



# Indigenous Health Research News

## Message from Dr. Malcolm King, IAPH Scientific Director



In July, CIHR announced the results of its two major research funding programs, namely the first [“live pilot” Foundation scheme competition](#), and the [final open operating grant competition – OOGP](#), which will

transition to the new Project scheme in the spring of 2016. The news, anxiously awaited by the many applicants, was both good and bad. On an individual basis, the competitions were as severe, with overall success rates of 10.9% in the three-stage Foundation competition (150 awards), and 14.3% in the OOGP (383 awards). With additional Priority Announcement funding, the total numbers of OOGP awards was an even 500 (success rate 18.6%).

So, first of all, congratulations to all those who achieved success in these two competitions. We wish you productivity in your research endeavours. For those who did not succeed this time, we hope you have learned from the experience.

Very few of these many awards directly relate to Aboriginal / Indigenous health. For example, only 2 of the 150 Foundation awards went to scholars listing Indigenous or First Nation or Inuit or Métis health as their primary focus. In the OOGP, only 4 of 383 awards were focused on Indigenous health topics, although through Priority Announcement funding in [Aboriginal ways of knowing and two-eyed seeing](#) and in [First Nations, Inuit and Métis](#)

[health](#), IAPH was able to add an additional 9 one-year grants to the total.

These results are certainly concerning, especially regarding the Foundation program. This is CIHR's premium open competition program, providing long-term (5 or 7 year awards) to research scholars whose research has achieved a certain degree of stability. The awards are also mostly single-investigator awards, revolving around the programs of individuals who have established themselves. There are some exceptions – some Foundation awards went to investigator pairs who work together on a line of research. Congratulations are certainly in order to James Ford of McGill University – “A research program on adaptation to the health effects of climate change in the Canadian Arctic” – and to Cheryl Barnabe of University of Calgary – “Arthritis care for Indigenous populations”. Way to go!

The concern in the OOGP, in transitioning to the Project scheme, is in regard to the review process – making sure that reviewers with appropriate understanding of Indigenous health research are assigned to grants in this area, [given the change from a review panel structure to the new College of Reviewers process](#) that is being introduced. These concerns will be addressed by the working group that CIHR will be setting up in response to the consultations with the Aboriginal Health Research Steering Committee. This working group will begin its work this fall.

In the long run, it's important that we address the issues of training and mentorship in order to advance the Indigenous health research agenda in CIHR. Our Indigenous Mentorship Network

Program is launching this fall; this will provide much needed funding for Indigenous mentorship and training activities.

A vital part of mentorship, in my view, is connections to the cohort of Foundation scholars who've just received long-term stable support for their health research programs. Many of the Foundation scholars are working on research themes that are, or should be, important in addressing the issues of health equity and wellness for Indigenous populations, but this is not the specific focus of their programs. It's up to us to connect with them to encourage them to bring their many talents to the task of addressing the critical health issues facing Canada's First Peoples. It's also up to our institutions – universities, foundations and agencies – to step up and partner with CIHR in supporting the training of promising Indigenous scholars, and making places for them in our health research system. We need coordinated efforts in order to achieve our CIHR strategic goal of achieving health and wellness for Aboriginal Peoples in these difficult times of limited funding.

## Transitions

I'd like to express my appreciation and gratitude to Jeff LaPlante, who is moving on to new endeavours in his native Winnipeg. Jeff has been with the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health at Simon Fraser University since March of 2013, initially as Project Officer, and lately as Senior Project Officer. Best wishes, Jeff. Miigwech.



# 2015 Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples - Annual Gathering

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) convened an inaugural gathering of key participants in its Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples Initiative (Pathways). The Inaugural Pathways Annual Gathering (PAG 2015) was held in Ottawa, Ontario on March 23-25, 2015. The PAG 2015 achieved a significant milestone toward CIHR's Roadmap II's research priority that focuses on supporting Health and Wellness for Aboriginal Peoples. Key participants included approximately 140 researchers, their community partners, CIHR partners, National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs), and CIHR staff to dialogue about the initiative, exchange knowledge, develop partnerships, and lay the groundwork for impact within four priority areas of suicide prevention, oral health, tuberculosis, and diabetes.

Some highlights of the Gathering included the opening reception at the Wabano Center for Aboriginal Health and provided participants with a networking opportunity in addition to a community experience: cultures of each group were showcased through entertainment provided by First Nations, Inuit and Métis performers. This Gathering also allowed for learning more about the Partners for Engagement and Knowledge Exchange (PEKES). The three PEKES act as the liaisons between funded researchers and community partners and support ways to incorporate Indigenous Ways of Knowing and taking diverse cultural protocols and norms into consideration as part of the research process. The next Gathering will build on the successes of PAG 2015 and planning for next year's event is expected to begin in September, 2015.



Opening Ceremony at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health



Inuk Elder Ovilu Goo Doyle and IAPH Project Officer Melanie Bergeron



First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM) PEKE Coordinator Wendy McNab

## IAPH's Inaugural New Investigators Meeting

On June 6 and 7, 2015, IAPH held its first New Investigators Meeting at the Coast Capri Hotel, in Kelowna, British Columbia. This Meeting brought together Indigenous health researchers at early stages of their careers with established researchers and mentors from across IAPH's networks. The Meeting began with opening remarks and territorial welcome from Elder Grouse Barnes. Mentors included IAPH IAB Chair Simon Brascoupé, Dr. Judith Bartlett, Dr. Heather Castleden, Dr. Margo Greenwood, Dr. Pierre Haddad, Dr. Malcolm King, Dr. Donna Kurtz, Dr. Rod McCormick, Dr. Chris Mushquash, Dr. Chantelle Richmond, and Bonnie Healy, Operations Manager for the AFNIGC.

The primary objective of the Meeting was to provide practical information that will assist Indigenous New Investigators, and New Investigators

evidencing Indigenous Ways of Knowing or Two-Eyed Seeing, in strengthening their research careers. Sessions provided information on how to become a successful researcher in academia, how to apply for CIHR RFAs, Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Two-Eyed Seeing in research and funding applications, knowledge translation, community based research, wellness and resilience, and what makes for good letters of recommendation.

There was also a poster session that provided a safe and open environment during which New Investigators shared details of their current research with mentors and colleagues. Many participants noted that the Meeting was a success, that they gained valuable insight and guidance, and the networking opportunities provided were essential and appreciated.



IAPH Advisory Board member Dr. Pierre Haddad speaks to the New Investigators Meeting

## IAPH's 15th Annual National Gathering of Graduate Students

On July 12, 13, and 14, 2015, IAPH held its 15th annual National Gathering of Graduate Students (NGGS) in Vancouver, British Columbia. The National Gathering of Graduate Students (NGGS) is an annual meeting for Masters and PhD students in Indigenous health and wellness. This year's co-hosts were the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) with the Aboriginal HIV and AIDS CBR Collaborative Centre (AHA Centre) and co-sponsors were IAPH, Aboriginal Health Research Networks (AHRNet) Secretariat and Centre for Aboriginal Health Research (UVic). The event was well attended with over 25 students from universities across Canada, as well as Elders, mentors, and community members.

IAPH and CAAN opened the Gathering with introductions and a presentation of the CAAN digital storytelling project "*Stable Homes Strong Families*" before the group split into 3 Elder sessions. Student oral presentation



Mentorship session at the NGGS

sessions allowed students to interact with their peers and mentors and discuss their research findings as well as issues and challenges they were having in their research.

The Scientific Director's Awards Dinner celebrated the exemplary achievements of students in Indigenous health research. Awards were given out for top Master's, PhD, and knowledge translation projects. The Master's award went to Vanessa Mitchell and her community partner the Okanagan Indian Band for the project titled "*From the Margins: Exploring Cultural Safety from a Sqilxw Perspective*". The PhD award went to Linda Diffey for her project "*Teaching Indigenous Health Using Anti-Racist Pedagogy*". The award for exemplary knowledge translation went to Jenny Rand and her community organizations - Kugluktuk, Clyde River, and Arviat Nunavut- for the project titled "*Seeing with Two Eyes: Exploring the Interaction of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*".

The Gathering opened on the second day with a keynote presentation by Dr. Janet Smylie reflecting on her experiences as a Métis health researcher working in communities. Students attended mentor sessions where they had small group discussions with Dr. Carrie Bourassa, Dr. Charlotte Loppie, and Dr. Janet Smylie. The Gathering concluded with a final round of mentor workshop sessions with Sharon Thira, Namaste Marsden, Marni Amirault, and Dr. Shelly Johnson, and student poster presentations.

## IAPH Indigenous Mentorship Network Program

The Institute of Aboriginal People's Health (IAPH) lead advancing the research agenda to improve the health of Aboriginal people in Canada. In order to do so, IAPH is committed to building capacity among emerging Aboriginal health researchers. To further this goal, IAPH is interested in funding transformative and paradigm shifting proposals in the development of an Indigenous Mentorship Network Program that meets the needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis trainees and New Investigators. The goal of this funding opportunity is to create distinctive cohort learning opportunities and tailored mentoring activities which create support mechanisms and identify system and individual barriers hindering First Nations, Inuit, and Métis trainees and New Investigators in Aboriginal Health Research. These activities should complement core course work or degree programs and early career responsibilities in research design, methodology, and other core content areas.

The funding opportunity will be comprised of **two stages**. The **first stage** will be a Letter of Intent competition launched in Fall 2015 and developmental grants will be funded. The aim of this first stage is to support the development of regional networks. Activities may include:

- Development of tools and training
- Creation of a Mentorship Network (which could include international members)
- Development of outreach mechanisms

Successful applicants from Stage 1 are invited to apply for Stage 2. The **second stage** will be a full application for up to 3 regional network grants. These regional mentorship networks will form the National Indigenous Mentorship Network Program. The aim of the second stage is to support activities of the Indigenous Mentorship Network Program and includes outcomes such as:

- Implementation of mentoring training and tools for trainees and New Investigators
- Fulsome mentorship networks that apply indigenous methodologies and Two-Eyed Seeing
- Increasing the number and competitiveness of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis research

The funded regional networks will be expected to attend annual workshops to ensure the cohesion and collaboration of the funded National Network Program.

For questions regarding the Indigenous Mentorship Network Program Funding Opportunity, please contact:

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## Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples: Population Health Intervention Research

Population Health Intervention Research supports research on program and policy interventions within and outside the health sector (such as education, transportation, social services, housing and the arts) planned and funded by community, not-for-profit, private, and/or public organizations that have an impact on health and health equity.

In particular, the CIHR Roadmap Signature Initiative on Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples is interested in funding population health intervention research projects as a means to support Aboriginal health research in Canada.

To be considered under the Pathways Initiative, applicants must focus on a policy or program intervention relevant to Aboriginal Peoples' health at a national, provincial/territorial and/or regional level and be related to Pathways exemplars (Suicide Prevention, Obesity/Diabetes, Tuberculosis and Oral Health). Examples of potential relevant interventions to be studied include, but are not limited to:

- Housing policies and the impact on tuberculosis prevention and control;
- Provincial funding/payment models for dentists and dental therapists to deliver preventive oral health interventions;

- Community-driven programs to improve health and health equity through diabetes prevention;
- Research on social enterprises as interventions.

The Public Health Agency of Canada encourages research on Aboriginal Head Start in urban and northern communities and the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC).

For questions about the Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples' initiative, please contact:

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For general questions about the Population Health Intervention Research Initiatives, please contact:

[Erica Di Ruggiero](#)

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## Team Grant: Intersectoral Prevention Research

The Intersectoral Prevention Research funding opportunity is a key component of the CIHR Environments and Health Signature Initiative focusing on research in three priority areas: agri-food production, resource development and urban form.

Intersectoral prevention research will examine and compare the social, cultural, health, health equity and economic impacts of intersectoral strategies (e.g. policies, programs, regulations, etc. implemented within or outside the health sector) have an impact on health and health equity.

Through this funding opportunity, CIHR will support co-led interdisciplinary and intersectoral teams that will work across sectors and jurisdictions to tackle real world problems together with partners. Information about partners can be found here

In particular, funding is available for two teams with a primary focus on: Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWK)/Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)/Two-Eyed Seeing (TES). In order to be considered relevant for this funding, applicants must propose a research program that addresses IWK/TEK/TES approaches in any one of the three nexus areas. The application must include a First Nations, Inuit or Métis person evidencing IWK/TEK/TES and reflect this in their program of research.

For general questions about the Intersectoral Prevention Research funding opportunity, please contact:

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**More information on these and other funding opportunities can be found at:**

<https://www.researchnet-recherchenet.ca/mnr16/srch.do?all=1&search=true&org=CIHR&sort=program&masterList=true&view=currentOpps>

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