



► BUILDING RESEARCH
CAPACITY



► ENCOURAGING EFFECTIVE
USE OF RESEARCH EVIDENCE



► INCREASING THE QUANTITY
AND QUALITY OF RELEVANT
APPLIED HEALTH RESEARCH

NLCAHR

2004-2006

A REPORT FROM THE NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CENTRE FOR APPLIED HEALTH RESEARCH

Message From The Chair of the Board

New efforts to communicate research results and to build health research capacity in Newfoundland and Labrador were the focus of our work from 2004-2006

The 2004-2006 period was a time of both consolidation and growth for the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research.

Working towards objectives outlined in our Strategic Plan, we created several new programs and activities to boost applied health research capacity in the province and to improve communications and knowledge transfer. While continuing to support the excellent work of local researchers and students through our grants and fellowships program, we have added a set of new initiatives in our Applied Health Researcher Support Program to provide mentorship and training opportunities for new researchers and for mid-career researchers wishing to shift their focus toward applied health issues.



Dr. James Rourke, Chair of the Board

In 2005, the Centre instituted a Scholar-in-Residence Program to encourage collaboration between local researchers and experts from other parts of Canada and the world. The first holder of the award, Dr. Keith Cash, began work at the Centre in January 2006. Also in 2005, we created our program of Establishment Grants to facilitate the recruitment of new applied health researchers to faculty positions in the province.

One important change has been the addition of a focus on Health Technology Assessment (HTA) as an important component of the Centre's activities. Two innovative projects, funded by the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH), are helping us build capacity for using HTA evidence to inform decision making in our provincial health system on the adoption of new drugs, medical devices and health service processes.

In October 2005, our second Stakeholder Forum assessed the Centre's performance in fulfilling the targets set in the 2004 Strategic Plan and helped us plan priorities and activities for 2005-6. A full report on this very successful meeting can be found on the NLCAHR website.

As Chair of the Centre's Board, I am grateful for the participation of our stakeholders in our planning activities, look forward to hearing what you think of the new programs we have been introducing, and welcome feedback from you on how we can best meet the needs of the applied health research community and the province's health system.

Funding Tomorrow's Applied Health Researchers

NLCAHR's mandate includes providing support to Newfoundland and Labrador-based graduate students through the allocation of fellowships

NLCAHR is investing in the future of health research in this province through its fellowship program.



Andrea Kitta

From 2004 to 2006, the Centre awarded Master's, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Fellowships totaling \$155,000. We have funded a total of 22 graduate students since 2001.

This funding is one way to help keep the brightest young researchers in the province and to encourage them to work on issues that affect the Newfoundland and Labrador population.

Nicole Power was awarded the NLCAHR Post-Doctoral Fellowship in 2004. She studied the role of masculinity in mediating workplace safety practices and perceptions of risk among Newfoundland fish harvesters. Dr. Power has since published a book on the subject. In 2006 she was appointed Assistant Professor

"HOW DOES MASCULINITY MEDIATE WORKPLACE SAFETY PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS OF RISK, SAFETY AND HEALTH AMONG NEWFOUNDLAND FISH HARVESTERS?"

NICOLE POWER

in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University.

The field of applied health research is a broad one, so that the students who have received NLCAHR fellowships have come from a variety of disciplines ranging from Community Health, Human Kinetics, Nursing, and Genetics, to Sociology, Psychology, and Folklore.

Andrea Kitta is a Ph.D. candidate in Folklore in the Faculty of Arts at Memorial University. She is interested in the perception and the

"HOW DOES THE PUBLIC PERCEIVE PEDIATRIC INOCULATIONS AND ANTI-VACCINATION DISCOURSE?"

ANDREA KITTA

outcomes of disease and medical treatment. Ms. Kitta received the NLCAHR Doctoral Fellowship in 2005 for her research on public perception of the efficacy and long-term impacts of inoculations and vaccinations.

Ms Kitta noted that, despite the success of the childhood inoculation movement and the proven dangers of failing to vaccinate, Canadians, including the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, have continued to raise questions about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. Ms. Kitta has lectured on this topic at Memorial's GSU Colloquia Series, at the American Folklore Society and at the Folklore Studies Association of Canada. Ms. Kitta's research will be used to create community-based public health education programs that she hopes will effectively address the vaccination concerns of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Brian Dalton, a Master's Student in Human Kinetics and Recreation, was awarded an NLCAHR Master's Fellowship in 2005 for research that looks at the ways in which noise and music impact the vigilance and cognitive performance of drivers. This work has direct relevance for the safety of both vehicle drivers and pedestrians.

Mr. Dalton expects to complete his program in August, and will enter a Ph.D. program at the University of Western Ontario in September 2006.

For a complete list of fellowship recipients from 2001 to 2006, please see our website: www.nlcahr.mun.ca

"HOW DOES MUSIC AND NOISE AFFECT DRIVING VIGILANCE AND COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE?"

BRIAN DALTON



Brian Dalton

Transferring... Translating... Exchanging... Research Knowledge

NLCAHR-affiliated researchers and decision-makers are working together to ensure that the research conducted here is relevant to the needs of the local population, and that research results are communicated to the people who can use them.

To assist with and encourage this knowledge transfer and exchange process, the Centre coordinates Knowledge Transfer Health Policy Seminars with the provincial Department of Health and Community Services. The seminars are designed to help enhance the research culture within the Ministry and to encourage evidence-based decision-making.

In 2005, the Centre also organized a very successful research forum on healthy body weight and obesity. The forum brought together more than 100 researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers to discuss existing evidence and future research directions. A report on this event is available on the Centre's website: www.nlcahr.mun.ca

NLCAHR is working to build capacity in health technology assessment (HTA). In October 2005, the Centre hosted a workshop for health decision-makers to help them understand and use assessments of health technologies. The Centre is part of a team that has created a new graduate-level course in HTA at Memorial, and is also working on a new contextualized research synthesis pilot project funded by the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health.

Building Provincial, National and International Research Networks

NLCAHR has developed a number of programs to help link the Newfoundland and Labrador health research community with researchers from other jurisdictions.

The Centre offers funding to support visiting scholars, and has developed a Scholar-in-Residence Program to allow collaboration between local researchers and experts from outside the province.

NLCAHR also organizes "Research Affinity Groups" to bring together local researchers with similar interests and has recently coordinated a group on Aboriginal and Northern Health as well as a Gender and Health Group.

The Centre works to build the profile of our researchers through participation in a number of national organizations that promote health research, such as the National Alliance of Provincial Health Research Organizations, Research Canada, and the Network of Centre Directors in Health Services and Policy Research.

In 2005, NLCAHR created a new program to assist NL-based researchers in accessing research funding. The Applied Health Researcher Support Program offers mentorship, proposal pre-review, and grantsmanship training to help researchers increase their chances for success in national grant competitions. The Centre also offers Establishment Grants to assist departments at Memorial University in the recruitment of highly-qualified applied health researchers.



Dr. Tracey Bridger and
Dr. Maria Mathews

NLCAHR was mandated by the provincial government to support applied health research in Newfoundland and Labrador, both directly through the allocation of grants and fellowships and indirectly by helping attract funding from external granting agencies.

The Centre's funding activities are aimed at research initiated by investigators residing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"WHAT ARE THE HEALTH SERVICES UTILIZATION, ASSOCIATED FACTORS, AND DIRECT COST OF HEALTH SERVICES AMONG OBESE VS. NON OBESE POPULATIONS IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR?"

DR. TRACEY BRIDGER

sponsored "Partnership for Health System Improvement Grants", offering as much as \$30,000 per project per year for up to 3 years.

Since its inception in 2000, NLCAHR has distributed more than \$475,000 in project and research grants, and has funded more than thirty projects on topics ranging from health policy and health services issues to occupational health, applied genetics, health technologies and the social determinants of health.

NLCAHR Development Grants serve as a springboard to develop larger research proposals and to help make previous grant proposals more competitive in national funding competitions.

Project Grants are designed to support small research projects of high scientific quality that may not be eligible for funding from external sources and that are of direct relevance to the mandate and priorities of the Centre.

NLCAHR-affiliated researchers are exploring questions on recruitment and retention of medical and nursing students; they are examining the social and genetic roots of obesity; they are studying

Meeting the Province's Health Research Needs

Supporting excellent research and building local research capacity

the impact of obesity on health services; and they are comparing health outcomes on issues such as stroke, hip fracture and epilepsy.

NLCAHR has also been commissioned to conduct research on a number of pressing and relevant issues, such as: the impact of the 2002 physicians' strike on health service utilization and health outcomes; a study of the possible impact of strikes in long-term care; and a study on the epidemiology of obesity and overweight in Newfoundland and Labrador.



Dr. Peter Wang

In April 2005, at the request of the Department of Health and Community Services (DHCS), the Centre developed a proposal for assessing the oral health status of

"WHAT ARE THE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN QUALITY OF LIFE AND HEALTH OUTCOMES AFTER HIP FRACTURE IN ELDERLY CANADIANS?"

DR. PETER WANG

adults and children in the province as well as the distribution and utilization of dental care services. The goal of the project was to provide empirical evidence to inform the development of a provincial oral health strategy. The final report of this study was provided to DHCS and the results were presented at the NLCAHR Stakeholder Forum in October 2005.

Copies of research reports, where available, are posted on the NLCAHR website, along with regularly updated descriptions of funding and professional development opportunities and a complete list of NLCAHR-funded researchers.

"HOW DO PROVINCIAL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS AFFECT THE RETENTION OF INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR?"

DR. MARIA MATHIEWS

Our Plans and Our People



Dr. Stephen Bornstein, Director, NLCAHR

In the coming year, NLCAHR will focus its attention on four priority areas: improving the services we provide to the research community by developing new Affinity Groups and by strengthening our researcher support programs; enhancing our knowledge transfer role in health technology assessment and in health services research; strengthening our collaboration with the Department of Health and Community Services and the new regional integrated health authorities; and expanding our interaction with the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information by developing plans for coordinated research activities.

This year, as always, NLCAHR has depended heavily on the contributions of many people who have played key roles in our governance and management bodies. I would like to thank the members of the Board for their dedication and I am grateful to the members of the Research Advisory Council for their work. I am particularly grateful to our Peer Reviewers and especially to those from outside the province who have provided their time, expertise, and goodwill in evaluating our research and fellowship applications. Finally, I want to express my gratitude to the Centre's staff— Janice Butler, Todd Jeans, Theresa Mackenzie, Annette McGrath, Joanne O'Neill-Sherrard, Luke Power, Laurie Twells and Tyrone White— for their excellent work.

Dr. Stephen Bornstein

NLCAHR Board

- Dr. James Rourke, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, MUN (Chair)
- Mr. John Abbott, Deputy Minister, Department of Health and Community Services
- Dr. Christopher Loomis, Vice-President (Research and International Relations), Memorial University
- Dr. Penny Moody-Corbett, Assistant Dean of Research & Graduate Studies (Research Advisory Council Delegate)
- Mr. Steve O'Reilly, CEO, Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information
- Mr. John Peddle, Executive Director, Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association
- Mr. George Tilley, CEO, Health Care Corporation of St. John's
- Dr. Stephen Bornstein, Director NLCAHR (member ex officio)

NLCAHR Staff

- Dr. Stephen Bornstein, Director
- Janice Butler, Research Coordinator
- Todd Jeans, IT Consultant
- Theresa Mackenzie, Knowledge Exchange and Research Capacity Development
- Annette McGrath, Administrative Staff Specialist
- Luke Power, Research Assistant

NLCAHR Research Advisory Council

- Dr. Shelly Birnie-Lefcovitch, School of Social Work, Memorial University
- Dr. Gerard Farrell, Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Centre
- Dr. Alice Gaudine, School of Nursing, Memorial University (2004-2005)
- Dr. Anne Kearney, Centre for Nursing Studies
- Dr. Debbie Kelly, School of Pharmacy, Memorial University
- Mr. Don MacDonald, NF & Lab. Centre for Health Information
- Dr. Penny Moody-Corbett, Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University
- Dr. Sean Murphy, Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University
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- Dr. Carl Robbins, TETRA, Memorial University
- Dr. David Schneider, Faculty of Science, Memorial University
- Dr. Shirley Solberg, School of Nursing, Memorial University (2005-2006)
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