

## Consensus on principles, goals and priorities brings Canada one step closer to a National Framework

An extensive national consultation that set out 18 months ago to enhance co-operation on issues of substance abuse in Canada has reached an important milestone following a key meeting in June. At a national forum in Montreal, a broadly representative group of stakeholders agreed on the underpinnings of a National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs and Substances in Canada, including a vision statement, principles, goals and priorities.

Health Canada and CCSA, co-sponsors of the consultation process, along with the National Framework partners, are now seeking endorsement of the Framework by their ministers, boards and governing bodies. CCSA will present the Framework to its own Board in February. As well, there is a call to the partner organizations to identify areas and issues within the Framework where they may want to play a more active role or assume leadership. A longer-term governance model spelling out roles and responsibilities is expected to emerge following a meeting in 2006.

The Framework document, "Answering the Call", spells out the points of agreement

reached in Montreal following a series of regional roundtables and thematic workshops that began in May 2004. The document contains the following vision statement: "All people in Canada live in a society free of the harms associated with alcohol and other drugs and substances."

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It also identifies nine principles underlying the Framework, including the view that "problematic substance use is a health issue", that "human rights are respected", that "those most affected are meaningfully involved", and that "action is knowledge-based, evidence-informed and evaluated for results". Other principles relate to accountability, partnerships and the critical role of health promotion, prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction in successful responses to

problematic substance use.

Two goals are identified:  
1. To create supportive environments that promote health and resiliency of individuals, families and communities in order to prevent problematic use of alcohol, other drugs and substances.  
2. To reduce the harms associated with alcohol, other drugs and substances to individuals, families and communities across Canada.

The Framework targets 13 priorities in three broad categories: 1. To address specific issues, 2. To build supportive infrastructure, and 3. To address the needs of key populations. Specific issues include problematic use of alcohol (see related story on alcohol on page 2) and pharmaceuticals, enforcement strategies, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Infrastructure priorities deal with addictions workforce development; access to programs and services; a national research agenda and knowledge transfer; and modernizing legal, regulatory and policy frameworks. Key populations include children and youth; people living in Canada's North; First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities; and offenders.

For details, visit [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca) (follow the CCSA Partnerships link to National Framework). □

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► **Michel Perron** is CCSA's representative as co-chair of the new National Alcohol Strategy Working Group (NASWG), along with Murray Finnerty of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, and Beth Pieterston of Health Canada.

## NASWG vows to have national alcohol strategy by summer

In consultations leading to the National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs and Substances (see page 1), alcohol policy emerged repeatedly as a topic of national concern. That concern is now being addressed by the first-ever National Alcohol Strategy Working Group (NASWG). The new multi-sectoral group is committed to producing a national alcohol strategy by summer, 2006.

CCSA's Chief Executive Officer Michel Perron provided some background on the NASWG in a recent presentation to the International Seminar on Retail Alcohol Monopolies in Montreal.

The origins of the group go back to fall 2004 when CCSA and Health Canada co-hosted a National Thematic Workshop on Alcohol Policy, which produced consensus on a variety of recommendations and priorities. These are captured in a "key messages" document at [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca) (follow the *Topics* link to *Substances/Addictions* and click on *Alcohol*).

NASWG was formed primarily to examine five priority topic areas, including drinking context and targeted interventions, routine screenings and brief intervention, alcohol taxation and pricing, chronic disease and alcohol, and the culture of moderation. Other topics will be addressed as needed.

NASWG is co-chaired by Health Canada, the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission and CCSA, and its composition reflects a broad interest and involvement in alcohol policy. Membership includes non-governmental organizations, federal partners in Canada's Drug Strategy, provincial and territorial governments, retail alcohol monopolies and regulators, the beverage alcohol industry, academics and researchers.

The group will hold three face-to-face meetings in Ottawa and Edmonton before unveiling a national alcohol strategy in the summer.

For details, contact Gerald Thomas, Senior Policy Analyst at [gthomas@ccsa.ca](mailto:gthomas@ccsa.ca) □



► **Colleen Anne Dell** is co-author of two recent documents looking at girls' and women's substance use, and at girls and women who self-harm. Several issues, including trauma, violence and abuse, are at the roots of both phenomena. Dr. Dell has a joint position as Senior Research Associate with CCSA and as Assistant Professor of Sociology at Carleton University.

## Attitudes must shift with respect to women's substance use

A new CCSA information resource calls for a women-specific approach to research, policy, treatment, harm reduction, prevention and health promotion in the area of substance use. The 16-page document contends that "a colossal shift needs to take place in public, professional and governmental attitudes" to women's substance use.

"Girls, Women and Substance Use" was developed by Nancy Poole of the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (BCCEWH), and CCSA's Colleen Dell. It summarizes the ways in which substance use and addiction differ for girls and women, and

the implications of those differences. The project is one of several flowing from a Memorandum of Agreement that BCCEWH and CCSA signed in 2004 to enhance their respective roles in promoting the health of girls and women.

Citing recent evidence, the authors point out that levels of problematic substance use by girls and women are increasing. Of particular concern is over-prescribing of mood-altering drugs such as benzodiazepines. Women are especially sensitive to the health effects of substance use and to other negative consequences such as stigma. The authors look at the unique pathways that lead

girls and women to substance use; the challenges faced by pregnant women and mothers; and the link between women's substance use and trauma, violence and abuse.

Dr. Dell explores related issues in another report co-authored with Catherine J. Fillmore of the University of Winnipeg in conjunction with the Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba. A summary of this report, "Community Mobilization for Women and Girls Who Self-Harm: An Environmental Scan of Manitoba Service Providers", is available at [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca) along with "Girls, Women and Substance Use" (follow *Topics* to *Populations* and click on *Women*). □

## Drugs and driving: what we know, what we don't know

**T**wo things become very clear in a new CCSA document on drugs and driving. The first is that a lot more research is needed to clarify the prevalence of “drugged driving”, its involvement in road crashes, and the characteristics of those who use drugs and drive. The second is that very little of what we know about detecting and preventing drinking and driving can be applied to this far more complex phenomenon.

Despite these significant knowledge gaps, *Drugs and Driving FAQs* (Frequently Asked Questions) presents a valuable summary of what is known about drugged driving and what Canadian authorities are doing to address this

relatively new concern.

Author John Weekes, Senior Research Analyst with CCSA's Research and Policy Division, reviews current legislation dealing with drugged driving and then looks at proposed legislation (Bill C-16) that would require drivers to undergo a Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) and a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) assessment if stopped by police on suspicion of drugged driving. No roadside test currently exists that can detect the presence of drugs the way a breathalyzer can detect alcohol. Dr. Weekes also examines the potential impact of proposed cannabis reform legislation (Bill C-17) on drugged driving.

The 12-page document

includes a discussion of possible treatment options for people who drive under the influence of drugs and have a substance abuse problem. Again, few studies have looked at the effects of rehabilitation programs on drugged driving. It also explores options available to police and the courts for dealing with the problem.

Although drugged driving is often associated with substances such as heroin, cocaine and cannabis, over-the-counter drugs and prescribed medications, particularly benzodiazepines, are also frequently detected in fatally or seriously injured drivers.

*Drugs and Driving FAQs* is available online at *CCSA Publications* (click on *FAQs*). □



► **John Weekes**, Senior Research Analyst with CCSA's Research and Policy Division, summarizes up-to-date information on drugs and driving in a new FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions). Dr. Weekes also addresses gaps in our understanding of this relatively new phenomenon.

## Record attendance at 2005 NSI; presentations now online

**A** 50% boost in registration for the third National Summer Institute (NSI) on Addictions in July underscored the relevance of this year's NSI theme as a sell-out audience of 90 professionals from across Canada travelled to P.E.I. for a four-day advanced learning session entitled “Mapping Change: Assessment and Treatment Planning”.

This year's theme reflects participant feedback from the 2004 NSI and input from members of the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions and the Atlantic Association of Addiction Executives. As well, a benchmark

2004 CCSA survey concluded that managers and front-line addiction workers from across Canada are keenly interested in assessment and treatment planning.

This year for the first time, CCSA and the Addictions Research Centre (ARC), Correctional Services Canada—sponsors of the event—have decided to post NSI presentations to the Web at [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca). This includes three presentations by keynote speaker William Miller, University of New Mexico and co-author of the seminal book, *Motivational Interviewing: Preparing People for Change*, and presentations by Dan Reist, B.C.

Centre for Addictions Research; Louise Nadeau, University of Montreal; Wayne Skinner, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; Brian Grant, Director, ARC; Greg Purvis, Nova Scotia Department of Health; and John Borody, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba.

This year, the University of Prince Edward Island hosted the event on their main campus in Charlottetown in a new partnership with CCSA-ARC that reflects shared goals and objectives and a plan for measured growth of the NSI.

Visit [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca) to view 2005 NSI presentations and a more detailed update. □



► **Dr. William Miller** (right), University of New Mexico, was keynote speaker at the 2005 National Summer Institute on Addictions. He is seen above with **Greg Graves**, Coordinator, CCSA Training and Workforce Development.



## Register now! Issues of Substance

November 13-16, 2005  
Toronto/Markham

[www.issuesofsubstance.ca/IOS/EN/Registration/](http://www.issuesofsubstance.ca/IOS/EN/Registration/)

### CCSA fills two key senior positions

**Dr. Franco Vaccarino** joins CCSA as Senior Advisor on Innovation and Transformation. He will advise CCSA on strategic approaches to new and emerging issues, including concurrent disorders, bio-medical and neuroscience, psychopharmacological treatments, redefining addiction, and mental health in the workplace. He is Chair of the Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto and past Head of the Neuroscience Program in the Department of Psychiatry at U of T.

**Bette Reimer** joins CCSA as Director, Information and Reference. Her experience includes managing library services for the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, working as senior information specialist with CCSA, and coordinating the Virtual Clearinghouse on Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs. She has presented internationally on information management issues, and recently wrote several papers on knowledge transfer in the addictions field in Canada. □



### Schedule change alters meth fact sheet

The announcement in August that methamphetamine had been moved from Schedule III to Schedule I in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) has necessitated a change to CCSA's recently published

fact sheet on methamphetamine. The revised fact sheet can be found at [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca) by following the *Topics* link to *Substances/Addictions* and clicking on *Amphetamines*. Printed copies of the fact sheet are also available from CCSA free of charge. □

## Events

For details of these and other events or to submit an event, go to **Calendar of Events** at [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca)

- Oct. 23–26—Making gains in mental health and addictions. London, Ont. [www.ontario.cmha.ca/content/inside\\_cmha/making\\_gains.asp](http://www.ontario.cmha.ca/content/inside_cmha/making_gains.asp) (rachel@haliburtonhighlands.com).
- Oct. 27–29—Rural and Northern Health Research: Bridging the Distance. Quebec City. <http://crhrs-scrsr.usask.ca/quebec2005/> (crhrs-scrsr@usask.ca).
- Oct. 27–30—5th Canadian HIV/AIDS Skills Building Symposium. Montreal. [www.hivaids-skills.ca/](http://www.hivaids-skills.ca/) (skills2005@cdnaids.ca) 1-877-998-9991.
- Oct. 30–Nov. 2—Colloque 2005 : Des outils pour répondre aux besoins de la clientèle. Trois-Rivières, Québec. Tel.: (450) 646-3271; Fax: (450) 646-3275. [www.aitq.com/activites/colloque.htm](http://www.aitq.com/activites/colloque.htm)
- Nov. 3–5—Hope 2005 International Conference on Alcohol/Drug Abuse & HIV/AIDS. Mumbai, India. <http://internationalconference2005.com/hope2005/india/hiv&drugs/hiv&drugs.html> (admin@internationalconference2005.com).
- Nov. 3–5—2005 Rainbow Health Conference. Halifax. [www.rainbowhealth.ca/english/index.html](http://www.rainbowhealth.ca/english/index.html)
- Nov. 4–5—Women Healing Conference: Finding Our Voices. Markham, Ont. Tel.: (888) 257-7800, ext. 4429 or 4280; Fax: (651) 213-4344. [www.hazelden.org/womenhealing](http://www.hazelden.org/womenhealing) (womenhealing@hazelden.org)
- Nov. 10–12—International Drug Policy Reform Conference: Building a movement for reason, compassion and justice. Long Beach, CA. [www.drugpolicy.org/events/dpa2005/](http://www.drugpolicy.org/events/dpa2005/) (psantiago@drugpolicy.org).
- Nov. 13–16—Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse National Conference: Issues of Substance. Markham, Ont. [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca) (info@ccsa.ca).
- Nov. 15–19—American Society of Criminology 2005 Annual Meeting: *The Interdisciplinary Roots and Branches of Criminology*, Toronto. [www.asc41.com/](http://www.asc41.com/) Co-Chairs: Frankie Bailey/Colin Loftin (asc2005@albany.edu)
- Dec. 4–6—2005 Diverse Voices: Family Violence Conference (5th Annual). Edmonton. (780) 423-9922, ext. 505; [www.diverse-voices.com/](http://www.diverse-voices.com/) (info@diverse-voices.com)

### HEP website: new look, new content

A recent acceleration of activity within CCSA's Health, Education and Enforcement in Partnership (HEP) Program—including the recruitment and training of a HEP Implementation Team—is now reflected in a thoroughly revamped HEP website (go to [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca) and follow the link for *CCSA Partnerships*). The site provides links to the seven provincial HEP coordinators who comprise the new implementation team and

whose priority is to support the development of province-wide drug strategies through a multi-sectoral approach. The site also contains links to recently announced provincial drug strategies, including “Building capacity—A framework for serving Albertans affected by addiction and mental health issues” and “Healthy Choices in a Healthy Community: A Report on Substance Abuse, Prevention and Treatment Services in Saskatchewan”. □