



Aboriginal Health Research News

Message from Malcolm King, IAPH Scientific Director

Building On Strengths – Taking Action to Improve the Health and Healing of First Nations, Inuit and Métis People, Families and Communities: A Day at Rideau Hall



On March 27, 2012, I had the privilege of attending, along with about 30 other Canadians, a [Roundtable Dialogue hosted by Her Excellency Sharon Johnston](#), the wife of Governor General David Johnston at Rideau Hall. The meeting was organized by the Canadian Nurses Association, and specifically their [National Expert Commission](#), co-chaired by Marlene Smadu, Dean of Nursing at the University of Regina, and Maureen McTeer, lawyer and wife of former Prime Minister Joe Clark. The Expert Commission includes Julie Lys, a nurse practitioner from Fort Smith, who is Métis.

The Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, led by interim Executive Director Fjola Hart Wasekeesikaw (Cree, MB), was also an important contributor to the meeting. Fjola led a smudging ceremony to formally open the day's proceedings. The gathering included Aboriginal health professionals, researchers and community leaders, as well as government

representatives. The CIHR-IAPH presence included Advisory Board members Gail Turner of Nunatsiavut, a nurse; Carrie Bourassa from Regina, Principal Investigator (PI) of the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre; and Ann Macaulay, co-PI of the Anisnabe Kekendazone NEAHR in Ottawa.

We were welcomed to Rideau Hall by both of their Excellencies, David and Sharon Johnston. I participated in discussions focusing on the social determinants of health, including poverty and housing, also touching on the underlying Indigenous determinants, including language, culture and connection to the land, as well as residential school and foster care experiences. A second panel discussed chronic diseases and the underlying determinants of health. The third group discussed child & family, including, not unexpectedly, social determinants. Much of the richness of the dialog could be attributed to the spirit of collaboration and interdisciplinarity brought to the occasion.

An [interim report](#) was released the day following the Roundtable. Discussions included items such as improvements in scope of practice for nurses and nurse practitioners, expanded midwifery services, and increased telehealth for remote communities, including

and expanded role for RNs. A more extensive report, including recommendations by the Expert Commission, will be released during the upcoming [CNA annual meeting and biennial convention](#) in Vancouver, June 18-20.

We look forward to hearing these recommendations, both the particular recommendations concerning the professional delivery of health services, and the broader ones, such as addressing social determinants issues as a way of closing the gap in indigenous health.

A footnote: Life truly is an intricate web of connections. My original connection with Her Excellency, Sharon Johnston, was as professor and graduate student; I was her thesis supervisor (MSc in physiotherapy) at McGill while an assistant professor (25 years ago). Although I'm still actively interested in respiratory disease research, my interests have turned more and more to the broader issues of Aboriginal health over the years. I was delighted to re-connect with Sharon, and to see that her interests and activities now include working towards the improvement of the health and wellbeing of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and their families. The Roundtable helped to close that circle, in a way.

Funding Results

Operating Grant: Aboriginal Health Intervention (201108AHI)

IAPH would like to congratulate the six teams funded in the [operating grant competition: Aboriginal Health Intervention](#). We would also like to recognize our financial partners - the CIHR [Institute of Genetics](#) and the Health Canada [First Nations and Inuit Health Branch](#). Many of the health issues facing First Nations, Inuit and Métis (Aboriginal) communities are multi-factorial and are therefore best addressed through multi-pillar, multi-disciplinary collaborations that both identify the relevant health priorities of Aboriginal peoples and produce scientifically excel-

lent research. The purpose of this funding opportunity was to support intervention research that would further strengthen policies and programs that positively impact on the health of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. It also sought to encourage innovative and collaborative intervention research between researchers and stakeholders in First Nations, Inuit and Métis health. In this issue, we highlight the work of one of those funded teams led by [Dr. Anne-Marie Laberge](#) from Hôpital St-Justine. For more information about the other funded projects please visit the [CIHR website](#).



Project Profile

Use of genetic information by Quebec First Nations communities

Anne-Marie Laberge - Hôpital Ste-Justine

Cree encephalitis (CE) and Cree leukoencephalopathy (CLE) are two severe neurodegenerative genetic diseases found in children in the Cree population of Quebec. A carrier screening program is in place in at-risk communities thanks to the combined efforts of the Eeyou Awash Foundation, a support group for families of affected children, and the Cree Health Board.

North American Indian cirrhosis (NAIC) is a severe liver disease found in some First Nations communities in Quebec.

Affected children need liver transplantation in childhood. No carrier screening program is in place for NAIC.

In collaboration with the Cree Health Board, the project will evaluate the impacts of the CE/CLE carrier screening program and the satisfaction of the population with this screening program. In parallel, the team will use the lessons learned from the CE/CLE experience to inform the needs assessment process in communities at risk for NAIC and will study the attitudes of members of those communities about a potential carrier screening program for NAIC. Finally, they will use what they learn to develop a framework to guide the development of future genetic disease awareness and screening interventions in First Nations communities.

15th International Congress on Circumpolar Health (ICCH)

August 5-10, 2012
Fairbanks, Alaska, USA

[Registration is now open!](#)

The ICCH15 promotes exchange of health-related knowledge and discussion of recent research results between scientists, health care professionals, policy analysts, government agency representatives, and community leaders for the benefit of all humankind.

PRELIMINARY SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM THEMES

1. Community Participatory Research/Indigenous Research
2. Women's Health, Family Health and Well-Being
3. Food Security & Nutrition
4. Social Determinants of Health
5. Environmental and Occupational Health
6. Infectious and Chronic Diseases
7. Climate Change – Health Impacts
8. Health Service Delivery & Infrastructure
9. Behavioral Health

IAPH Funding Opportunities

Institute Community Support - Travel Awards

The [ICS Travel Awards competition](#) is for students, postdoctoral fellows, new investigators and knowledge users to present their own research at meetings and/or conferences. *The Application deadline is May 28th!*

CIHR Café Scientifique Program

Start the discussion: The call for applications to the 2012-13 CIHR Café Scientifique program is now underway. This is your chance to potentially hold an informal event between experts and the general public about a particular health research subject of popular interest. *Applications are due on May 31, 2012.* For further information, please visit the [CIHR website](#).

Planning Grants and Dissemination Events

IAPH supports the [Planning Grants](#) and [Dissemination Events](#) programs as part of the Knowledge Translation aspect of our mandate. Both funding opportunities are now posted on the CIHR website. The total amount available for each funding opportunity is \$50,000. *The application deadline is June 15th!*

Webinar on research involving First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples

Everything that you need to know about Tri-Council Policy Statement Involving Humans (TCPS 2) and the implications for Research Involving First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada

This Webinar will focus on community engagement, complex authority structures, capacity building, and research agreements.

Thursday May 10th, 2012 (12pm to 1pm EST) and in French on Thursday, May 24th, 2012 (12pm to 1pm EST). [Registration](#) to both webinars will be open on April 26, 2012.

CONTACT US

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

[Paul Bélanger, BScN](#)
Assistant Director

[Atsinak Bishop](#)
Administrative Assistant

[Jacques Dalton](#)
Associate, Strategic Initiatives

[Gayle Spencer](#)
Finance & HR Manager

[Mélanie Bergeron](#)
Project Officer

[CIHR-IAPH Website](#)

Upcoming Conferences

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.