

**Forum on Alcohol and Illicit  
Drugs Research**

Holiday Inn, Kanata, Ontario

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## **Canadian addictions researchers meet to develop a national research agenda on alcohol and illicit drugs**

OTTAWA – More than 70 leading addictions researchers and other specialists from across Canada have agreed on a set of nine strategic directions for future research into the causes and consequences of substance use and abuse. The nine research themes are expected to form the basis of a new national addictions research agenda in conjunction with the renewal of Canada's Drug Strategy, announced by the Government of Canada in May 2003.

The Forum on Alcohol and Illicit Drugs Research is sponsored by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Health Canada, the Solicitor General of Canada, the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions, and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

"Developing a national research agenda in partnership with stakeholders, is a key component of Canada's renewed Drug Strategy," said Anne McLellan, federal Minister of Health. "Research on health and social issues associated with alcohol and illicit drug use in Canada will allow us to better understand the root causes of substance use and abuse and enable us to develop the right tools to prevent it and treat it."

"Education and knowledge will help us in the fight against illicit drugs and alcohol abuse. We need to share our results so that together, we can identify what we can do better to help people who have substance abuse problems," said Solicitor General of Canada Wayne Easter. "Our knowledge can help us determine if we're using the right approach and how we can make our citizens safer. I believe this research forum will help us reach this goal."

Canada's renewed Drug Strategy addresses the underlying factors associated with substance use and abuse and includes education, treatment, prevention and health promotion initiatives as well as enhanced enforcement measures. The results of the Forum will be used to inform planning for the first of a series of national, biennial conferences that will bring stakeholders together to help set overall priorities for the five-year strategy.

Forum participants agreed on a set of nine strategic themes or directions that alcohol and illicit drug research should take over the next five years. These were:

- Treatment and relapse prevention
- Sex differences and gender influences
- Health promotion, prevention, and healthy public policy
- Aboriginal peoples
- Systems design and evaluation
- Patterns of use and dependence (epidemiology)
- Populations and resiliency
- Research on knowledge exchange and dissemination
- Biology of substance use and addiction

Participants agreed that research should be inter-disciplinary and should cut across basic and clinical science, and social, cultural and environmental issues.

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## **Contact**

Justin Kingsley, Director of Communications, CIHR Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction, Mobile: (613) 297-7190; [JKingsley@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:JKingsley@cihr-irsc.gc.ca)

Richard Garlick, Director of Communications, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), (613) 235-4048, ext. 230; [rgarlick@ccsa.ca](mailto:rgarlick@ccsa.ca)

Amy Jarrette, Office of the Solicitor General of Canada (613) 794-4605

Farah Mohamed, Office of Anne McLellan, Minister of Health. (613) 957-1694

Catherine Saunders, Health Canada, (613) 946-4250