

Indigenous Health Research News

Message from Dr. Malcolm King, IAPH Scientific Director



Greetings from Coast Salish Territory!

I hope that you enjoyed your summer and are enjoying the new academic year!

Staff here at IAPH have had a busy summer with the various events that we attended, hosted, and co-hosted! In this edition of the newsletter, we will bring you some stories from the Strategic Directions Community Gatherings, the National Gathering of Graduate Students in Indigenous Health, and the New Investigators Meeting. We were quite pleased with all events and appreciated the chance to interact with so many people.

May this Fall bring you and your loved ones many blessings.

IAPH Strategic Directions Community Gatherings

Since the inception of IAPH, there have been growing concerns and frustrations expressed by those involved in Indigenous Health Research (IHR) around fair review processes, equitable funding opportunities (FOs), and sustainable and continued mentorship opportunities. With growing impetus from the approaching end of

the current Scientific Director's term, the creation of a new Institute Advisory Board (IAB), new peer review processes that disadvantage all health scholars, foundational documents acknowledged, signed, and upheld (e.g. Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), and a fundamentally new relationship with the federal government, IAPH determined it would be timely to hold community gatherings to get collective guidance on how IAPH and CIHR can act on these drivers, and ultimately strengthen the voices of Indigenous Peoples in health research in Canada. The perspectives shared at these gatherings will be used to refresh the IAPH Strategic Plan (2014-2018), to inform the agenda of the incoming IAPH Scientific Director, and to guide the new Indigenous Peoples' Health IAB as it counsels all 13 CIHR Institutes. A wide range of voices representing all key stakeholder areas—such as community Elders, community health organizations, and CIHR Scientific Directors, among others—participated in five regional sessions respecting the Four Directions.

Each gathering was filled with rich discussion, with many regional differences, as well as similarities in expressing the challenges, successes, and thoughts of advancing IHR. There was an overwhelming understanding that we, generally, should move beyond simply emphasizing a need for the inclusion of Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK) to being compelled to truly acknowledge, respect, and implement fully throughout CIHR the notion of co-learning and its benefits.

The need for strong, meaningful Indigenous representation at CIHR and globally was highlighted. Without Indigenous representation, particularly at Governing Council, there is no Indigenous voice to make decisions. Considerations for

indigenizing health research are needed to cement IHR as part of research excellence at CIHR, such as addressing often inadequate timelines in calls for proposals and the adoption of language that acknowledges the realities of health research in partnership with rural and remote communities. Furthermore, validating Indigenous knowledge and successes using the dominant Western paradigm is inappropriate and further colonizes Indigenous knowledge. CIHR must consider how to be more equitable in health research with respect to IHR and IWOK, and appropriately valuing community funding (e.g. with funding), as well as being more inclusive and responsive to community needs. While knowledge translation of research results may be occurring, this knowledge is not leading to successful outcomes, as findings from IHR are not being adopted by decision- and policy-makers. Therefore, knowledge mobilization (KM) must be built into the Strategic Plans of IAPH and CIHR so it is considered in every funded CIHR activity.

Action items for IAPH and CIHR as a whole to consider include:

- Develop an operational plan to implement the existing IAPH Strategic Plan
- Develop an IHR Values and Principles Guide for reviewers, reviewing IHR applications, CIHR staff, applicants
- Develop a CIHR-wide Indigenous Strategic Plan
- Validate and value Indigenous Knowledges, experience, traditional skills as meaningful in the Western context
- Must be more inclusive of all Indigenous communities where TES may not be applicable



Appointment of Dr. Jeff Reading

It is a great pleasure and honour to report that the inaugural Scientific Director of IAPH, Dr. Jeff Reading, has returned to the West Coast to fill the prestigious role of inaugural First Nations Health Authority Chair in Heart Health and Wellness at St. Paul's Hospital, located in Vancouver, BC. The \$2.5 million Chair was co-developed by FNHA, St. Paul's Hospital, and Simon Fraser University, with funding intended to support the chair for 10 years.

In this role—the first of its kind in western Canada—Dr. Reading has been tasked with establishing strong health policy aimed at improving chronic cardiac health conditions among First Nations people in British Columbia, as well in increasing cardiac health research infrastructure and capacity in First Nations communities. He will also be leading research efforts to better

***"This chair at SPH and SFU is a brilliant opportunity to establish timely access to strengths-based, preventative and wellness-focused treatment and care for First Nations communities."* - Dr. Jeff Reading**

understand the social determinants impacting the health and wellness of Indigenous communities, resulting in improved health literacy among both patients and caregivers in the Indigenous context. The work done by the Chair will be wholistic in nature, and will be driven by the First Nations' perspective of health and wellness.

Dr. Reading is a leading national and international expert in Indigenous health, with more than two decades of experience. He is of Mohawk ancestry, from Tyendinaga First Nation in Ontario. By undertaking the

inaugural Chair position, he is continuing to be a pioneer in Indigenous health research—he was the founding Director at the Centre for Aboriginal Health Research at the University of Victoria, and later the inaugural Scientific Director at IAPH. Prior to coming to St. Paul's Hospital, Dr. Reading completed a one-year term as the first interim Director of the newly created Waakebiness-Bryce Institute of Indigenous Health at the University of Toronto.

Congratulations, Dr. Reading, on such an important achievement! We wish you luck, and look forward to your success in this position.



National Gathering of Graduate Students & New Investigators Meeting

This past June, IAPH co-hosted the annual National Gathering of Graduate Students with Métis Nation BC, and the New Investigators Meeting on Algonquin Territory in Ottawa. Both the Gathering and Meeting were themed Reconciliation: Resurgence of Strong Indigenous Voices in Health Research.



From June 12-14th, graduate students studying Indigenous health and wellness, and representing institutions from across Canada, came together to share

their research and experiences in working with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, to network, and to build their capacity as Indigenous health researchers. In addition to presentations from their peers, students attended skills building workshops and presentations from Métis Nation BC and the DUDES Club of British Columbia. One of the highlights of the Gathering was the Scientific Director's Awards Dinner, which was held at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health. Students and presenters were treated to a tour of the centre, as well as a delicious traditional dinner. Overall, the Gathering was a huge success, and IAPH is honoured to have facilitated dialogue to further the field of Indigenous health research.

NGGS and NIM shared an agenda on June 14th, which saw keynotes from Drs. Marlene Brant Castellano, Malcolm King, Rod McCormick, and Fred Wien. The following days were devoted to skills building workshops designed to meet the needs of new investigators, as well as plenty of networking opportunities to allow for connections between colleagues and with established researchers. NIM was another successful event for IAPH, and we are excited to watch the new investigators' careers as they develop.

Scientific Director's Awards

Congratulations to Morgan Phillips and Dana Kremetz, this year's recipients of the Scientific Director's Award for their presentations at the Gathering. Morgan, a PhD Candidate at University of McGill, presented her project *Renewing the Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre Health Education Program for Diabetes Prevention for Elementary Students in Kahnawake*, while Dana, an MPH Candidate at Simon Fraser University was recognized for her work *Connections with the Land: Qualitative Research on Cultural Wellness Retreats for Indigenous People with Lived HIV, Hepatitis C, and HIV/HCV Co-infection Experience*.



PEKE Spotlight: First Nations Health & Social Secretariat of Manitoba

The First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM) is one of three Partners for Engagement and Knowledge Exchange (PEKEs) that is funded through the CIHR Signature Initiative, Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples. Through Pathways, CIHR and its partners will contribute to the creation of better preventative health services, healthier communities, and health equity of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. CIHR has identified four priority areas for the PEKEs (suicide prevention, diabetes/obesity, tuberculosis, and oral health), however, the FNHSSM-PEKE focuses on wholistic health rather than specific pathologies, with an overarching goal of moving from promising practices to knowledge exchange and action in communities.

The FNHSSM

The [First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba](#) pursues tripartite collaboration for a unified health system in

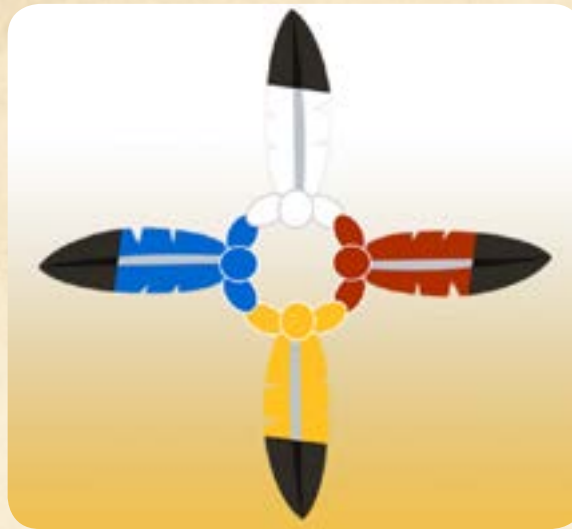
Manitoba through partnerships with the 60 Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs member First Nations, 7 Tribal Councils, and PTOs. Established in 2014, the FNHSSM is also known by its traditional name presented by knowledge givers, Nanaandawewigamig, meaning “the healing place.” The FNHSSM is the only regional body to be chosen as a Pathways-PEKE, owing to the outstanding outreach and relationships established across Canada and internationally. It highlights and provides a space for First Nations communities to connect, share, and collaborate on actionable health projects. The research supported by the FNHSSM develops and shares wise practices in health, as opposed to highlighting health disparities.

In order to achieve its goal of increasing First Nations participation in Manitoba’s health care system, the FNHSSM will:

- Develop innovative program and policy that incorporates best practices, and supports First Nations communities in the delivery of high quality holistic services
- Uphold and protect Indigenous values and knowledge systems that

reflect and respect the voice of First Nations people and communities

- Support education and training for service delivery in First Nations communities that includes governance, financial services, planning, and evaluation
- Support First Nations controlled and administered research and evaluation that informs government and leadership decisions



The FNHSSM logo represents health, healing, learning, growth, sacredness

Impact

The FNHSSM impacts First Nations’ health in Manitoba by connecting different health-focused organizations with each other, and by participating in the newly forged partnership however is seen fit. These connections extend internationally to support the health of Indigenous peoples all over the globe, as was the case with the Diabetes Integration Project, which involved knowledge sharing from an Australian research team, and led to a mobile diabetes screening program. Other examples of successful knowledge translation and exchange since the FNHSSM’s establishment

include meetings with First Nations community health focused programs, projects, and researchers, as well as the coordination and establishment of the FNHSSM-PEKE governance structure and monthly webinars.

Uniqueness

Unique amongst the CIHR-PEKEs for being the only regionally funded PEKE, the FNHSSM also narrows its focus on First Nations people and communities in respect of the boundaries of Inuit and Metis communities. According to Wendy Fontaine, Coordinator of the FNHSSM-PEKE project, this allows for a unique and supportive relationship with the region First Nations; a non-prescriptive approach to health. Five Knowledge Teams, each focusing on a different aspect of health (suicide prevention, diabetes/obesity, tuberculosis, oral health, and the social determinants of health) support knowledge translation and exchange into action by identifying current promising practices in communities, and recommending ways to share and celebrate said practices through their networks.

CIHR News

Meet the New Institute Advisory Board

The newly appointed [Institute Advisory Board on Indigenous Peoples’ Health](#) will provide advice to CIHR’s 13 institutes, with the aim of supporting the health and wellness of Indigenous peoples’ across Canada, and to develop culturally appropriate policies and interventions. IABs will consist of 10-15 members, including the Chair and the Vice Chair. Three seats are reserved for a member to be selected by each of the National Aboriginal Organizations: the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National

Council. Congratulations to the IAB members! We look forward to working with them.

- Jeffrey Cyr, Chair
- Carrie Bourassa
- Simon Brascoupé
- Wayne Clark
- Sheila Carter
- Sharon P. Edmunds
- Pierre S. Haddad
- Henry Harder
- Mabel Lena Horton
- Debbie Martin
- Janet McElhaney
- Margaret Robinson
- Gail Turner

Calendar

Upcoming Events

2016 Global Symposium on Health Systems Research

The 4th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research is taking place in Vancouver, BC, from **Nov 14-18**. This year's Symposium is themed *Resilient and responsive health systems for a changing world*. Speakers include Evan Adams, Chief Medical Officer of First Nations Health Authority, Nila Heredia Miranda, Executive Director of the Andean Health Organization, and IAPH's own Scientific Director, Malcolm King.

Registration is [still open!](#)

Call for Presenters

Dialogue for Life: Suicide Prevention Conference

The First Nations and Inuit Suicide Prevention Association of Quebec and Labrador are calling for presenters to join the Dialogue for Life: Suicide Prevention Conference from **Nov 20-25** in Montreal, Quebec. Desired topics for training, workshop, and presentations include: suicide prevention, intervention, postvention; tools for youth; Elder teachings; and intergeneration trauma and family violence.

Please email dialogueforlife@gmail.com or call 1 (514) 933-6066 for more information on proposal guidelines and how to submit.

RCAP 20th Anniversary

Sharing the Land, Sharing a Future: A National Forum on Reconciliation

In 1996 the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) put forward a bold and comprehensive vision of reconciliation. This Forum will explore, extend and mobilize knowledge available from RCAP and the experiences of the intervening 20 years to advance reconciliation. The Forum will be **Nov 2-4** in Winnipeg, MB.

Registration and information [online](#).



CIHR News

Current Funding Opportunities

Team Grant: Pathways Implementation Research Team - Component 2 [here](#)

Doctoral Research Award : Fall 2016 Priority Announcement (Specific Research Areas) [here](#)

Operating Grant: HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research [here](#)

More information on these and other funding opportunities can be found [here](#).

Catalyst Grant: Indigenous Approaches to Wellness Research**

**Additional awards available through Institute of Cancer Research

Check ResearchNet for other Funding Opportunities to be announced soon

The Institute of Gender and Health wants to hear from you!

Presenting Discoveries, a brand new newsletter highlighting the most interesting sex- and gender-related findings in Canadian and international health research across disciplines. We'll be sharing it with our government partners, funding organizations and partners across Canada and the world.

We're calling out to health researchers across disciplines to send us new and exciting discoveries in sex- and gender-based health research. Let us know what discoveries are making waves in your field. If you have something new and exciting from your own research you want to share? Write a brief for us!

Email: Rachel.macneill@criugm.qc.ca

The **CIHR Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health** fosters the advancement of a national health research agenda to improve and promote the health of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada, through research, knowledge translation and capacity building. The Institute's pursuit of research excellence is enhanced by respect for community research priorities and Indigenous knowledge, values and cultures.

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