health outcomes. In our experience, collaboration between medical education providers may yield better educational outcomes by enabling multi-modal education and developing tools and resources for a broader group of learners.

## Terms and Conditions

The selected grant recipient shall be bound by the terms and conditions found in the Merck Letter of Agreement.

## References

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