

## **Consent Form for Social Network Analysis**

### ***Reducing Health Inequities: The Contribution of Core Public Health Services in BC***

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled *Reducing Health Inequities: The Contribution of Core Public Health Services in BC* that is being conducted by Bernie Pauly and other research team members. Bernie is a Scientist at the Centre for Addictions Research in BC (CARBC) and Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by emailing [bpauly@uvic.ca](mailto:bpauly@uvic.ca) or by phoning 250 472-5915. This research is being funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

The purpose of this five-year program of research is to engage in a collaborative, participatory process between researchers and decision makers in all BC health authorities to study and foster learning about the use of an equity lens during a period of complex system change in public health to inform systemic responses for reducing health inequities.

Research of this type is important because as it aims to contribute to staff learning and knowledge development in equity-oriented practices and strategies; strengthen collaboration within and across sectors to work together on reducing health inequities; identify appropriate tools and frameworks to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of equity strategies; and provide a framework to support ethical public health practice in addressing ethical challenges inherent in developing and providing mental health and substance use services to reduce health inequities.

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your involvement in mental health and substance use public health programs and the expertise that you have in this area.

The focus of this component of the project is to examine the collaborations between public health and others within and outside the health authorities with respect to reducing health inequities in mental health and substance use programs. If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, you will be asked to participate in a social network analysis. You would complete a short survey identifying any professional relationships that you may have with organizations/ professional positions. It is estimated that the survey will take approximately 30 minutes of your time to complete.

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you as it will require some time commitment. However, the time you spend will be directly related to health equity. In other words, it will take place during work time (unless it is more convenient for you to participate outside work time). There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

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***Social network analysis*** is a well-established methodology for collecting and analyzing data from multiple individuals or organizations that may be interacting with one another. *Social network analysis* focuses on the linkages among the different people within a system, and the impact of these relationships. Relationships can be described on multiple dimensions – e.g. sharing information or other resources, taking on task responsibilities, offering task support, or referring clients. The relationship for each dimension can be one- or two-way – specified as “provide”, “receive”, or “share”.

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The potential benefits of your participation in this research include learning from other health authority personnel and increasing your knowledge exchange capacity and research skills. You will also benefit in knowing that for every survey completed, the ELPH project team will contribute \$2 to a not-for-profit organization in BC that supports work in health promotion and prevention of harms. We ask that you tell your colleagues about this study to help boost participation and our donation.

Please be advised that information about you that is gathered for social network analysis uses a secure web program Fluid Surveys, which stores the data collected on servers in Canada. We ask that you complete the survey using your real initials. We need real initials to know whether people occur in more than one network. That is, if someone is identified in two surveys, we'd like to know that this is the same person so that we can combine the networks for a more powerful analysis of intersectoral collaboration. If 2 people in your organization have the same initials, and other responses, we ask for permission to contact you for further information that will clarify whether you are in our database twice (such as your full name). Your survey responses will be encrypted. As soon as all the surveys are finished, we will download the survey responses and delete them from Fluid Surveys. We will then replace all initials or names of people and organizations with codes. The code list will be password protected and kept separately from the survey responses.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, the information you provided up to the time of withdrawal will be kept in the dataset unless you indicate otherwise. You may skip any question in the survey by leaving it blank and going to the next question.

It is important to note that due to the nature of social network analysis, researchers cannot guarantee confidentiality. However, there are a number of safeguards that will be put into place to protect your confidentiality. First, your name will be removed and replaced by a code. Second, no individuals will be identified in any reports or papers emerging from the project. Finally, members of the research team who are health authority employees will not have direct access to the data. All data analysis will be conducted by academic members of the research team and research staff.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: directly to participants and their organizations, to other health authorities and the BC Ministry of Health through a Knowledge Exchange workshop, through scholarly journal or book chapter publications and presentations at conferences, as well as and on a website.

Data from this study will be secured for 5 years post publication in Bernie Pauly's office at the University of Victoria in a locked filing cabinet and/or on a password protected computer after which time paper copies will be destroyed. Electronic data will be saved indefinitely, with all identifying information removed. Data collected during this study may be used for secondary analysis by a graduate student writing a thesis if written permission is obtained from the principal investigator and ethical approval has been granted.

Please be aware that there may be risks associated with receiving emails from the research team including possible loss of confidentiality and the introduction of viruses into my computer. Further details regarding the risks of email communication will be provided to you by the research team upon request.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher at the above contact information, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Fraser Health Research Ethics Board (REB) co-Chair by calling 604-587-4681. You may discuss these rights with the co-



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chair of the Fraser Health REB and by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria at 250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

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*Name of Participant*

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*Signature*

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*Date*

***A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.***