

Aboriginal Health Research News

Message from Dr. Malcolm King, IAPH Scientific Director



First Nations Housing and Health

On February 4th, I had the privilege, along with my colleagues from CIHR and Health Canada, to appear before the [Senate Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples](#), specifically to speak

to the issue of mould in First Nations housing and how it affects health. Dr. Nancy Edwards, Scientific Director of the Institute of Population and Public Health, and I represented CIHR, whereas Ms. Debra Gillis, Acting Director General, Interprofessional Advisory and Program Support represented the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch at Health Canada.

The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples was created by the Senate in 1990, following a motion presented by the Honourable Len Marchand, an Aboriginal senator from British Columbia who later became the committee's first Chair. The Senate Selection Committee nominated the first members of the committee on February 14, 1990. The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples is referred, as the Senate may decide, matters relating to the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada.

Senator Dennis Patterson, current Chair of the committee, started the meeting by explaining the overall purpose of this session, which is to inform the committee on what future studies it could undertake to best serve Aboriginal Communities.

Nancy and I explained how research provides evidence, specifically on mould in housing for Aboriginal peoples, and generally on housing quality and its impacts on the health of First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, and finally on how CIHR is poised to help inform decision making.

As an illustrative example, we [highlighted](#) the work of Dr. Linda Larcombe from the University of Manitoba. Last year, Dr. Larcombe received an operating grant in the [Population Health Intervention Research Fall 2013 competition](#) for her project entitled "*A New Vision: Dene First Nations Perspectives on Healthy Housing*". In this interesting and novel project, the investigative team was engaged in identifying mould and also developing a vision for more culturally appropriate housing for the Dene people of Manitoba.

Since February 4th, Senator Lillian Dyck of Saskatchewan, in follow-up to this initial hearing, tabled a Senate motion for the Standing Committee to examine and report on challenges and potential solutions relating to First Nations infrastructure on reserves, including, but not limited to: (a) housing; (b) community infrastructure (such as water and wastewater treatment, schools and other community buildings); and (c) innovative opportunities for financing and more effective collaborative strategies. IAPH is pleased to see the broad nature of this senate inquiry.

This was my first appearance before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples and I must say it was a very rewarding experience. For those of you who are interested in learning more about

the role of this committee and the important work it undertakes, or to view this specific hearing, I encourage you to visit their website.

The [video](#) of the hearing can be found on the Parliament website – click on "view this clip" under general information. You can also read the [transcript](#) of the hearing on the Senate Committee's website.

In closing, by the time of distribution of this newsletter, I will also have met with a Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region on the subject of "Mental Wellness in Canada's North". Stay tuned for more on this topic in a subsequent newsletter.

Best wishes. Chi-miigwetch

Malcolm King, PhD

REMINDER: New IAB members wanted!

Applications are still being accepted for membership to CIHR Institute Advisory Boards.

The deadline for submission is April 11, 2014.

[Details on the CIHR website.](#)



MENTORSHIP/TRAINEE CORNER

Mentorship - Writing Excellent Support Letters for your Trainees

IAPH is aiming to create a strong cadre of Indigenous researchers driving Indigenous health research. In order to do so, we need to increase the number of trainees funded in the CIHR open competitions. This is a challenging task because of the larger number of excellent trainees in all fields of health applying to these competitions – challenging, but not impossible. To this end, we asked our CIHR colleagues to give us advice on how to write memorable letters of support; the kind everyone remembers and wished they had in their application. We encourage future trainees and their mentors to take stock of the tips described below, and remember that a well-crafted letter is priceless.

CIHR research training awards, such as [Travel Awards](#), [Doctoral Research Awards](#), and [Fellowships](#) are highly competitive. Here are some simple, yet effective tips, to prepare strong letters of support for CIHR training awards.

1. It's important that the right people be selected to write the letters of support - someone with scientific credibility and direct experience working with the candidate. Choose sponsors (i.e. references) that know you well enough to be able to assess your potential and to provide specific examples of behaviour with respect to each characteristic on the Sponsor Assessment Form.
2. Ensure that the proper form is used and read the instructions carefully.
3. The Letter should be no more than 1 ½ to 2 pages long.

4. The first paragraph should clearly state the intent and describe the relationship between the sponsor and the applicant (i.e.: history of prior work, collaboration with or support of the candidate's research, current status of partnership).
5. Use clear language and familiar descriptors (i.e.: outstanding, excellent, very good, good, etc).
6. For each statement made, ensure that an example that describes specifically the behaviour of the candidate in that specific circumstance is provided.
7. End with a statement of enthusiasm or excitement regarding the potential of the candidate.

Letters of support should comments on the candidate's:

- characteristics, skills, strengths, abilities, qualities and assets that correlate with career research achievement;
- leadership abilities and potential for contribution and impact to research;
- ability to conduct health research and their most significant achievements;
- knowledge translation activities.

For general tips about the application process, see the [July 2012](#) edition of our Newsletter.

Why you should apply for an IAPH Travel Award

You're a Master's or Doctoral student, a Post-Doctoral Fellow, or perhaps even a Knowledge User, working in the broad area of the IAPH mandate. As you know, one of the most important tasks of any successful researcher or knowledge user is to share their wisdom. As the adage goes "publish or perish" - at least for academics. Presenting at conferences is an excellent way of sharing the fruits of your labour with other like-minded people, gaining visibility, networking, and fine tuning your presentation skills.

But attending a conference can be costly! This is where IAPH might be able to help you with a travel award. An IAPH travel award enables trainees and knowledge users to present their own research at national and international meetings and/or conferences.

Travel Awards are relatively small amounts of funding compared to other funding opportunities offered by CIHR. But for trainees particularly, a travel award is a great way to get started, to learn how to apply to CIHR; and most importantly, build your CV for the next bigger grant!

Some points to consider:

The timelines between the launch of Travel Awards and Funding Start date can be quite lengthy and so, they require a bit of forward thinking. The sooner you know the conference dates, the better. In order to receive funding in time, should you be successful in the competition, you will need to apply early – otherwise you will have to pay for your travel and receive your payment once you've returned*; as long as your travel dates are within the allowable travel period for that competition.

Here is a breakdown of the different timelines:

Spring competition

Launch: mid-April
Application deadline: end-May
Funding start date: September
Allowable travel period: Mid-Aug to end-Feb

Fall competition

Launch: mid-August
Application deadline: end-September

Funding start date: January
Allowable travel period: mid-Dec to end-May

Winter competition

Launch: mid-December
Application deadline: end-January
Funding start date: May
Allowable travel period: mid-Apr to end-Oct

So, for example, you have submitted your poster for a conference happening in November 2014. You will want to apply to the upcoming Spring competition, in order to receive funding in time to attend the conference.

Also, make sure you provide adequate justification for each point on your application. Don't forget your great letter of support! (See above)

Look for the next round of Travel Awards, the Spring 2014 competition, to be launched in April!

And remember, if you have any questions about the IAPH travel award competition, you can contact [Jacques Dalton](#). Good Luck!

* Not all institutes allow payment after travel. Please check the funding opportunity and individual institute criteria for details.

IAPH would like to congratulate those who were successful in the following Winter Priority Announcements.

**Operating Grant - Priority Announcement:
Aboriginal Ways of Knowing**

LATIMER, Margot (IWK Health Centre - Halifax)
Seeing Aboriginal Children's Pain-Weaving Stories, Art and Statistics to Create Ways to Reduce the Hurt and Improve Children Wellbeing

Operating Grant - PA: Applying the "Two-eyed Seeing" model to Aboriginal Health

CIDRO, Jaime (University of Winnipeg)
Birth Repatriation in Northern Manitoba: Norway House Cree Nation

HADDAD, Pierre (Université de Montréal)
The best of both worlds: Developing strategies to provide safe and culturally appropriate access to Traditional Medicines for diabetes care in contemporary Aboriginal primary healthcare

Operating Grant - PA: First Nations, Inuit and Metis Health

GALLOWAY, Tracey (University of Manitoba)
The impact of proposed change in federal health funding policy on health programs operating in Yukon First Nations communities



CIHR IRSC

Applied Public Health Chairs

*This FO contains a Pathways-related component

[Application deadline: May 1, 2014](#)

CIHR Open Operating Grants - Priority Announcements

[Application deadline: March 3, 2014](#)

- Aboriginal Ways of Knowing and Two-Eyed Seeing (Bridge Funding)
- IAPH Start-up Funds: Early Careers (Bridge Funding)

Team Grant: Boys and Men's Health

[Application deadline: August 6, 2014](#)

CIHR News

An important message from Dr. Jane Aubin, CIHR's Chief Scientific Officer

CIHR Reforms: Addressing the Gap - An Update on the funding start date for the 2014 Foundation Scheme "live pilot" and Transitional OOGP competitions

As part of our commitment to keeping the research community informed throughout the implementation of the new Open Suite of Programs and peer review processes, I would like to let the community know about a recent development related to the [2014 Foundation Scheme](#) and [Transitional OOGP](#) competitions.

Early in the design process for the new Open Suite of Programs, we acknowledged that there would be an impact on the cycle of funding start dates during the transition period and therefore have worked both to minimize the impact and provide information to the research community as early as possible. In this vein, we provided the community with the relevant funding opportunities and associated timelines well in advance of the transition period to allow current grant holders to plan for potential gaps in CIHR funding. We have heard concerns from many in the community, both from individual researchers and from research institutions, regarding the impact of a six month gap in funding for successful applicants. After

having considered various options, and weighing the risks and benefits of any adjustments (including the impact on the predicted number of grants CIHR will be able to support through these competitions) we have taken the decision to reduce the gap by moving forward the funding start date for both competitions. This will have the effect of allowing new grantees to ramp up their research faster and will reduce the funding gap that may exist for some current grantees from 6 months to 3 months.

As a result, the funding start date for the 2014 Foundation Scheme live pilot and Transitional OOGP has changed from October 1, 2015 to July 1, 2015.

Questions regarding the Open Suite of Programs and peer review reforms can be sent to CIHR at Roadmap-Plan.Strategique@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

CONTACT US

[Malcolm King, PhD, FCCP](#)
Scientific Director

[Paul Bélanger, BScN](#)
Assistant Director

[Nicole Manson](#)
Finance & HR Manager

[Jacques Dalton](#)
Associate, Strategic Initiatives

[Jeff LaPlante](#)
Institute Project Officer

[Mélanie Bergeron](#)
Project Officer

The *Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health* fosters the advancement of a national health research agenda to improve and promote the health of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada, through research, knowledge translation and capacity building. The Institute's pursuit of research excellence is enhanced by respect for community research priorities and Indigenous knowledge, values and cultures.

[CIHR-IAPH Website](#)