



Canadian Institutes
of Health Research

Instituts de recherche
en santé du Canada

Institute of Health Services and Policy Research **Strategic Plan – in brief**

April 1, 2005 – March 31, 2008

Health Services and Policy Research:
Making the Best of Canadian Health Care



CIHR IRSC

Canada



Message from the Scientific Director

Over a ten-month period beginning at the Institute's inaugural symposium in Montreal in 2003, IHSPR and five national partners canvassed policy-makers, managers, members of the public and researchers across the country to identify research priorities for the next two to five years. This process, *Listening for Direction II*, was intended to refresh a similar exercise undertaken shortly after the inception of the Institute, in early 2001. The changes and, equally, the lack of change, in the identified priorities, reflect the realities of the Canadian health care system. Periodically some new issue emerges, but for the most part, the major problems besetting Canada's health care system are soap opera-like—they remain the same, even if nuanced in slightly different ways.

Those priorities are now guiding investments in pursuit of the goals of the broad "Outstanding Research" component of our second Strategic Plan. Like the research priorities themselves, this Plan will look and sound familiar, yet has also undergone some changes. Most obviously, the major areas for investment and attention are now consistent with CIHR's own *Blueprint*. Other changes and consolidations reflect the

experience of our early years, and the decisions taken by the Institute Advisory Board over that period.

This Strategic Plan is what guides the Advisory Board in making critical decisions about human and financial commitments, and with so many opportunities worthy of Institute support, and so many challenges and issues to attempt to respond to, to which it returns in moments of uncertainty. It provides the framework around which we organize our work, against which we evaluate ourselves, and against which others will evaluate the Institute's work over the coming year.

This also represents the Strategic Plan that we will hand to our successors. Both of our terms, as Scientific Director, and Advisory Board chair, end in 2006. While there is still much to be done in the coming year, we are confident that this document will provide important guidance to our successors and, equally important, will ensure continuity for the communities the Institute serves.

We continue to welcome feedback on our goals and objectives, as well as on the means we choose to achieve them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Barer". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a large, light green maple leaf graphic.

Morris Barer
Scientific Director

Our Goals

The strategic goals of CIHR's Institute of Health Services and Policy Research are built around a commitment to *five* key areas, corresponding to the CIHR Planning, Reporting and Accountability Structure:

- Creation and synthesis of **Outstanding Research**
- Building a community of **Outstanding Researchers in Innovative Environments**
- **Translating Health Research into Action**
- Developing and nurturing **Effective Partnerships and Public Engagement**
- Promoting and facilitating **Organizational Excellence** in all Institute activities, and within CIHR more generally.

Outstanding Research

Health care decision-makers carry the challenge, on behalf of all Canadians, of developing and implementing constructive change in health services and systems in Canada. To make informed decisions, they need the best available research evidence, provided in a timely fashion.

Goal 1 Identify and prioritize current and emerging information needs of health care decision-makers and the public.

Objectives:

- 1.1** Periodically undertake a national consultation process in collaboration with key partners to identify the most important current and emerging issues.

Goal 2 Support the creation and synthesis of health services and policy research in strategic areas.

Objectives:

- 2.1** Develop, implement and evaluate funding mechanisms for strategic health services and policy research
- 2.2** Collaborate on the development and implementation of relevant funding tools of other CIHR Institutes or national or provincial funding agencies.
- 2.3** Implement initiatives that assist health services and policy researchers in developing proposals for, and successfully obtaining, operation and/or infrastructure grant funding.

Outstanding Researchers in Innovative Environments

Canada continues to face a shortage of individuals with the requisite skills and experience to conduct outstanding health services and policy research. With mounting pressures facing the health care system, members of this small research community are increasingly approached to undertake work of direct and immediate relevance to health care decision-makers and the public.

Goal 3 Increase the supply, and improve the geographic distribution of excellent interdisciplinary researchers in Canada who can successfully lead, participate in and translate outstanding health services and policy research.

Objectives:

- 3.1** Provide scholarships, fellowships, career awards and other types of support to students, post-doctoral fellows, and young investigators.
- 3.2** Promote the value of investing in health services and policy research capacity development (e.g. with provincial and other potential partners).
- 3.3** Provide support for innovative health services and policy research training programs.
- 3.4** Support mentorship initiatives for health services and policy researchers and trainees.

Goal 4 Encourage and facilitate the emergence of new collaborations by increasing connectivity among health services and policy researchers and with biomedical, clinical and population health researchers who engage in health services and policy research projects.

Objectives:

- 4.1** Support initiatives that enhance connectivity among researchers who affiliate with this Institute.
- 4.2** Support teams, networks and centres that create enabling environments for innovative interdisciplinary programs of research across the four domains of CIHR.

In order to conduct outstanding research, investigators must work within innovative, supportive research environments, and have access to the best available resources. For health services and policy researchers, this means ready access to the best available research data, whether these data are collected through survey instruments or interview approaches, are located in administrative databases, or are developed from other sources.

Goal 5 Support the development of, and improve access to, health and health service data in Canada to enable researchers to undertake outstanding health services and policy research.

Objectives:

- 5.1** Identify and reduce barriers to access to existing data repositories for scholarly health research.
- 5.2** Make strategic investments to enhance data infrastructure in Canada.
- 5.3** Work towards legislative and regulatory environments in Canada that are supportive of the use of health information for scholarly health services and policy research.
- 5.4** Provide briefings to policymakers about how to balance privacy concerns and scholarly health services and policy research.
- 5.5** Continually work toward identifying, communicating, and encouraging best practices in the area of data stewardship.

Outstanding health services and policy research requires continuous enhancement of theory, frameworks, and empirical methods, as well as measurement and evaluation tools. Health services and policy researchers have much to gain from the methodological and content expertise of academics, policy-makers and practitioners from disciplines such as mathematics, law, ethics, the humanities, and a wide range of social sciences.

Goal 6 Support the development, enhancement, and use of theories, frameworks, research methods, measurement tools, and evaluation techniques, for health services, health policy and knowledge translation research.

Objectives:

- 6.1** Support health services and policy research initiatives that are intended to develop, expand and/or refine approaches and methodological tools.
- 6.2** Bring together researchers from diverse professional backgrounds to create new health services, health policy and knowledge translation methodological tools.

Translating Health Research into Action

The process of translating knowledge into improved services and systems is not always a straightforward chain of events where knowledge is produced, distributed, received and used.

Effective knowledge translation requires continuous long-term interaction between researchers and users of research, effective synthesis and communication skills for researchers, and a commitment to using relevant research results in decision-making.

Goal 7 Support the identification of, promote the use of, and engage in, effective approaches to translating knowledge.

Objectives:

- 7.1** Support processes that can be used to enhance the commitment and involvement of health services and policy researchers in effective knowledge translation and exchange initiatives.
- 7.2** Develop, implement and evaluate funding mechanisms to support syntheses of health services and policy research evidence in priority areas, and the use of such syntheses.
- 7.3** Develop and support mechanisms, processes and tools that enable and enhance communications among and between researchers and health care decision-makers.
- 7.4** Support innovative training opportunities for researchers and research users, in the areas of knowledge translation and exchange.

Effective Partnerships and Public Engagement

Partnerships are particularly relevant for IHSPR because so much of the research within its domain is multi-disciplinary. Partnerships are essential not only for the leveraging of funds and the conduct of research, but also for enhancing the relevance, applicability and use of research products.

Goal 8 Develop and maintain relations with relevant organizations on domestic and international fronts in order to facilitate appropriate partnerships in a timely and effective manner.

Objectives:

- 8.1** Maintain collaborative relationships with key national, provincial and territorial government partners to meet Institute goals.
- 8.2** Maintain and sustain partnerships with other organizations that have relevant interests in knowledge translation priorities.
- 8.3** Build stronger links with voluntary health organizations, with a particular focus on collaboration in the area of knowledge translation.
- 8.4** Develop and implement a cohesive international partnership strategy to advance health services and policy research and knowledge translation.
- 8.5** Work to effectively engage the Canadian public in understanding the importance of health services and policy research to their health, and the strength of their health care system.

Organizational Excellence

IHSPR is committed to identifying, adopting, developing and sharing best practices for the management and operation of its programs, initiatives, and investments. The institute strives to create and maintain a work environment that supports excellence in all aspects of its mandate.

Goal 9 Encourage innovation and effectiveness in all Institute programs, initiatives, activities and structures.

Objectives:

- 9.1** Continue to support an actively and meaningfully involved Institute Advisory Board.
- 9.2** Develop and implement a performance measurement framework to measure and report on ongoing performance.
- 9.3** Use efficient organizational processes to ensure that the Institute's strategic and operational activities reflect its values and guiding principles.
- 9.4** Work closely with the CIHR president, senior executive and staff to ensure harmony between corporate and institute affairs.
- 9.5** Work closely with CIHR senior staff to ensure that corporate programs and peer review processes remain responsive to the unique needs and issues of the health services and policy research community.
- 9.6** Plan for a seamless transition of the Institute during Scientific Director succession, to ensure continued excellence in operations, and a fair and respectful treatment of current staff.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is Canada's major federal funding agency for health research. Its objective is to excel, according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence, in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health for Canadians, more effective health services and products and a strengthened Canadian health care system. In July 2000, CIHR identified 13 institutes, each dedicated to a domain of research. The Institute of Health Services and Policy Research is one of these institutes.

IHSPR Vision

A vibrant community of excellent researchers who conduct outstanding health services and policy research that informs Canadians about their health care system, is used by decision makers to strengthen Canada's health care system, and influences health and social policy in Canada and abroad.

IHSPR Mandate

To support outstanding research, capacity-building and knowledge translation initiatives designed to improve the way health care services are organized, regulated, managed, financed, paid for, used and delivered, in the interest of improving the health and quality of life of all Canadians.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institute of Health Services and Policy Research

209 – 2150 Western Parkway

Vancouver, BC

V6T 1V6

Tel: (604) 222-6875

Fax: (604) 224-8635

Website: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca

To view the full version of IHSPR's Strategic Plan, please go to
<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/12010.html>