



Aboriginal Health Research News

Message from Malcolm King, IAPH Scientific Director

Traditional Ways of Knowing and Health Research to Reduce Health Inequities in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis



The CIHR Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health is nearing completion of a long process to engage the wider CIHR community in the development of *Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples*. The overall goal of *Pathways* is

to support research and knowledge translation.

The Institute is also working to do the following: increasing awareness, understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal ways of knowing and traditional knowledge among researchers, peer reviewers and the wider Canadian population; increasing the rigour and the scientific methodology underpinning Aboriginal ways of knowing and traditional knowledge; increasing the number of community-based organizations that are eligible to receive and manage funds on behalf of CIHR in order to foster and support communities' abilities to address their own health issues; increasing the number of researchers conducting Aboriginal-related health research; and increasing the number

and quality of Aboriginal-related research projects submitted to CIHR Open Competition for peer review.

Two-Eyed Seeing: IAPH's overall goal is to foster research based on the concept of "two-eyed seeing", as put forward by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall: *"To see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and to see from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing, and to use both of these eyes together"*.

Pathways is a CIHR Roadmap Signature Initiative, led by IAPH, the Institute of Population and Public Health and the Institute of Gender and Health. Its overall goal is to reduce health inequities of Aboriginal peoples through research and knowledge translation. Although it has not yet been finalized, it can be stated that *Pathways* focuses on exemplars in key areas of health, which include communicable diseases, chronic diseases, mental health, and health services.

At the core of *Pathways* is the scale-up and implementation of knowledge. Key concepts in *Pathways* include Relevance, Respect, Reciprocity and Relationality,

based on respecting Indigenous values and community partnerships. *Pathways* will fund implementation research to enhance understanding of how to implement multilevel and scalable interventions that will lead to improving the health of Aboriginal Peoples.

Indigenous Methodologies are key to *Pathways*. We believe that understanding and applying the Indigenous determinants of health will lead to broader, lasting health outcomes. Further, interventions to improve health behaviours and outcomes need to include Indigenous context and ways of knowing. Engagement of Indigenous peoples and communities is critical to successful implementation of existing and developing knowledge. The principle of two-eyed seeing is the pathway to success.

IAPH is currently engaged in a partnership with the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) to explore how to integrate Indigenous and Western methods in addressing the research and knowledge translation needed to close the gap in First Nations, Inuit and Métis health in this country. Please stay tuned, and if you wish to become involved, please contact either NAHO or IAPH.

Funding Opportunities

CIHR Partnership Award

The CIHR Partnership Award annually recognizes a partnership that exemplifies excellence. The recipients receive a \$25,000 award in the form of a one-year research grant for advancing the research or knowledge translation activities of partnerships with the private, voluntary or public sectors. We encourage you to make your nominations before May 1, 2012. For more information please see the [award website](#).


Canadian Epigenetics, Environment and Health Research Consortium (CEEHRC)

The key focus for this [funding opportunity](#) is the exploration of gene-environment interactions where epigenetics may play a role. This program will support collaborative research teams that have the capability to transform epigenetics research, enhance our understanding of gene-environment interactions, address major health research questions (including health services/policy/economic/ethical, legal or social issues), and foster the application of knowledge gained to the clinic and/or to populations.



Funding Success Story

Two University of Saskatchewan-Based Addictions Projects Address Aboriginal Culture in Healing



The findings of an IAPH-funded study that examined the role of identity and stigma in the healing journeys of First Nations, Inuit and

Métis women from drug abuse were translated into a song and music video in 2009. With nearly 20,000 views on you-tube, the findings were recently released in a second unique approach to translating knowledge – a half-day health intervention workshop titled From Stilettos to Moccasins: A Guide for Group Discussion©. The workshop is available at no cost to communities

and is designed to be facilitated by community members with community members. It comes with a 30-minute training video and all required materials, including feedback forms so the program's impact can be evaluated.

Spearheaded by the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, and led by Dr. Colleen Anne Dell and her community-based team out of the University of Saskatchewan, this workshop was designed based on the latest evidence mirrored with cultural understanding. Favorable results of pilot testing in various settings, from residential

treatment facilities to correctional institutions led to the securing of a Knowledge Translation grant from CIHR. With this funding 150 workshop kits are being promoted and distributed across Canada by 14 community Project Ambassadors. Pauline Young, a research participant and now one of the Ambassadors, has shared that "this project helped me to better understand who I am and its importance to my own healing. And now, through the workshop, I am able to share this life lesson with others." For more information on the project or to access a kit, please visit the [Addictions Research Chair](#) website.

Researcher-Practitioner Health Equity Workshop: Bridging the Gap

By Emma Cohen and Sarah Viehbeck, CIHR-Institute of Population and Public Health

In February of this year, several national-level partners collaborated to host a 1.5 day workshop aimed at bridging the gap between research and practice in health equity. [Health equity](#) implies a focus on achieving fairness in health outcomes for all population segments. Health equity was integrated into all aspects of the workshop including practice- and research-driven sessions. The workshop brought together 60 researchers and practitioners from across Canada. The workshop aimed to:

- Examine approaches to recognize health inequities and increase ability to use tools to address health equity during research, program planning, implementation, and/or evaluation building on an environmental scan [Integrating Social Determinants of Health Equity into Canadian Public Health Practice](#) (NCCDH, 2010)
- Strengthen ability to integrate research and practice-based evidence into planning, implementing and evaluating public health interventions, as well as to monitor action and create opportunities to adjust based on the evidence.
- Identify opportunities for sustained knowledge translation and create stronger links between researchers and public health practitioners who are addressing health equity.

To achieve these objectives, the workshop used a combination of presentations and participatory/interactive components. On Day 1, four case studies that highlighted the intersection between practice and research were presented. A panel of population and public health researchers that described tools to link evidence and action on health equity kicked off discussions for Day 2. Many opportunities for discussion and dialogue were built into the agenda.

At the close of the workshop, Nancy Edwards, Scientific Director CIHR-IPPH, and Connie Clement, Scientific Director NCCDH, expressed a commitment on behalf of their organizations to consider workshop outcomes and continue to support bridging the gap between evidence and action on health equity. Participants also identified opportunities that they could commit to act upon. In the coming weeks, a summary report will be available on the partner websites and follow-up on recommended actions will be conducted with relevant stakeholders.

IAPH Mandate

IAPH 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.

Did you know?

Appointment of Valerie Gideon to ADM at Health Canada

We would like to congratulate Valerie Gideon on her appointment as the Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations with the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch at Health Canada, effective March 1, 2012.

Valerie has been with Health Canada since 2007 where she held the positions of Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Analysis, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch as well as Regional Director, First Nations and Inuit Health, Ontario Region. Prior to this, Valerie was the Senior Director, Health and Social Development with the Assembly of First Nations. She also held the positions of Director, First Nations Centre and Health Information Policy Analyst with the National Aboriginal Health Organization. She was also the first Chair of CIHR's Aboriginal Health Peer Review Committee.

Valerie is a member of the Gesgapegiag First Nation in Quebec and holds a PhD in communications from McGill University.

On behalf of IAPH and the research community, congratulations Valerie!

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