

Indigenous Health Research News

Message from Dr. Malcolm King, IAPH Scientific Director



Season's Greetings

As we are nearing the close of 2015, we have much to be thankful for, beginning with a new government and a Prime Minister who has already committed to working with First Peoples on a "Nation-to-Nation" basis. Prime Minister Trudeau has announced a five-point plan to reset the relationship with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. This surely will contribute to the reconciliation efforts between Indigenous Peoples and the whole of Canada.

May your families be safe over the holidays and feel hopeful for all that we have to look forward to in the New Year 2016.

College of Reviewers

The College of Reviewers is part of CIHR's new way of reviewing applications for funding, facilitating access to reviewers based on expertise, and experience relevant to the topic of the proposal. Once up and running, this will be the primary source of reviewers for CIHR's main open competitions, the Foundation Scheme (longer term, theme-oriented grants) and the Project Scheme (shorter term, goal-oriented grants). Along with initial-phase virtual reviews, the

College represents the new way of reviewing grant applications. Please check out the CIHR website for further details on the College, as well as the new open competitions in these three links [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

There have been concerns raised over participation in the College. Some of these are very relevant to proposals related to the health and wellness of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. For one, the question of what constitutes Indigenous health research is an important question that needs to be clarified by CIHR. We are committed to addressing this question and how it will then impact the review of applications. The issue of a sufficient cadre of reviewers with expertise in Indigenous health is another, perhaps even bigger issue. Further, it's essential that there be reviewers with Indigenous lived experience and reviewers who are knowledgeable about Indigenous methodologies and Indigenous ways of knowing, particularly for applications where these aspects are integral to the proposal.

While we are working with CIHR to address the questions of how Indigenous health research can be fairly, appropriately reviewed, we need researchers and knowledge users to step up and make themselves available as reviewers of Indigenous health research grant applications. The alternative is reviews by those who are less knowledgeable and understanding about Indigenous methodologies, the Indigenous determinants of health, and Indigenous ways of knowing.

Chi Miigwech.

You may also be interested in my Letter to the Editor in the recent Canadian Journal of Public Health found [here](#) titled Contextualization of Socio-Culturally Meaningful Data.

Staffing Announcements

As you are aware from our August newsletter, Jeff LaPlante, our former Senior Project Officer moved on to new endeavors in his native Winnipeg. As a result, we have hired two new Project Officers - Joanne Nelson and Maya Nakajima.

Previously, Joanne Nelson, a Tsimshian woman from Lax Kw'alaams in northwestern British Columbia, was an Epidemiologist for First Nations Health Authority. Joanne comes to us as a recent graduate of the University of Washington's Master of Public Health program and with nearly twenty years of experience in the field of public health as it pertains to First Nations peoples. She is excited for her opportunity to join the CIHR-IAPH team and is considering PhD studies in the field of Indigenous health research.

Maya Nakajima happily joined the CIHR-IAPH team as an Institute Project Officer, with a Master's in Public Health from Simon Fraser University, focused on Indigenous health research. Her experiences in this strong, growing field include managing the First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education, and Employment Survey in BC with the First Nations Health Authority, learning from and working with Inuit youth as a Youth Leader in Iqaluit, Nunavut, to managing the Population Health Information Unit in overseeing the management of health services utilization data for the Government of Nunavut. By grounding herself in community, keeping an open mind and heart, Maya brings many stories of spending time on the land, learning from the stories and experiences of First Nations and Inuit youth, leaders, and Elders alike, and making meals and sharing lasting, memorable laughs with community members.



The Seventh Gathering of the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide

The Seventh Gathering of the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide (HOSW 2015) took place in Kirikiriroa, Hamilton, Aotearora, New Zealand from November 15-19, 2015. The HOSW movement began with a vision to create an international forum to share information about community programs, strategies, research, and evaluation, addressing challenges of alcohol and drug misuse among Indigenous communities across the world. Conference delegates, including Indigenous Peoples from around the world, gathered for The Seventh Gathering, featuring the theme of Mauri Ora meaning "life force, a positive state of being, a continuous energy flow, life, good health and vitality." There were four key themes that were considered strengths-based and forward focused: building the capacity of Indigenous leadership; celebrating Indigenous solutions; realizing Indigenous potential; leading towards a healthy Indigenous future.



There were 1200 delegates who attended the HOSW 2015, of which 25% were Canadian. Keynote speakers included Dr. Evan Adams (One Eye Forward, One Eye Back), Dr. Cindy Blackstock (Ka Pouhana: Indigenous Leadership and Health Promotion), and Alicia Argulak (Make Room for

Youth). At least seven Canadian delegates were awarded CIHR Travel Awards to attend the gathering. Some of the awarded presentations included: Mâmawoh kamâtowin: Coming Together to Help Each Other: Honoring Indigenous Nursing Knowledge; Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal People in Canada; Potentializing Wellness through the Stories of Female Survivors and Descendants of Indian Residential Schools Survivors; and Inuit Approaches to Healing: Mamasarvik Healing Centre (MHC) (see more about the MHC in this newsletter).

Speaking with delegates about their experiences in attending the HOSW, many commented on unique and meaningful opportunities to develop new partnerships, and showcase their own projects, with fellow communities and researchers. HOSW is a perfect example of how Indigenous Peoples celebrate their successes and it demonstrates the strength of culture. Through opportunities like HOSW, delegates are able to gain much more fulsome experience, rather than just highlighting new programs or research opportunities; they feel grounded, connected, and inspired, with greater mauri ora.

Mamasarvik Healing Centre Model Presented at HOSW 2015

Tungasuvvingat Inuit Management presented the Mamasarvik Healing Centre (MHC) Model at the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide (2015) in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) provides a variety of social, cultural and wellness programs to Inuit living in Ottawa and other urban areas. The MHC is an Inuit-specific residential treatment program that provides treatment services for drug and alcohol misuse, as well as for the effects of trauma. The program is an eight-week residential program and is holistic, culturally relevant and language appropriate for Inuit. It is recognized throughout the country as a centre of excellence.

It is well known and documented that suicide among Inuit populations is a significant concern. One of the unexpected outcomes of this healing model was the dramatic decline in the rate of suicide among its participants. Over 720 Inuit have participated in the eight-week intensive treatment program since 2003. The program's completion rate for residential treatment is 80%.



The model has proved to be an effective suicide prevention program with 0.04% incidence of suicide post-treatment, as reported by MHC.

The MHC presents an excellent opportunity for meaningful discussions with Indigenous health researchers, who can help to demonstrate program successes and outcomes of Inuit-specific approaches to healing in areas such as: suicide prevention; youth services; cultural retention and language; employment and vocational services; child welfare; health promotion services; food security; urban issues; and housing and homelessness. For more information please contact Pam Stellick, Director of the MHC (director@tungasuvvingatinuit.ca) or

Jason LeBlanc, Executive Director of TI (exec-dir@tungasuvvingatinuit.ca). MHC: 613 563 3546 ext. 209 and TI: 613 565-5885 ext. 15. Website: www.tungasuvvingatinuit.ca.

PEKE Spotlight: National Association of Friendship Centres

The NAFC-Pathways-PEKE is one of three Partners for Engagement and Knowledge Exchange (PEKEs) that has been funded through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Pathways for Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples signature initiative. Through Pathways, CIHR and its partners will contribute to the creation of better preventive health services, healthier communities and health equity for First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Aboriginal peoples in Canada in four priority areas. These priority areas include, suicide prevention, diabetes, tuberculosis, and oral health. The primary goal of the NAFC-Pathways-PEKE is to ensure that Friendship Centres are meaningfully and ethically engaged throughout the course of the Pathways initiative.

The NAFC

The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) is democratically governed, status blind and is accountable directly to Friendship Centres.

Established in 1972, the NAFC is a network of 118 Friendship Centres from coast-to-coast-to-coast. Friendship Centres are Canada's most significant off-reserve Aboriginal service delivery infrastructure, achieving 2.6 million points of contact nationwide in 2011-2012. During the same year Friendship Centres across Canada delivered over 1,493 programs and services to approximately 700,000 urban Aboriginal people.

In order to achieve its goal the NAFC-Pathways-PEKE will focus on the following:

- Building community capacity to partner in Pathways research.
- Building capacity of community to turn research into action by supporting the development and implementation of community specific knowledge mobilization plans.
- Building researcher capacity to understand and respect the urban Aboriginal research environment.



- Brokering and supporting research relationships between Friendship Centres and Implementation Research Teams (IRTs).
- Promoting urban Aboriginal research opportunities among post-secondary students.
- Supporting and facilitating the scale-up of interventions.
- Contributing to knowledge translation and dissemination activities.

Impact

The NAFC-Pathways-PEKE will impact Friendship Centres in two key ways. First, through their participation in Pathways related activities Friendship Centres will be in a position to guide research and leverage findings to advocate for additional program and service funding. Second, Friendship Centres will have the opportunity to develop or increase their capacity to drive and/or partner to conduct research within their communities.

Uniqueness

Catherine Graham, the Manager of the NAFC-Pathways-PEKE, states that they are a "unique PEKE" given their urban Aboriginal focus and their extensive reach within the urban

Aboriginal community. Throughout all aspects of their work, the PEKE remains mindful that "communities have the right to tell their own stories" and as such they are respectful of community boundaries as they focus on long-term capacity building and support so that urban Aboriginal research is community-driven, rather than merely community-based. To that end, they are developing tools for communities that include a community ethics development tool kit intended to support communities in the development of their own research principles and a knowledge translation planning tool kit. In addition, they are working to develop a fact sheet series "Research 101," and a researcher's guide to community expectations. With all of these tools and their unique focus, the NAFC-Pathways-PEKE will create a sustainable research environment for Friendship Centres.

Become a CIHR Institute Advisory Board Member

The recruitment campaign to fill up to 75 positions within the five new Institutes Advisory Boards (IABs) has begun. Comprised of five (5) horizontal boards serving all 13 CIHR Institutes, this new advisory model will boost collaboration across Institutes and within our multitude of stakeholder communities by bringing together a wide range of perspectives within each IAB. The five (5) new IABs are:

- IAB on Indigenous Peoples' Health
- IAB on Health Innovation
- IAB on Research Excellence, Policy and Ethics

- IAB on Health Promotion and Prevention
- IAB on Chronic Conditions

Online applications can be submitted before February 3.

Click [here](#) to apply to become an IAB member and [here](#) for further information.



CIHR Foundation Grant Recipients: Focus on Indigenous Health Research

Using traditional knowledge, cultural values and science, Inuit are adapting to climate change in Canada's North

Studying the adaptive capacity of Inuit facing climate change in the Canadian Arctic

Dr. James D. Ford, Department of Geography, McGill University

Excerpt:

"Having incorporated Inuit traditional knowledge and cultural values into his work, Dr. James Ford is keenly aware of the ability of traditional Indigenous knowledge to help Inuit adapt to shifts in the climate."

Please click [here](#) for the full article.



Developing a more complete picture of arthritis in Indigenous communities

Dr. Cheryl Barnabe, Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary

Excerpt:

"Dr. Cheryl Barnabe, a Métis clinician and researcher at the University of Calgary, is exploring why arthritis appears to disproportionately affect Indigenous communities, and what can be done to reduce these disparities."

Please click [here](#) for the full article.



World AIDS Day and Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week December 2015

Please click on both of these links for inspiring messages regarding World AIDS Day and Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week

Message from the Honourable Dr. Jane Philpott, Minister of Health - Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2015

Excerpt:

"Reducing HIV/AIDS burden among Indigenous peoples in Canada is a key priority for the Government of Canada's Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada. Our current efforts focus on culturally appropriate HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Blood Borne infections, prevention, education and awareness, research and community capacity building. In addition, we work with numerous partners at the national and community level to address barriers to HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment and support."

Statement from Dr. Marc Ouellette, Scientific Director – CIHR Institute of Infection and Immunity

Excerpt:

"The theme of this year's World AIDS Day is "Getting to Zero." That means zero deaths, zero new infections and zero stigma."



Newslinks

TRC Releases Final Report

Truth and Reconciliation chair says final report marks start of 'new era'

The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was released on December 15, 2015 and is available [here](#). There are seven volumes available in French and English that include 94 "Calls to Action".

Tier 2 Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Indigenous Community-Engaged Scholarship

The College of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan is actively seeking an Indigenous person for a full-time tenure-track position in the Department of Indigenous Studies for nomination as a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Indigenous Community-Engaged Scholarship.

You can find more information on how to apply [here](#).

Upcoming Events

CIHR Pathways IRT Component 2 Webinar:

A series of webinars will be held to assist applicants in understanding the focus and the application process:

Webinar in French: on January 6th, 2016 from 12-1pm (ET).

The webinar will feature Dr. Sarah Viehbeck, Assistant Director, for the **Institute of Population and Public Health** and Adrian Puga, Competition Lead for CIHR.

For more information on the webinar please visit the [registration page](#). (Event address for attendees: <https://gts-ee.webex.com/gts-ee/onstage/g.php?d=556579619&t=a>)

Webinar in English: on January 7th, 2016 from 12-1pm (ET).

The webinar will feature **Dr. Malcolm King**, Scientific Director for the **CIHR-Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health** and Adrian Puga, Competition Lead for CIHR.

For more information on the webinar please visit the [registration page](#). (Event address for attendees: <https://gts-ee.webex.com/gts-ee/onstage/g.php?d=555285942&t=a>)

CIHR National Gathering of Graduate Students: Save the Date! June 2016, Ottawa, ON. Students please apply for the CIHR Travel Award (see below) if you plan on attending!

CIHR New Investigators Meeting: Save the Date! June 2016,

Ottawa, ON. New Investigators please apply for the CIHR Travel Award (see below) if you plan on attending!

CIHR Pathways Annual Gathering: Save the Date! June 19-21, 2016 Regina, SK

CPHA Public Health 2016: June 13-16, 2016, Toronto, ON

2016 Global Symposium on Health Systems Research: November 14-18, 2016 Vancouver, BC

Call for Abstracts

2016 Cinsa Conference

June 22-24, 2016, First Nations University, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Co-hosted by Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN) and First Nations University. Submissions are due: January 31, 2016. For more Cinsa 2016 information, visit their [website](#) or follow them on Facebook: [Cinsa 2016](#)

2016 Indigenous Health Conference: Towards Health and Reconciliation

May 26th to 27th 2016, University of Toronto. Call for Abstracts is open! Deadline is January 15th 2015. For more information, please click [here](#).

2016 Global Symposium on Health Systems Research

November 14-18, 2016, Vancouver, BC. For more information and to submit an abstract, click [here](#).

Current Funding Opportunities

Make sure to check out all of the current funding opportunities available through CIHR by clicking on the links below

Training Grant – Indigenous Mentorship Network Program

Team Grant – Pathways Implementation Research Team Component 2

Team Grant – Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases Lung Diseases Phase 3

Team Grant – Environments and Health: Intersectoral Prevention Research Phase 2

Other – Planning and Dissemination Grants – Institute/ Initiative Community Support (Winter 2016 Competition)

Other – HIV Implementation Science Component 1

Upcoming – Travel awards – STAY TUNED! Students planning on attending either the NGGS or NIM this June will be required to submit an application for a travel award.

More information on these and other funding opportunities can be found [here](#).

The **CIHR 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.

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