

# Newsletter



Quarterly news for researchers, pharmacists, and patients to advance research that addresses local needs.

The Iowa Research Network (IRENE) is a practice-based research network (PBRN) composed of Iowa's primary care physicians, advanced practice providers, and community pharmacists. IRENE is supported by the University of Iowa's Department of Family and Community Medicine, private donors, and external research funding.

## M MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



### Happy March!

As we are heading into spring, I'm excited to share a couple of opportunities on the horizon.

Our five-year study, Improving High Blood Pressure in Older Adults with Multiple Chronic Diseases – The SMBP Study, is currently underway with ten University of Iowa Health Care clinics, and we are now recruiting an additional ten clinics through IRENE. We are particularly interested in partnering with clinics that serve a high proportion of patients aged 65 and older who live in rural areas. Participating clinics receive \$5,000 per year to support their involvement. If you are interested in learning more, please contact us at [SMBP-Study@uiowa.edu](mailto:SMBP-Study@uiowa.edu). We look forward to connecting with you!

We are partnering with Greenwood Pharmacy and Cedar Valley Clinical Research in Waterloo to launch the first phase of a lung cancer screening study supported by Eli Lilly. The Community Health Assessment and Monitoring in the Pharmacy (CHAMP) study aims to enroll 250 patients in this three-year Phase I initiative. During a routine pharmacy visit, patients will be pre-screened by a pharmacist to assess eligibility. Those who meet initial criteria will participate in a shared decision-making discussion to determine whether lung cancer screening is appropriate. Eligible participants will receive a blood test designed to assess their likelihood of having detectable lung cancer. Patients with positive blood test results will then be referred for a low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) scan for further evaluation.

Annual lung cancer screening is recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) for eligible patients; however, only about 20% of eligible Iowans currently undergo screening. This study will evaluate the number of screenings ordered, the proportion completed, and the rate at which patients return for recommended annual follow-up screening. Following Phase I, investigators plan to expand CHAMP to additional pharmacies and primary care clinics across Iowa. Stay tuned for updates!

*Korey A. Kennelty, PharmD, MS, PhD, BCGP  
Director, Iowa Research Network (IRENE)*

## R HIGHLIGHTED RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Opportunity for Neurologically Healthy Older Adults Living in Rural Iowa

The Kiwanis Neuroscience Research Foundation has funded a project to develop a standardized neuropsychological assessment battery that can be administered remotely in patients' homes via secure video conferencing. By collecting robust normative data from 210 neurologically healthy older adults living in rural Iowa communities, this project will establish reliable reference standards for interpreting test results obtained through remote means – a resource that does not currently exist for this population.

We encourage collaborating providers and pharmacists to share information about this study with eligible patients and their communities. Participation for patients is available at no cost, and the study will provide all equipment necessary for the assessment, including secure internet access for patients that don't have an internet connection.

**Role of IRENE:** Seeking primary care clinics and community pharmacies to distribute pamphlets about the study. If you are interested, please send an email message to [irene@uiowa.edu](mailto:irene@uiowa.edu).

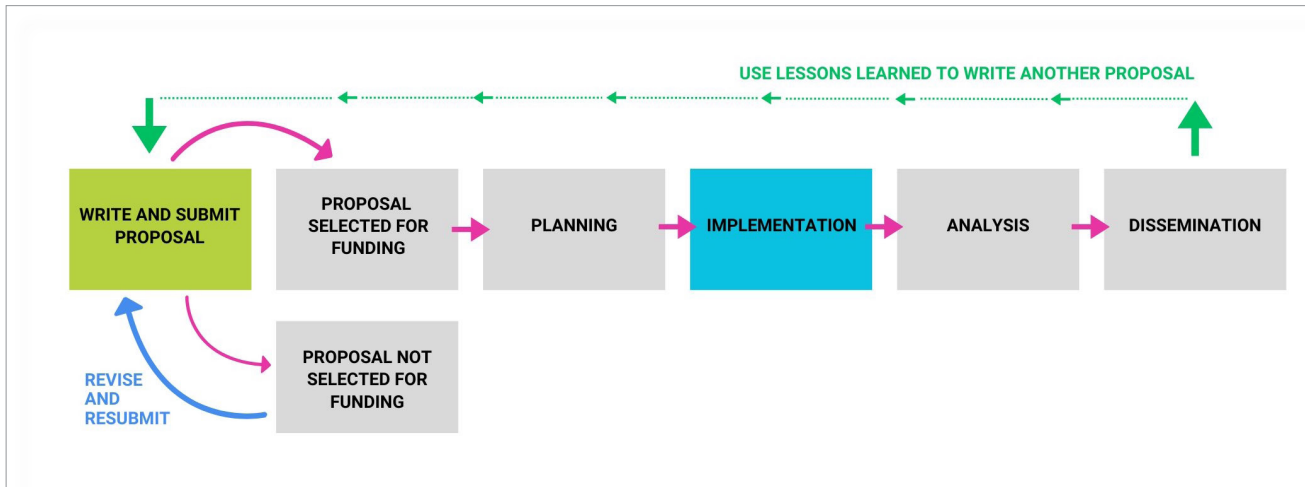
**Principal Investigators:** Dan Tranel, PhD, and Natalie Denburg, PhD

## R HIGHLIGHTED PROJECT IN THE PIPELINE

IRENE is working with investigators on an application to the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), due on May 5, 2026. This proposed project seeks to develop and test a strategy to increase patient and caregiver engagement in research projects.

Including patients and caregivers as members of the research team ensures that our work reflects real-world needs, priorities, and lived experiences. Their partnership strengthens study design, improves relevance and feasibility, and helps ensure that findings translate into meaningful, patient-centered improvements in care. We will learn about PCORI's funding decision for this project near the end of 2026.

## C CLINICAL TRIAL CYCLE



In previous newsletters, we highlighted the Proposal Submission and Planning phases of a clinical trial. In this issue, we turn our focus to the **Implementation Phase** – when a study transitions from planning to action within clinics and/or pharmacies. During this phase, sites make the decision to participate and begin integrating study activities into their everyday clinical workflows and patient care practices.

Participating clinics and pharmacies receive support from study staff, including information about the study and training on any required procedures. Study staff work closely with each site to fit the study into existing workflows and reduce burden as much as possible.

For example, studies often rely on information already in the electronic medical record to help identify eligible patients and track outcomes, rather than adding extra documentation. Many studies also provide financial support or incentive payments to participating clinics and pharmacies to recognize the time and effort involved.

The implementation phase may last several years, depending on the size of the study. Throughout this period, study activities are carried out according to the protocol approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), ensuring that patient safety and privacy remain a top priority.

## Upcoming Events

Meet the IRENE team!  
Find our booth and get some fun swag!



Public Health Conference of Iowa  
April 8-9, 2026 | Des Moines, Iowa  
<https://iowapha.org/phci/>

## Contact us!

Email [irene@uiowa.edu](mailto:irene@uiowa.edu) if you have any additional questions about IRENE or suggestions for future newsletter items.



Please help us save paper and postage! Provide your email address and research interests in the short survey via QR code.

If you would prefer to not have any further communication from IRENE, please email "STOP" to [irene@uiowa.edu](mailto:irene@uiowa.edu).