

CCSA's first national conference taps into a wealth of Canadian knowledge and expertise

Issues of Substance (IOS), Canada's only national conference on substance abuse issues, is generating keen interest within Canada's alcohol and other drugs field as the Nov. 13–16 meeting date draws closer.

By the time the call for abstracts closed on May 18, the IOS program committee (see page 4) had received 380 submissions—more than four times the number of available presentation slots. Because of the generally high quality of the submissions, the committee decided to add 18 more slots to the program. "It's very clear that an annual event of this kind was long overdue," said conference chair and CCSA's Chief Executive Officer Michel Perron.

The landmark conference on alcohol and other drugs—set for the Hilton Suites Toronto/Markham Conference Centre & Spa in Markham, Ont.—is supported by Health Canada, the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions and the provincial and territorial departments of health. It features *Innovation and Action* as its theme and focuses on

Canadian contributions in prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement.

Details of the opening day (*Challenges and Opportunities*) are not yet available, but an evening event has been confirmed that should be both entertaining and informative. With CBC's Ralph Benmergui as moderator, CCSA will

John Wing, along with veteran comedian Mike MacDonald.

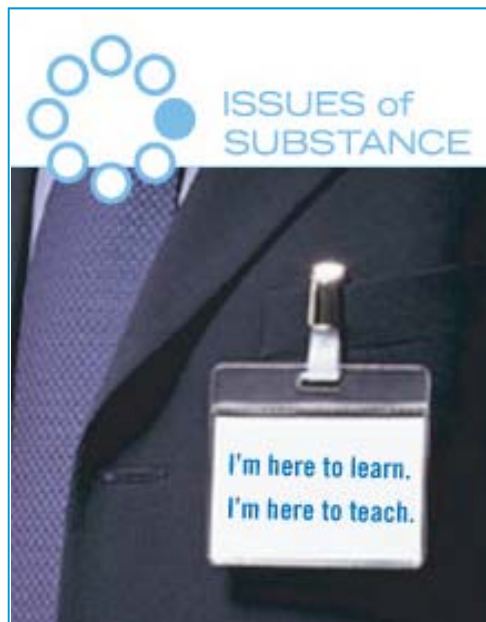
Day 2 deals with *National Action Strategies*. CCSA's Michel Perron and Health Canada's Beth Pieteron will update delegates on the National Framework for Action on Substance Use and Abuse, and Alberta MLA Dave Rodney will present a provincial

perspective on alcohol and drug strategies. Brad Woodside, mayor of Fredericton, NB, will speak on municipal action strategies.

On Day 3 (*Current Innovative Actions*), four Canadian experts will address "Principles, Innovations and Promising Approaches for Action in Canada". Perry Kendall, BC's Provincial Health Officer, will look at *prevention*; Gloria Chaim, Deputy Clinical Director, Child, Youth and Family Program, Centre for Addiction and Mental

Health, will speak on *treatment*; Diane Riley, Assistant Professor, University of Toronto and Deputy Director, International Harm Reduction Association, will address *harm reduction*; and a speaker still to be confirmed will talk about innovative develop-

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recreate the "seriously funny" One Day at a Time skit first staged at the 2004 Winnipeg Comedy Festival, which brought together three of Canada's funniest comics to talk about their struggles with drug use. This session will feature two of the original participants, Glen Foster and

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► **Dr. Gerald Thomas** is the author of a new CCSA report on addiction treatment and its place in the development of Canada's health info-structure. Dr. Thomas warns that we may be missing an opportunity to develop an integrated national system of treatment data collection and analysis.

Addiction treatment not keeping pace with health reform

Over the past 10 years, healthcare reform in Canada has focused increasingly on the need to more effectively collect, manage, analyze and share health information at the local, regional, provincial-territorial and national levels. Since 1997, the federal government has allocated more than \$1.5 billion to developing Canada's health info-structure.

A new CCSA report argues that for the most part, addiction treatment appears to be only loosely integrated and coordinated with efforts to improve information and communication technology in the health sector. More importantly, the report points out, there have been no discussions about standardizing reporting requirements or about issues related to compatibility of addictions data systems at the national level.

"The health info-structure development train is leaving the proverbial station in Canada, and addictions seems to have been left abandoned on the tracks," says author Dr. Gerald Thomas, Senior Policy Analyst with CCSA's Research and Policy Division. "If efforts are not made now to hitch addiction treatment to the health info-structure engine, there may be limited opportunities in the future to bring this sector up to speed with other areas of the healthcare system. An excellent opportunity to develop an integrated national data collection and analysis system may be lost."

In his report, *Addiction Treatment Indicators in Canada: An Environmental Scan*, Dr. Thomas surveys the current organization of health service delivery systems across Canada, presents information on

the data elements collected by the major addiction treatment providers, and describes the data systems used for these purposes.

The paper concludes with recommendations for a national-level addiction treatment data collection system for Canada, involving identification of specific information requirements for the effective management of addiction treatment, and a list of national minimum reporting requirements. The author also recommends that opportunities be identified for transferring proven data collection and management systems, such as Catalyst in Ontario and ASIST in Alberta, to jurisdictions planning to upgrade their treatment data collection and analysis systems.

This report can be downloaded at www.ccsa.ca/pdf/ccsa-011132-2005.pdf □



► The Canadian Addiction Survey (CAS) microdata file is now available for teaching and research purposes. Find out more at www.ccsa.ca

CAS microdata file is now available for research purposes

The 2004 Canadian Addiction Survey (CAS) is the first in-depth study of how Canadians use alcohol, cannabis and other drugs—and the impact these substances have on their lives—since 1994.

In the spirit of partnership on which the CAS was founded, the survey microdata file is now available for non-commercial, scientifically rigorous research and teaching purposes. Academic researchers may access the data file through the Data Liberation Initiative (DLI).

DLI represents a cooperative effort between Statistics Canada and the Canadian academic community. It provides participating Canadian post-secondary institutions with affordable and equitable access to Statistics Canada standard electronic data products, databases, public use microdata files and geographical files.

For more information on the DLI visit: www.statcan.ca/english/Dli/dli.htm

All other researchers, research organizations and academics who wish to ana-

lyze the CAS data outside the confines of the DLI licence may apply for access through a CCSA partnership with Carleton University. A five-year Memorandum of Agreement between CCSA and Carleton is intended to provide a bridge between academic excellence and the addictions field. Working together to make the CAS data publicly accessible is a highlight of the partnership.

For more information on DLI and non-DLI access to CAS data, go to CCSA's website at www.ccsa.ca □

Getting policy makers up to speed on methamphetamine

A major new consensus report on methamphetamine (MA) provides a “framework for informing drug policy”, says the chair of the independent expert panel that produced the report.

Joanna Ashworth of Simon Fraser University says the 48-page report not only examines the impact of MA on individuals and the community, but also highlights promising developments in prevention, treatment, research and health promotion. The report documents areas of agreement reached during the Western Canadian Summit on Methamphetamine in No-

vember 2004. A multidisciplinary panel of eight experts, including CCSA’s Anne-Elyse Deguire, developed the document around five organizing questions posed by the summit planning committee (see *Action News* Vol. XIV No. 4).

Areas of agreement identified by the panel include:

- ▶ MA is not a drug of choice for high school students, so MA-specific school-based programs are not recommended. MA education should be incorporated into a broader comprehensive program on substance use issues.
- ▶ Peer outreach programs are highly effective at reaching high-risk groups, including

street youth and gay men.

- ▶ Increased enforcement targeted at users is not a cost-effective strategy.
- ▶ Information is lacking on the mental-health impacts of MA use.
- ▶ To control precursor chemicals, there needs to be a coordinated action between the regulatory arm and the law enforcement arm.

The summit was sponsored by Vancouver Coastal Health, and funded by Health Canada, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, and the BC and Alberta governments.

For a fact sheet on methamphetamine: www.ccsa.ca/pdf/ccsa-011134-2005.pdf □



▶ **Anne-Elyse Deguire**, a Senior Research Analyst with CCSA’s Research and Policy Division, was part of a panel of experts who developed a new consensus report on methamphetamine (MA). She is also the author of a new CCSA fact sheet on MA.

First Board meeting North of 60 signals new CCSA focus

A meeting of CCSA’s Board of Directors in Iqaluit in June—the first Board meeting North of 60 in the agency’s 17-year history—highlights recent efforts by the Centre to establish closer links with the North.

During a four-day visit to Iqaluit, Board members and senior staff met with local government officials, health authorities and substance abuse workers to explore areas of potential collaboration. High points of the visit included a keynote address by Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik at a Board dinner, and a pizza lunch hosted by CCSA for local high school students.

Also in June, CCSA Senior Policy Analyst Gerald Thomas spoke at the Yukon’s first Substance Abuse Summit in

Whitehorse. Dr. Thomas’s presentation on Guiding Principles for Substance Abuse Policy was the only summit session open to the media, apart from a public forum on the first night of the event. The summit is viewed as the starting point in developing a Yukon substance abuse action plan to help guide the government’s response to substance

abuse in the territory.

Other recent CCSA initiatives with a northern connection include the creation of a northern Web page (see www.ccsa.ca under Topics/Populations) and the signing of Memorandums of Agreement with the Youth Solvent Addiction Committee and the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation. □



▶ **Premier Paul Okalik** (centre) delivered the keynote address at a recent CCSA Board event in Iqaluit. The Nunavut premier is flanked by CCSA’s Chief Executive Officer Michel Perron (left) and Board Chair Chief Barry King.

Photo: Greg Younger-Lewis

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 ments in enforcement.
 For conference details,

including registration, please
 visit the IOS Web page at
www.issuesofsubstance.ca □



► **IOS program committee:** (seated) Brian Grant, Addiction Research Centre, Correctional Service Canada; John McCready, Program Committee Chair; John Borody, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba; Wayne Skinner, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; (standing) Greg Purvis, Nova Scotia Health; Patricia Begin, CCSA; Enid Harrison, CCSA; Greg Graves, CCSA; and Ed Sawka, Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission. Missing: Carol Hopkins, Nimkee Gawagan Healing Centre and Youth Solvent Addiction Committee; Nancy Poole, BC Centre for Excellence in Women's Health.

News from CCSA's Board of Directors

Barry V. King, OOM, Chief of Police in Brockville, Ont., has been re-appointed for another three years as Chair of CCSA's Board of Directors. The Governor-in-Council appointment became effective May 18. Chief King has been Chair since Nov. 1, 2001, and first joined the Board in October, 1998.

CCSA has also announced the appointment of Roger D. Landry, CC, OQ, CD to the Board as a member at large. Mr. Landry was formerly Chair of the Canadian Press, the Canadian Daily Newspaper Association and the Association of Quebec Daily Newspapers, and was also Co-chair of the Canadian Journalism Foundation. He has held several important positions during his long career,

including Deputy Director of Public Relations for Expo '67, Vice-President of Marketing and Public Affairs for the Montreal Expos Baseball Club, and President and Publisher of the Montreal daily, *La Presse*.

Board members Anne Lavack and Len Blumenthal have been given Governor-in-Council appointments. They both joined the Board as members at large, Mr. Blumenthal in November, 2000, and Dr. Lavack in June, 2002.

In other Board news, Edgar F. Kaiser Jr. has received an honorary Doctorate of Laws from the University of Victoria, and Mr. Blumenthal has been elected Chairperson of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

A list of CCSA Board members and their biographies is available at www.ccsa.ca □

Events

For details of these and other events or to submit an event, go to Calendar of Events at www.ccsa.ca

July 18–21—National Summer Institute on Addictions. Mapping change: assessment and treatment planning. Charlottetown, PEI. www.ccsa.ca (mgrant@ccsa.ca).

Aug. 19–20—First national conference on methamphetamine, hepatitis and HIV. Salt Lake City. www.harmredux.org/conference2005.html (awhipple@harmredux.org).

Sept. 9—6th International FASD Awareness Day. Worldwide. www.fasworld.com.

Sept. 25–27—Sixth International Symposium on Alcohol Ignition Interlocks: "A Global Perspective". L'Impérial Palace Allée de L'Impérial, 74000 Annecy, France. www.ignitioninterlocksymposium.com/callforpapers.shtml (doug@trafficingjuryresearch.com) 1-877-238-5235.

Oct. 2–5—International Conference on Distracted Driving. Toronto. www.trafficingjuryresearch.com/ (turf@trafficingjuryresearch.com).

Oct. 23–26—Making gains in mental health and addictions. London, Ont. 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.hivaidsskills.ca/ (skills2005@cdnaids.ca) 1-877-998-9991.

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

Nov. 10–12—International Drug Policy Reform Conference. Building a movement for reason, compassion and justice. Long Beach, CA. 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 (info@ccsa.ca).

Lianne Calvert is new T&WD director

Lianne Calvert has joined CCSA as Director of Training and Workforce Development. Lianne comes to CCSA from the Ottawa Hospital where she was Director of Volunteer Services. She has extensive teaching and training experience, especially in the areas of literacy, professional development, and employment readiness for adults participating in substance abuse rehabilitation. Lianne's background includes a Master of Education and a BA (Hons)



in criminology and sociology. She has also worked as an addictions counsellor and a federal parole officer. □