

04/13/2026

NC TraCS Clinical & Translational Science (CTS) Pilot Program

North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences (NC TraCS) Institute

Evan Dellon, MD, MPH – Program Director

David Carroll, PhD – Director, Research Funding Development

Kaitlin Zalcikova, PhD – Program Manager, CTS Research Program



The University
of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill

CTS Research Program: Who are we?



Evan Dellon, MD, MPH
Director



Kaitlin Zalcikova, PhD
Program Manager



Leah Gardner, MIS, PMP
Project Manager



David Carroll, PhD
Director, Research
Funding Dev.



Line Gonet, MPH
Project Manager,
Team Science



Laura Cowan
QA/QC Manager



Samantha Schwartz, PhD
Science Grant Writer



Topics to be covered

- Translational Science vs Translational Research
- Outline of CTS Pilot Program
- Q&A

CTS Pilot Program: Language from the CTSA FOA



- The CTS Pilot Module provides modest research support for new and innovative research projects relevant to CTS.
- Pilot projects must be focused on translational science, i.e., focused on ***understanding a scientific or operational principle underlying a step of the translational process with the goal of developing generalizable principles to accelerate translational research.***

Translational *Science* vs Translational *Research*



- ***Translational Research***: Turning observations in the laboratory, clinic and community into interventions that improve the health of individuals and communities – from diagnostics, preventions and treatments, to medical procedures and behavioral changes



Translational *Science* vs Translational *Research*



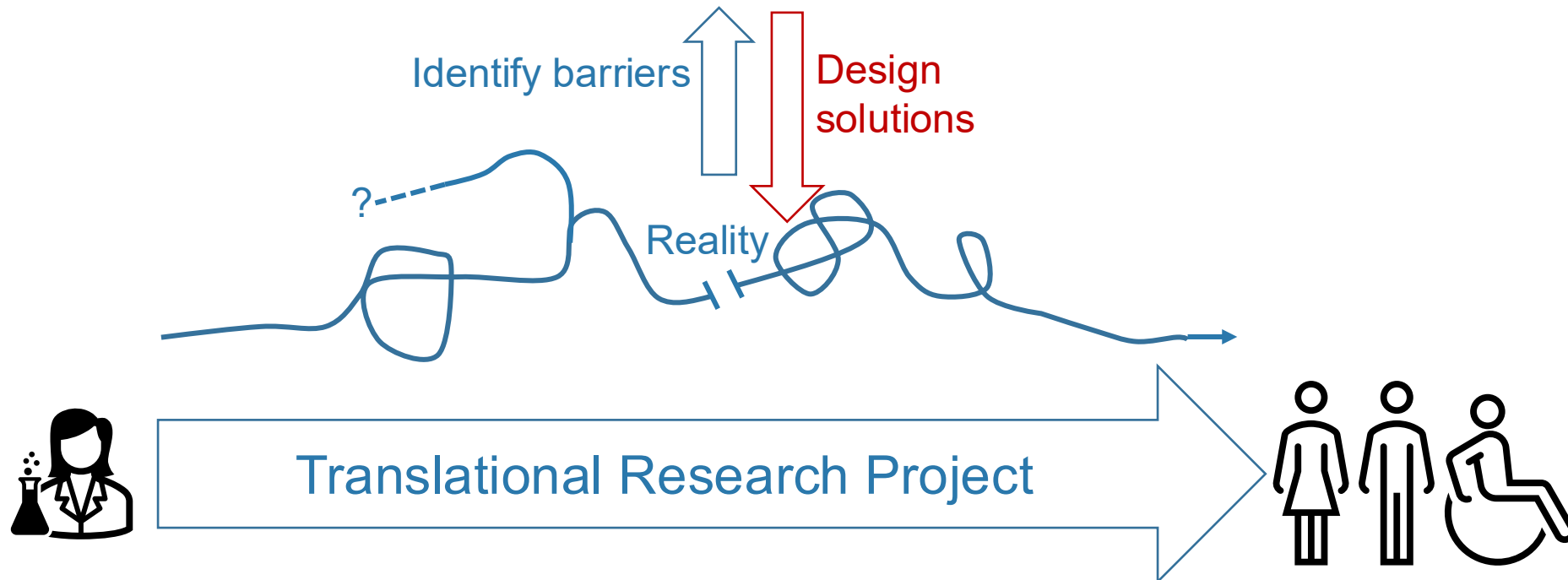
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Translational Science vs Translational Research



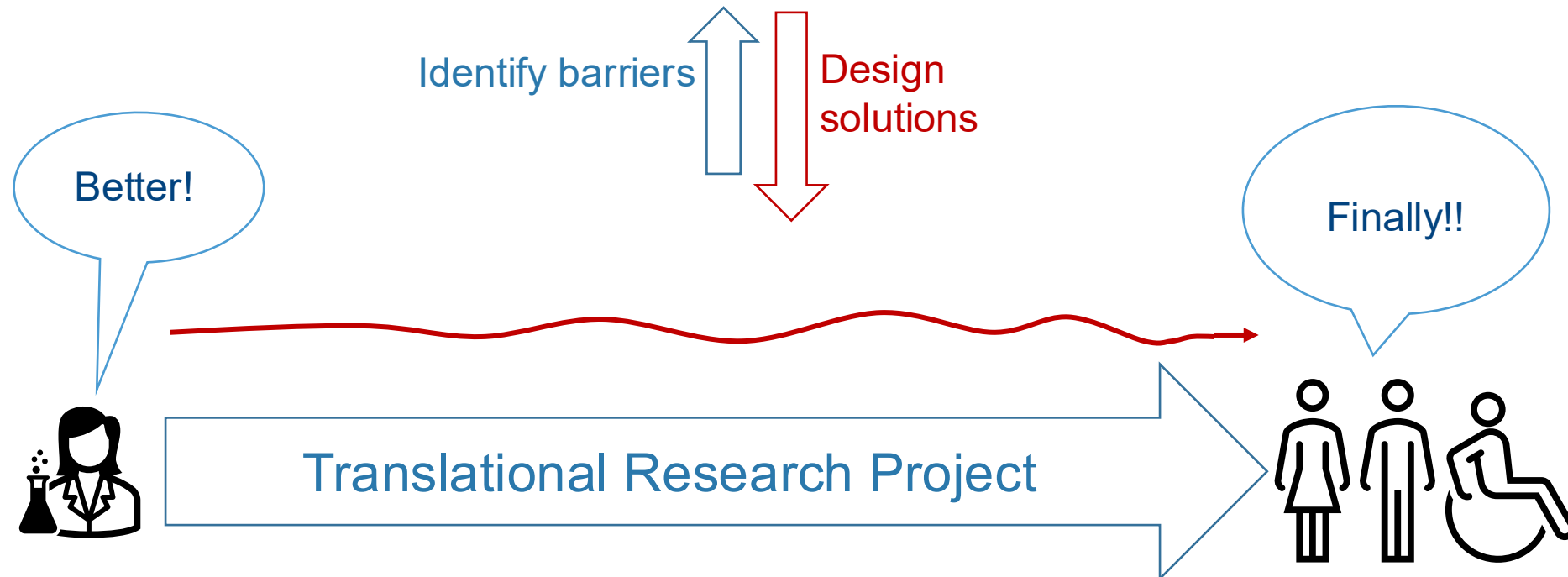
- **Translational Science** aims to **accelerate** the process of translational research by identifying common roadblocks and developing solutions to make translational research **more efficient, faster and more predictable**.



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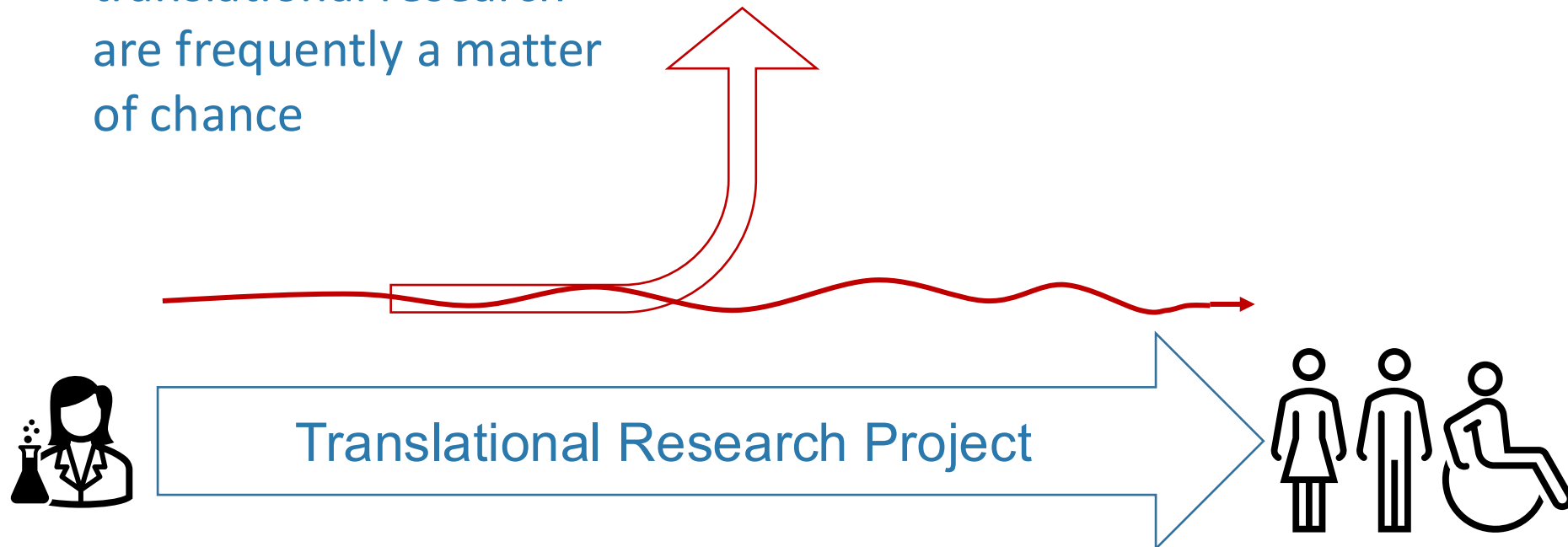


Translational *Science* vs Translational *Research*

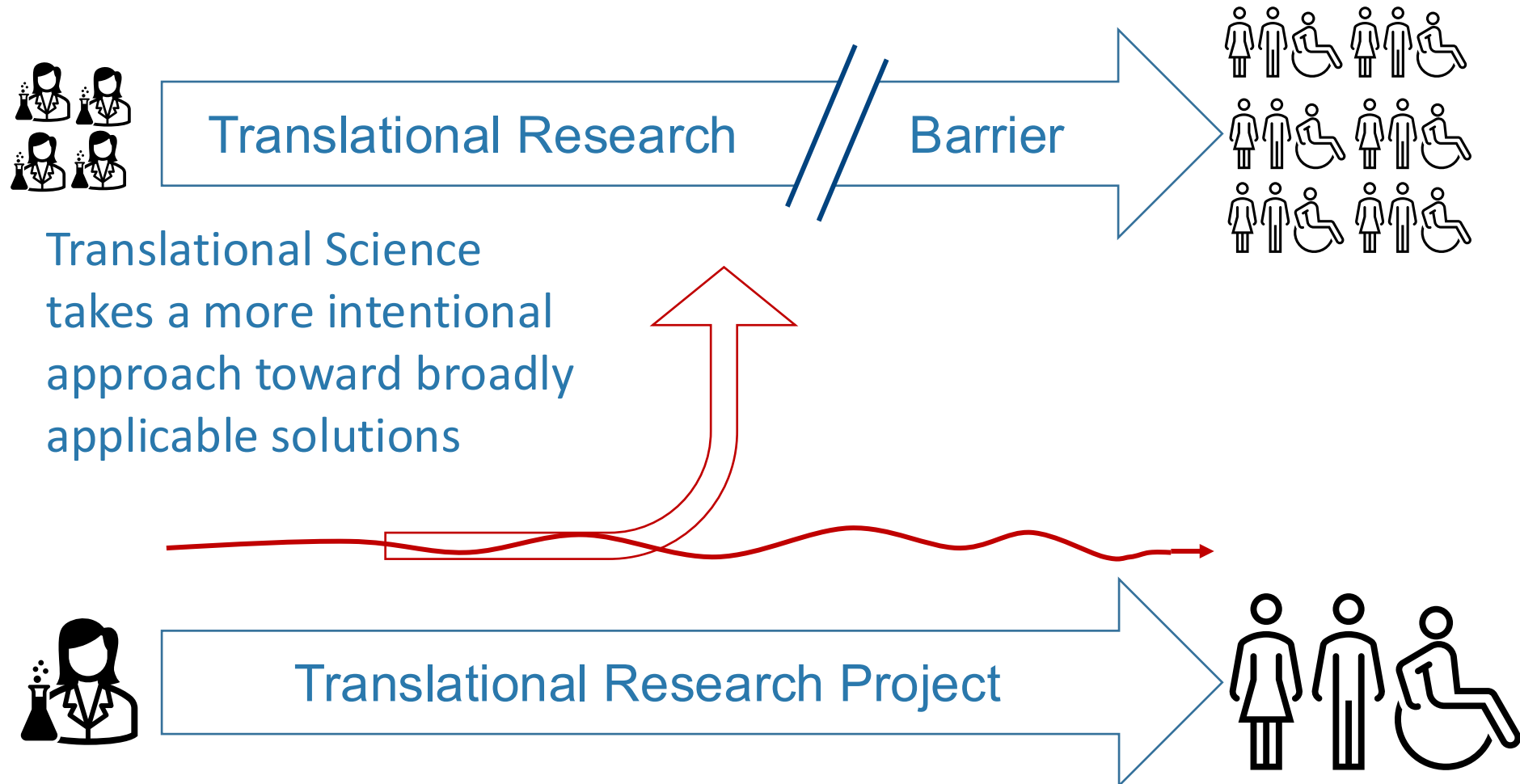


Broadly applicable advances resulting from translational research are frequently a matter of chance

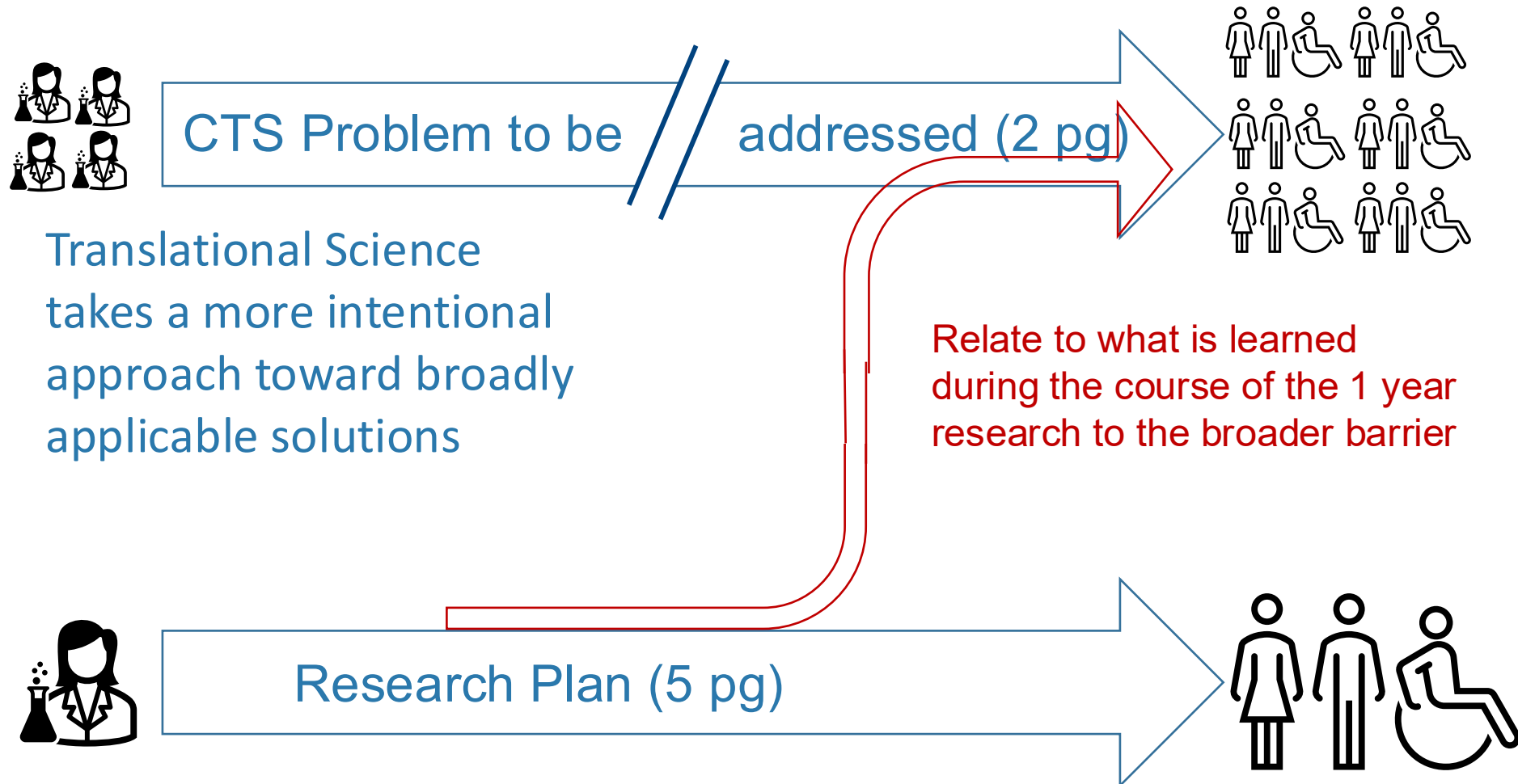
A broadly applicable solution without a broadly encountered translational barrier



Translational *Science* vs Translational *Research*



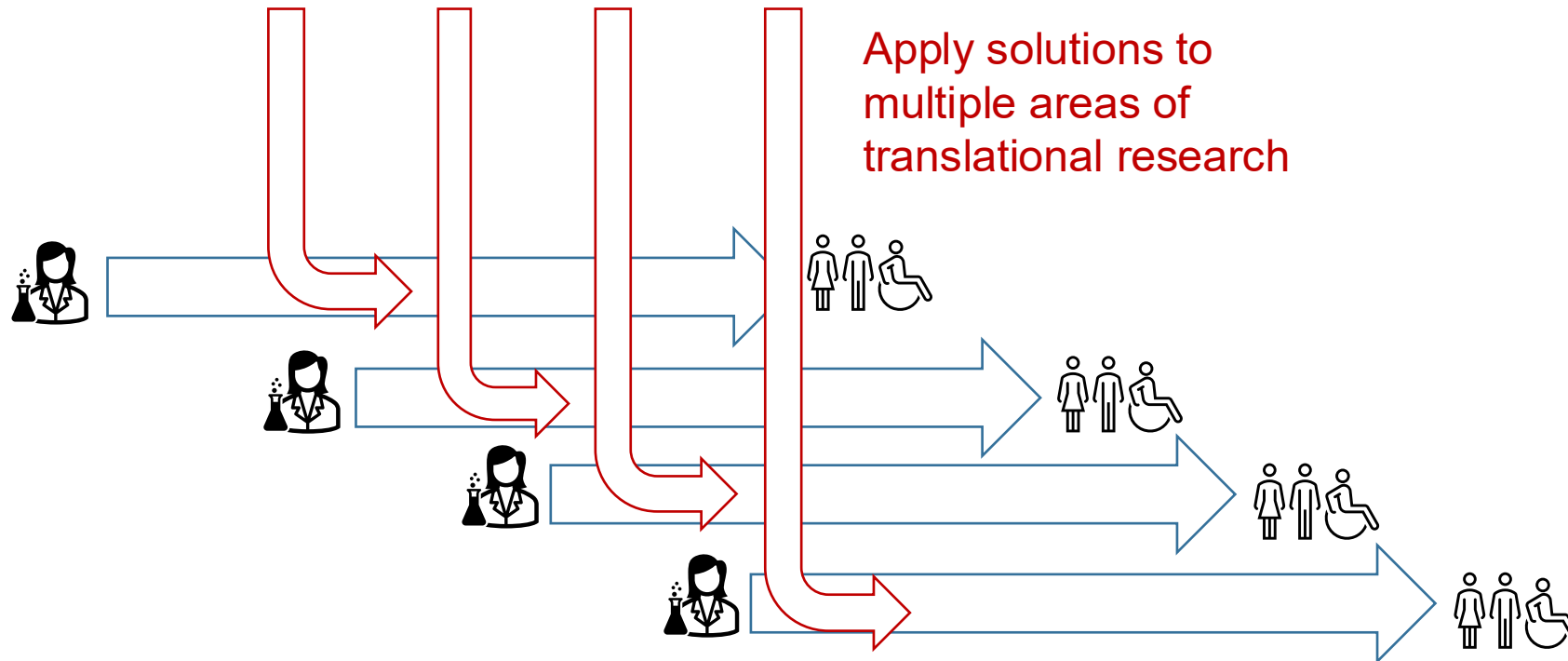
Translational *Science* vs Translational *Research*



Translational *Science* vs Translational *Research*



- Designing workarounds for your own research is good troubleshooting – designing solutions while considering how researchers in other fields might benefit is Translational Science



TR vs TS: The University of Rochester Pie Example



- **Translational Research:** Baking a better pumpkin pie
- **Translational Science:** Designing a faster and more pastry-making technique, benefiting pie-makers everywhere
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/university-of-rochester-ctsi_translational-science-explained-easy-as-activity-7263173913285685248-op4k?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop



This is still a Pilot Program...



- Projects are intended to:
 - generate preliminary data to support subsequent applications for external funding
 - provide initial support to establish proof of concept
 - explore possible innovative new leads or new directions for established investigators
 - stimulate investigators from other areas to lend their expertise in research in CTS

TraCS CTS Pilot Program Basics



- 4-8 grants, awarded annually.
- \$25k – \$50k grants. **No match allowed**
- Use of TraCS services is encouraged
- 1 year funding period, extending from April 1 – March 31 - **No budget extensions**
- PI eligibility essentially the same as that for NIH “R” funding
- PI from any TraCS partnership institution (UNC, NC A&T, NC State)

Using TraCS Services for Pilot Projects



- For example:
 - Biostatistics
 - Clinical and Translational Research Center (CTRC)
 - FastTraCS
 - Patient and Community Engagement in Research (PaCER)
 - Regulatory
 - Inclusive Science Program (ISP)
 - Team Science
 - Research Recruitment and Retention (R&R)
 - Informatics and Data Science (IDSci)

Using TraCS Services for Pilot Projects



- Visit [NC TraCS website](#), see what TraCS offers
- Consult with individual Service reps
- Address Service usage in application
- TraCS services are available at reduced rates to Pilot awardees
- ***Use of TraCS services must be discussed with, and agreed upon with service reps, and described in the Service Agreement attachment in the application (one agreement form per TraCS service to be used)***

“Cooperative Agreement” vs Grant



- Ongoing Pilot Program input and support:
- Navigator assigned to research team
 - Advise on CTS aspects of research
 - Liaise between team and TraCS services
 - Future plans and funding opportunities
- Regular meetings
- 6- and 12-month progress reports

Key Dates/Timeline – Cycle 6



Milestone	Timeline
FOA Release Date	March 1, 2026
FAQ Sessions (2)	April 7, 2026 April 13, 2026
*Meeting with Pilot Staff	March – June 2026
**Meeting(s) with TraCS service reps	March – June 2026
Application Due Date	July 14, 2026
Anticipated Funding Announcement	October 2026
Completing Regulatory Approvals (IRB, IACUC, NCATS)	March 1, 2027
Funding Period	April 1, 2027 – March 31, 2028

*Required for all prospective applicants

**Required only for applicants intending to use TraCS services

Proposal Submission and Review



- Due July 14, 2026 through the NC TraCS [online pilot submission system](#)
- Application comprises a set of uploaded PDFs describing Research Plan, CTS Relevance, Timeline, Budget, Biosketches etc
- Applications will be reviewed “NIH-style” – assigned to a small set of reviewers and subsequently discussed in Study Section.
- Funding decisions will be announced October 2026, and all applicants will receive written feedback

Program Staff/Contacts/Information



- General Questions? email pilots@unc.edu
- Contacts:
 - Evan Dellon, MD, MPH - Module Leader
 - David Carroll, PhD - Lead Navigator (for questions re: topic suitability and application process)
 - [Kaitlin Zalcikova, PhD](#) – Program Manager, CTS-RP (for questions re: applicant eligibility)
 - [Laura Cowan](#) – QA/QC Manager, Pilot Program
- [Funding Announcement, FAQs, Application Portal](#)
- [NCATS Translational Science Resources](#)



Questions for us?



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Think of our helpful and knowledgeable staff and faculty as your extended research team.

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North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences (NC TraCS) Institute

NOTEWORTHY NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brought to you by the integrated hub of the NCATS CTSA program at UNC-Chapel Hill

Innovating the future of esophageal research

The esophagus is an organ with a simple purpose—moving food from our mouths to our stomachs. It's also an organ that people don't think about very much unless something is wrong. Treating esophageal diseases can be complicated, as it's hard to get medication to stick to the inside of the esophagus long enough to be effective.

Evan Dellon, a gastroenterologist at the UNC School of Medicine, along with Anthony Blikslager, a veterinarian at North Carolina State University, are helping researchers test, discover, and study new drugs and treatments for esophageal diseases. Their PROMOTER project will develop models of the disease in pigs, giving scientists an efficient and newly insightful way to investigate these conditions.

Contact Us



For more information about NC TraCS offerings and to engage one of our many experts, you can:

Visit us online at tracs.unc.edu

Call us at 919-966-6022 / toll-free at 866-705-4931

Email us at nctracs@unc.edu

Find us on campus: Brinkhous-Bullitt Building, 2nd floor



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