



Powered by the **Center for Healthcare Innovation**

Center for Healthcare Innovation (CHI) Annual LAUNCH Program  
Charlotte, NC / September 9-11, 2026

**2026 LAUNCH Program Application**

The Center for Healthcare Innovation (CHI) is excited to announce that this year’s annual LAUNCH program is seeking innovative solutions and enablement strategies related to the Right Place of Care. The discovery/research should be focused on delivering care in the most appropriate setting—guided by clinical need, patient preference, and system efficiency—to improve outcomes, reduce waste, and enhance patient experience. Some suggested project focus areas include:



**Reducing Referral Leakage (PCP → Specialty Care)**

- Improving **closed-loop referrals** between primary care and specialists
- Increasing **in-network specialty utilization** without restricting patient choice
- Reducing delays caused by Manual referral workflows, Lack of appointment availability transparency, or Poor referral status tracking
- Enhancing **bi-directional communication** between PCPs and specialists
- Supporting **eConsults / curbside consults** to avoid unnecessary specialty visits
- Aligning referrals with **value-based care incentives**



**Avoidable Emergency Department (ED) Utilization**

- Identifying and redirecting **low-acuity ED visits** to: Urgent care, Primary care, Virtual care
- Real-time **decision support** for patients and clinicians at the point of care
- After-hours and weekend care access solutions
- Predictive identification of **high ED utilizers**
- Addressing social drivers that lead to ED overuse transportation, housing instability, access barriers
- Post-ED follow-up pathways to prevent repeat visits

Timeline for required attendance if selected as a finalist. CHI will select four project finalists to move forward with the LAUNCH program. Below is an outline of dates associated with the program, and noted dates (\*\*) are ones that the project PI or project team delegate **MUST** be able to attend in person. We require that all teams stay at the designated hotel for the duration of the event in Charlotte this September. We are going to cover the costs for up to 5 members per project team. Costs for required travel and lodging accommodations will be covered by CHI.

What	When	Where
RFA Announcement	March 9, 2026	
Application Deadline	April 13, 2026 (5:59pm EST)	
Finalist Selection/Announcement	May 1, 2026	
Project Kickoff Workshop**	May 19, 2026 week (TBD)	TEAMs Meetings
Project Virtual Pitch Reviews	August 1 - 15, 2026	TEAMs Meetings
LAUNCH Event**	September 9 - 11, 2026	Charlotte, NC
Winner Award Announcement**	September 11, 2026	Charlotte, NC
Project Award Period	October 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027	

**Purpose of this Specific RFA**

Develop solutions and strategies for delivering care in the most suitable setting, considering clinical need, patient preference, and efficiency. Research should explore new care models or advances in AI, software, or device technology that enhance outcomes, reduce waste, and improve patient experience. The research centers and service lines are invited to submit proposals, with suggested focus areas including reducing PCP to Specialty Referral Leakage or Avoidable ED Utilization.

Please review the application requirements listed below. All required documents must be uploaded through REDCap. Materials sent by email, either during or after the application deadline, will not be accepted unless specifically requested by the review committee.

Submit the 2026 LAUNCH application **HERE** by **Monday, April 13, 2026, at 5:59pm. No deadline extensions will be given.**

Contacts for questions regarding application submissions are listed below.

- [Andricka.Oliver@AdvocateHealth.org](mailto:Andricka.Oliver@AdvocateHealth.org)
- [Renee.Woodard@AdvocateHealth.org](mailto:Renee.Woodard@AdvocateHealth.org)

## **Application and Selection Process**

Applications are open to any group within Advocate Health. Teams are strongly encouraged to comprise members from diverse functional backgrounds and various markets, such as medical providers and trainees, advanced care providers, nurses, case managers, pharmacists, allied health professionals, data scientists, implementation scientists, business managers, among others. Priority will be given to teams that include representation from multiple markets across Advocate Health.

Should a team advance to the final competition phase, and in commemoration of our 5-year anniversary, up to five team members may represent their project at the Launch 2026 Event.

### **Cover Sheet** (download/Upload Template from REDCap.)

- 1) Project Title
- 2) Brief Summary of Project (3-5 sentences)
- 3) PI Information: Headshot and PI Bio Paragraph (3-5 sentences)
- 4) Team Member name(s) and credentials
- 5) Primary Region/Market
- 6) Department Manager or leader name/email aware of project application

### **Detailed Entry** (download/Upload Template from REDCap.)

- 1) **Innovation/Novelty: (15 points)**
  - Please describe how your project solution is innovative.
- 2) **Feasibility: (10 points)**
  - Explain how your project can this be tested and implemented in the defined cohort during the allotted time frame of the project (October 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027).
- 3) **Scalability: (15 points)**
  - Is your solution one that can cost-effectively be scaled across the health system within the population of interest or to adjacent populations starting July 2027.
- 4) **Enterprise Strategic Alignment: (10 points)**
  - Please describe how your project relates to our enterprise strategy (ReWire 2030). You may refer to the focus areas at the top of the RFA.
- 5) **Collaboration: (20 points)**
  - 5 points will be awarded to the teams for each market (Wake, Atrium, Aurora, Advocate) represented by team members, beyond the market represented by the Team Leader.
  - Identify how each of the additional markets will be represented and individuals' role in the project.

**Total Potential Points: 70 points**

**Other Information Needed** (Not scored, but included to assist with project assessment and selection)

- 1) What evidence do you have that there is a need for this project?
- 2) If you win LAUNCH 2026, what type of support from CHI would help move your project forward?
- 3) Please provide a brief explanation of how you will utilize the grand prize award (\$70,000 for first place, \$30,000 for second place with potential matching) to evolve your project should you win LAUNCH 2026?

**Additional Documents** (not required)

Please attach, in a single PDF, any additional documents that you would like the application review committee to read along with your submission.

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**Apply TODAY**

Check out previous themes and LAUNCH winners on our Website,  
<https://school.wakehealth.edu/research/institutes-and-centers/center-for-healthcare-innovation/research/launch>.

