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**About CPHFRI...**

The Core Public Health Functions Research Initiative (CPHFRI), a collaborative program of research focused on public health systems renewal in Canada, brings together an inter-disciplinary team of academic researchers, and national, provincial and local public health policy/decision-makers and practitioners. The overarching goal of the CPHFRI ("see-free") is to develop a research program, along with training opportunities, aimed at studying the impact and outcomes of the Core Public Health Functions Framework in BC, and in one of our recent research grants, the Public Health Standards in Ontario. Inherent in this goal is the intent to increase

the capacity of decision makers to use evidence to improve public health policy and practice so that ultimately, the health of the population is improved.

Our specific goals are to: a) advance the field of public health services research in Canada by implementing a consensus-based research agenda and through the application and development of innovative research methodologies; b) broadly inform public health systems renewal in Canada that, in turn, will contribute to improving population health and reducing health inequities; c) contribute to better integration and linking of public/population health services and health services more broadly, particularly primary care;

and d) train expert public health services and population health researchers.

The CPHFRI team has been engaged in an extensive collaboration and team building process since 2006, initially supported by a Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) Team Planning Award and now by a MSFHR Team Start-up Award. CPHFRI's research has primarily focused on public health systems renewal in BC but is expanding to include a national focus and inter-provincial comparisons. The research program comprises multiple individual, yet related and integrated, research projects that serve both specific project objectives and overall CPHFRI goals.

**Message from CPHFRI Co-Team Leads**

**Funding Announcements:**

**Congratulations to:**

- \* Marjorie MacDonald on her CIHR/PHAC Applied Public Health Chair Award
- \* Craig Mitton and Allan Best (co-PIs) CIHR Knowledge Synthesis Grant
- \* Marjorie MacDonald and Trevor Hancock (co-PIs) CIHR Emerging Team Grant

More details included in the newsletter...

*We've just launched our website, check us out online at: [web.uvic.ca/~cphfri](http://web.uvic.ca/~cphfri)*

**The little project that grew!**

This project began 2- ½ years ago as a conversation between the two of us about research opportunities in public health, and the concept of 'public health services research'. Based on that initial discussion, we approached the Core Functions Steering Committee and secured the support of the health authorities and the Ministry of Health in BC. In fact, more than just their support, we also secured their interest in and commitment to examining and learning from the experience of developing and implementing core public health functions in BC. This is such an encouraging and important part of the work of this emerging program of research. We also enlisted the involvement of top-notch researchers who are already doing or are interested in public health services research. Later, we

expanded our collaboration to include an excellent team of researchers, decision-makers, and health units in Ontario, thus enhancing the relevance of our work for other parts of Canada.

Another very exciting and heartening aspect of our work together is that it is together. Right from the start there has been a commitment on the part of all the players to create a truly collaborative research agenda, one that meets the needs of the practitioners and policy-makers as well as the researchers. The fact that the research team is co-led by a researcher and a policy-maker and the commitment to find resources to support the health authorities may be part of the reason that our recent successful application for a CIHR Emerging Team Grant in Public Health Services Renewal was ranked second in the competition.

So we have come a long way since we began our 'little' project not so long ago; research grants totalling over \$3 million, the Ministry and six health authorities and five universities in BC, three health units and three universities in Ontario, a CIHR Chair in Applied Public Health - and we have barely begun!! We look forward to working with you all on this exciting work and developing new opportunities in the years ahead, and to putting public health services research on a firm footing here in BC and across Canada.

*Trevor Hancock and Marjorie MacDonald*



CPHFRI would like to acknowledge our primary funders



## CPHFRI Research Priorities

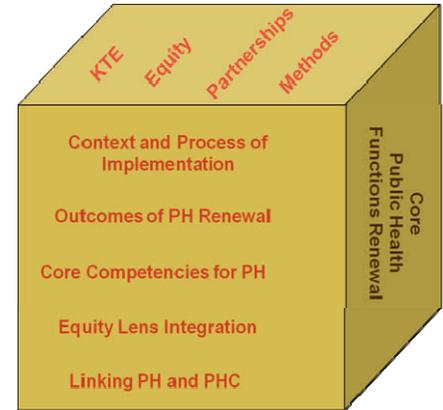
### Four Cross Cutting themes:

KTE, Equity, Partnerships, Methods

### Five Priority Research Projects

& Overall Focus: Public Health Renewal

In April 2007, the team held a Think Tank to identify research priorities related to the impact and outcomes of the implementation of core public health functions framework in BC. The Think Tank was funded by a MSFHR Team Planning Award, with additional funding from the BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport and the Public Health Agency of Canada. The result was a set of time-ordered research priorities and a conceptual framework, as seen on the right. This framework guided the development of several research proposals based on the collaboratively identified research priorities. The recently funded CIHR Emerging Team Grant (featured on the next page) includes five studies based on this research framework.



## MSFHR Team Start-up Award

PIs: Marjorie MacDonald & Trevor Hancock  
May 2008-2011

### *Public Health Services Renewal in BC: Implementation and Impact of the Core Public Health Functions*

In the last year,  
CPHFRI has  
secured over  
\$3.1 million  
in external  
research  
funding

The research projects under CPHFRI and collaborations between team members are supported by a MSFHR Team Start Up grant with additional funding provided by the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport; the specific objectives are:

- To use infrastructure resources to leverage funding to research the core public health function priorities identified by the team, and to obtain longer term infrastructure supports.
- To increase the research and scholarly productivity of all team members.
- To build capacity for public health services research in Canada and to play a leadership role in advancing this under-developed area of research.
- To contribute to methodological advancement in the areas of: a) innovative methods for mapping the influence of context on program implementation and outcomes; b) rigorous tracking of causal processes in non-experimental designs; and c) operationalizing and integrating an equity lens in public health services research.
- To engage in a Knowledge Translation and Exchange (KTE) process to ensure accessibility to the products of this research.
- To provide unique student training opportunities and innovative professional development opportunities for team members, and other researchers and decision makers.

For more information about CPHFRI activities, please contact Heather Wilson Strosher at [hlwilson@uvic.ca](mailto:hlwilson@uvic.ca).

## CIHR Knowledge-to-Action Project

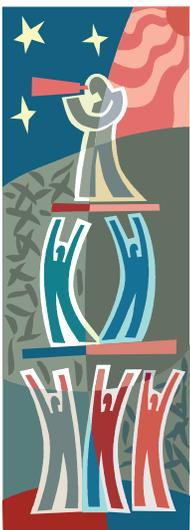
PIs: Marjorie MacDonald & Allan Best  
May 2008-2010

### *Evidence-Informed Practice and Practice-Informed Evidence: Knowledge Exchange for Core Public Health Functions Implementation in BC*

The purpose of the project is to identify, implement and evaluate appropriate Knowledge to Action strategies to support the use of evidence in core program development and implementation and to compare the process and outcomes across health authorities. The overall goal is to support the use of evidence in core program development and implementation and to compare the process and outcomes across health authorities for two core programs (food safety and unintentional injury prevention). The project will examine: a) variations in how evidence is used to support program development and improvement, b) the most effective KTA strategies; and c) the impact of the strategies and the use of evidence on common indicators.

We will begin conducting key informant interviews and focus groups in early 2009. Near the end of each year of the study, we propose to hold a Knowledge Exchange workshop - in the first year at the regional level (spring 2009) and in the second year at the provincial level (spring 2010). This will provide a forum for exchanging knowledge about: a) how the process is unfolding in each health authority; b) the mid-course corrections being implemented in each health authority in response to data being gathered for the performance improvement process; and c) developing recommendations for ongoing study and knowledge exchange.

For more information about this project, please email Wanda Martin at [wmartin@uvic.ca](mailto:wmartin@uvic.ca).



## CIHR Emerging Team Grant

PIs: Marjorie MacDonald & Trevor Hancock  
January 2009-2014

### CIHR Team in Public Health Systems Renewal

The purpose of this recently funded project is to do a set of comparative studies on the implementation and impact of the BC Core Public Health Functions framework and the Ontario Public Health Standards through an integrated program of research that partners academic researchers and key decision makers at the provincial and regional/local levels. Our overarching goals are to contribute to: a) Public health systems renewal in BC and Ontario to inform system renewal in Canada and, in turn, contribute to improving population health and reducing health inequities; b) advancing the field of public health services research in Canada by implementing a consensus-based research agenda and applying/developing innovative research methodologies; c) informing integration and linkage of public/population health and primary care services; and d) training expert public health services and population health researchers.

We will achieve our research goals by conducting an integrated set of studies that are focused on three core public health programs (reproductive health, chronic disease prevention, and preventing sexually transmitted infections) that are common to both BC and Ontario. In keeping with a systems and ecological framework guiding our project, and using an embedded case study, multi-method design, there are five proposed studies that each pose distinct questions, yet together form an integrated program of research, including:

1. What is the context and process of implementation for three core public health programs in BC and Ontario?
2. What are the impacts and outcomes of the three core programs and how does variation in implementation affect these?
3. What are the implications of public health systems renewal for public health human resources planning related to workforce competency, skill development, and for basic and continuing education?
4. What are the relationships between public health and primary care sectors within and across the three core programs and what effects do these relationships have?
5. How and to what extent is an equity lens integrated into the three core programs and with what impact?

This project is in the early planning phase; for more information, contact Heather Wilson Strosher at [hlwilson@uvic.ca](mailto:hlwilson@uvic.ca).

## CIHR Knowledge Synthesis Project

PIs: Craig Mitton & Allan Best  
December 2008-2009

### Meta-narrative review of conceptual models for knowledge to action

The aim of this study is to identify and synthesize existing conceptual models related to 'knowledge to action' in order to determine the appropriate model to employ, for a given context, when embarking on knowledge translation for the purpose of influencing clinical practice and/ or health policy development. A six step meta-narrative methodology previously used in the knowledge dissemination literature will be employed to answer the following five research questions:

1. What are the distinct "research traditions" that guide conceptual models for KT?
2. What is the nature and strength of the theoretical principles that under gird each type of model?
3. What are the important features of each type of model that distinguish it from other models?
4. How does each model address contextual factors known to influence KT processes and outcomes?
5. What criteria might guide selection and refinement of the best model in a specific decision context?

The project will address a critical gap in the literature related to conceptual models for knowledge translation, noting that all stakeholders have a vested interest in ensuring maximal return and impact from scarce research funds. The study will also provide real-world insight for researchers and decision makers in moving from knowledge to action; at present, such information is not currently available in a single, synthesized form.

For more information about this project which is just getting off the ground, email Jen Bitz at [jen.bitz@ubc.ca](mailto:jen.bitz@ubc.ca).

## CIHR Healthy Living Intervention Project

PIs: Joan Wharf Higgins & Karen Strange  
September 2008-2009

### Evaluation of Healthy Living as a Core Function in Public Health

The purpose of this project is to work with Vancouver Coastal Health and Vancouver Island Health Authority to determine how research evidence does or does not influence decision-making in the development and implementation of the Healthy Living Model Core Program. This knowledge translation will provide clarification on the kinds of research evidence that are most useful, and how decision-makers and those who influence policy and program development within health authorities use research evidence in their work.

For more information, please contact Victoria Barr at [Victoria\\_Barr@telus.net](mailto:Victoria_Barr@telus.net)

## CPHFRI Team Members

Cindy Anderson  
Charlene Beynon  
Ted Bruce  
Allan Best  
Steve Corber  
Maureen Dobbins  
George Eisler  
Michael Egilson  
Vera Etches  
Vicki Farrally  
Anne George  
Trevor Hancock  
Shazia Karmali  
Tim Lambert  
Cheryl Martin  
Marjorie MacDonald  
Heather Manson  
Craig Mitton  
Veronic Oullette  
Paul Pallan  
Mike Pennock  
Bernie Pauly  
Nancy Peroff  
Johnston  
Antoinette Rosario  
Jennifer Scarr  
Paulina Salamo  
Lorna Storbakken  
Karen Strange  
Joanne Thanos  
Ruta Valaitis  
Joan Wharf Higgins  
Roger Wheeler  
Sabrina Wong  
**Students:**  
Wanda Martin  
Jennifer Terpstra  
Marilyn Plummer  
**Research Staff**  
Heather Strosher  
Anne-Mette  
Hermansen  
Jennifer Bitz  
Ipsita Banerjee  
Mina Banadarvish  
Luiza Souza



**Doctoral and Post Doc  
Fellowship Announcement**

Applications are invited for doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Victoria, to engage in research related to public health services renewal with the CPHFRI team. Selection will be based on: 1) relevance of candidate's educational and professional background, research interests, and potential to contribute to public and population health or public health services research; and 2) evidence of a developing research and publication record. Doctoral fellowships include a salary stipend of \$21,000 and the postdoctoral fellowship includes an annual salary stipend of \$40,000; both awards include \$2,500 for research expenses. Application deadline is February 28, 2009, please see the CPHFRI website for further details.

**We welcome submissions to future newsletters! Please send event listings, research highlights, funding announcements, etc. to [cpfhri@uvic.ca](mailto:cpfhri@uvic.ca)**



The focus of this Research Symposium will be on innovative methods development for studying complex public health services and population health interventions. It will provide training and networking opportunities while advancing research methodologies relevant to policy and practice. New methods that address the complexity of interventions and yet allow for cross-jurisdictional comparisons are essential to advance the field. We will invite participation by others working on the development of these methods for addressing these issues and will target researcher and decision maker audiences, as well as graduate students who will have an opportunity to participate in the symposium for course credit. The specific objectives of the proposed symposium are:

1. To introduce team members to the research methods to be used in our proposed program of research and provide opportunities for members to discuss, debate, critique, and learn about application in their own organizational contexts and to the research projects of the team.

2. To provide training opportunities in public/population health and related disciplines (e.g., nursing) to learn about new and innovative methods for studying complex systems, particularly related to the implementation of public and population health interventions.

3. To provide opportunities for non-team member researchers and decision makers to participate in this knowledge translation and exchange opportunity to build research capacity beyond the team.

4. To disseminate the knowledge gained in the symposium more broadly to the research and practice community through a variety of knowledge translation and exchange methods and processes.

5. To provide networking opportunities among all participants in the symposium.

**Registration information will be posted on our website soon**

**Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Awards Ceremony**

On November 4th, 2008, Marjorie was invited to a celebration to honour Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) award recipients. She was also invited to speak about the CPHFRI and the impact of receiving MSFHR infrastructure funding. CPHFRI was initially supported by a MSFHR Team Planning Grant which allowed us to bring together the team with public health experts to identify research priorities by holding a Think Tank. CPHFRI was also awarded a three year Team Start Up award in May 2008 which has enabled the team to collaborate further and to develop research proposals which has resulted in the team leveraging significant external research funding. More photos and podcasts of Marjorie's and others' speeches are available on the MSFHR website at [http://www.msfhr.org/sub-media-photosvideos-photos-article.asp?photo\\_page\\_id=21](http://www.msfhr.org/sub-media-photosvideos-photos-article.asp?photo_page_id=21)



MSFHR Team Start-up awards were presented to the team leaders. Pictured are (from left) back row: Dr. Martin Schechter, Dr. Ellen Balka, Dr. Stuart Turvey, and Tim Murphy. Front row: Dr. David Dolphin, Dr. Darlene Reid, Dr. Marjorie MacDonald, and Dr. John Challis.

**CPHFRI would like to acknowledge our partners who have provided significant in-kind contributions**

