

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CENTRE FOR APPLIED HEALTH RESEARCH

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2007- March 2008

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR CENTRE FOR
APPLIED
HEALTH
RESEARCH



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Goals and Programs

The Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research was created in the fall of 1999 as the product of a partnership among three organizations: Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Department of Health and Community Services of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Health Care Corporation of St. John's. It is constituted as a centre within Memorial University under the auspices of the Board of Regents and is led by a Director and a Board. The Centre is funded primarily by an annual grant from the Department of Health and Community Services of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, with project funding from various granting agencies and administrative support from the Faculty of Medicine.

NLCAHR's mission is to contribute to the effectiveness of the health and community service system of Newfoundland and Labrador and to the physical, social, psychological health and wellbeing of the province's population by supporting the development and the use of applied health research in this province.

The Centre's work revolves around three principal goals:

- to help build human capacity and organizational resources for undertaking and supporting high-quality applied health research in the province;
- to increase the amount and impact of high-quality applied health research undertaken on the priority research themes of Newfoundland and Labrador; and
- to help increase the effective and efficient use of research evidence in the province's health and community services system.

These goals are achieved through our funding programs, collaborative activities, research and knowledge exchange activities (including the new Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program) and our capacity development activities.

Link: [NLCAHR's Strategic Plan 2007-2011](#)

Highlights of 2007-2008

This year was an active one for the Centre. We have begun implementation of our new 5-year strategic plan, developed with stakeholders in March 2007. Our Contextualized Health Research Synthesis program (CHRSP) completed its first cycle, producing a detailed report on dialysis services in Newfoundland and Labrador and nearing the completion of two additional studies. The CHRSP program facilitated the development of new relationships with the health boards and the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association as we worked with them to identify CHRSP topics and to carry out the synthesis work.

In September of 2007, we welcomed Dr. Roger Pitblado, from the *Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research* at Laurentian University, for the fall term as our Scholar-In-Residence. Dr. Pitblado contributed to discussions on rural health through public lectures and collaboration with local researchers.

NLCAHR devoted significant energy to knowledge transfer activities and partnerships in this fiscal year. We worked with the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association to implement a successful knowledge transfer conference, "*Making the Connections*," in October. We conducted a number of presentations within the university to raise the profile of our programs and activities, continued to update our stakeholders on research and research-related matters through our communications program, and introduced an electronic directory of applied health researchers and research in Newfoundland and Labrador. Finally, in March 2008 we hosted an extremely successful research forum on Aging. The event was webcast across the province and the presentations are archived on the NLCAHR website.

Governance

The Board

For the period under review, the membership of the Board was as follows:

Name	Position	Organization
Dr. James Rourke (Chair)	Dean	Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University
Mr. John Abbott	Deputy Minister	Department of Health and Community Services
Mr. Don Keats	Deputy Minister	Services
Dr. Christopher Loomis	Vice-President (Research)	Memorial University
Dr. Penny Moody-Corbett	Associate Dean, Research & Graduate Studies	Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University
Dr. Don McKay	(Research Advisory Council Delegate)	
Mr. Mike Barron	CEO	NL Centre for Health Information
Mr. John Peddle	Executive Director	NL Health Boards Association
Mr. George Tilley	CEO	Eastern Health
Ms. Louise Jones	Interim CEO	
Dr. Stephen Bornstein (ex officio)	Director	NLCAHR

During the period under review, the Board met 4 times. We welcome new Board members Louise Jones, Don McKay, and Don Keats, and thank John Abbott, Penny Moody-Corbett, and George Tilley for their contributions over the last several years.

The Research Advisory Council

For the period under consideration, the membership (with the Centre's Director as Chair) was as follows:

Representative	Organization
Dr. Shelly Birnie-Lefcovitch	School of Social Work, Memorial University
Dr. Stephen Bornstein	NLCAHR
Dr. Gerard Farrell	Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Centre
Dr. Marshall Godwin	Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University
Ms. Patricia Grainger	Centre for Nursing Studies, Memorial University
Dr. Debbie Kelly	School of Pharmacy, Memorial University
Mr. Don MacDonald	Newfoundland & Labrador Centre for Health Information
Dr. Maria Mathews	Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University
Dr. Penny Moody-Corbett	Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University
Dr. Don McKay	
Dr. Donna Moralejo	School of Nursing, Memorial University
Dr. Shirley Solberg	
Dr. Sean Murphy	Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University
Dr. Barbara Neis	Faculty of Arts, Memorial University
Dr. Ban Youngusband	Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University

The Research Advisory Council met once during this fiscal year and has been consulted periodically via e-mail by the Director on various policy issues. We thank the RAC members for their contribution to our work.

We also wish to thank those who have served on the Peer Review Committees for the Centre's awards and fellowships competitions. For the 2007-2008 awards cycle, this group includes Dr. Therese Stukel, Vice-President of Research, Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, Toronto; Dr. Shelly Birnie-Lefcovitch, Director of the School of Social Work, Memorial University; Dr. Bryan Curtis, Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University and Dr. Sean Murphy, Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University.

Administrative Issues

Personnel

Over the past year, the Centre has seen a number of core staff changes. **Theresa Mackenzie** rejoined the Centre as Manager of Communications and Partnerships. **Tyrone White**, the Centre's Administrative Officer, now shares responsibility with Theresa for maintaining our website. In addition to her duties as research officer for the Health Technology Assessment program, **Janice Butler** is now Coordinator for our Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program (CHRSP).

Pablo Navarro continues as Research Officer and shares responsibility with Janice for CHRSP activities. **Annette McGrath** has taken the position of Operations & Finance Officer, handling special events, research affinity groups, and the Centre's finances. **Todd Jeans** is the Centre's part-time IT Coordinator. We have also hosted several students under the MUCEP and GradSWEP programs, including Doreen McNeil (GradSWEP), Natalie Reardon (GradSWEP) and Mandy Peach (MUCEP).

Co-located Units

In June 2007, SafetyNet relocated from the NLCAHR offices on Bonaventure Avenue to the Inco Innovation Centre on the university's main campus. Despite this change of location, the Centre and SafetyNet are still linked by the Centre's Director (**Stephen Bornstein**, also Co-Director of SafetyNet) and IT Coordinator (**Todd Jeans**).

In addition to this change, **Sheila Tucker** returned from maternity leave to resume her position as the Provincial Liaison Officer for CADTH (Canadian Agency for Drug Technologies in Health.) With the relocation of SafetyNet and reduction in available office space, the CADTH office moved to the Beothuk building at Crosbie Place.

Funding Programs

The Centre has been mandated by government to support applied health research and graduate training in the province both directly, through the allocation of grants and fellowships, and indirectly by helping to attract funding from external granting agencies.

The Centre's funding activities are aimed at research initiated by investigators resident in Newfoundland and Labrador. It currently takes five forms: Research Grants, Fellowships, Visiting Lecturer Grants, the Scholar-in-Residence Program and the Establishment Grants Program.

For all awards except the Master's Fellowships, preference is given to applications with direct relevance to one or more of NLCAHR's priority themes. The following research themes were confirmed by our stakeholders at our strategic planning session in March 2007:

- Population health and health services challenges of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Health promotion and wellness
- Efficiency and effectiveness of the provincial health system

Research Grants

NLCAHR offers three types of research grants: Development Grants; Project Grants; and Partnership for Health System Improvement (PHSI) Grants (co-funded with CIHR). This year's competitions yielded 6 successful research projects in total; three development grants, and three project grants. The total amount of research funds granted in 2007-2008 was \$132,407.20.

Development Grants

NLCAHR's Development Grants provide up to \$10,000 per project to assist in the development of effective research teams in Newfoundland and Labrador that are capable of obtaining funding from national and international

research granting agencies. These grants are intended to perform one or more of the following functions:

1. Fund the development of new letters of intent and research proposals for submission to national and international funding competitions
2. Support the enhancement and resubmission of research proposals to external funding agencies, including those that have received a high scientific merit score in external funding competitions but did not secure funding

NLCAHR received five applications for the 2007-2008 Development Grant competition. Three of these applications were awarded funding.

Investigators	Project Title	Funding
Dr. Angela Loucks-Atkinson (with Linda Rohr)	“Exploring Biopsychosocial Factors of Physical Activity Adherence Among Older Adults”	\$9,128
Dr. Maria Mathews (with Peter Dawe, Dr. John Hawboldt, Dr. Peter Wang, Dr. Roy West and Dr. Stephanie Young)	“Out-of-pocket costs for breast cancer patients in Newfoundland and Labrador”	\$10,000
Dr. Donna Bulman (with Dr. Karen Parsons and Dr. Maria Mathews)	“HIV testing in pregnancy: Utilizing women’s voices to inform policy”	\$7781.58

Project Grants

Project grants of up to \$40,000 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. During the 2007-2008 funding cycle, there were five applications received for this competition, and three were successful.

Investigators	Project Title	Funding
Dr. Karen Parsons-Suhl (with Dr. Aimee Suprenant, Ann Marie Tracey and Dr. Marshall Godwin)	“Determining the Needs of Community Dwelling Older Adults with Age-Associated Memory Loss and Mild Cognitive Impairment in Newfoundland”	\$25,737.62
Dr. Mark Stefanelli (with Kanwal Richardson and Dr. Bridget Fernandez)	“Clinical and Genetic delineation of hereditary Neurological disorders in Newfoundland and Labrador: A pilot study”	\$39,880
Roxana Vernescu	“Attention Process Training in Young Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders”	\$39,880

CIHR’s Partnership for Health System Improvement (PHSI) Grant

NLCAHR has made a commitment to CIHR’s Institute for Health Services and Policy Research to act, in conjunction with the provincial government’s Industrial Research and Innovation Fund, as a co-funder for successful NL applications to the PHSI program. There were no new applications for this program in this fiscal year, but NLCAHR continued its funding commitment for the second year of the following three-year project:

Investigators	Project Title	Funding
Dr. Maria Mathews (with Dr. Robert Truscott Card, Dr. James Rourke, and Dr. Jody Glacken)	“Retention of locally trained medical graduates in Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador”	\$ 6,178 (\$17,554 over three years)

Our contract, in collaboration with the provincial Industrial Research and Innovation Fund that provides the co-funding with CIHR for the PHSI grants program, is set to be renewed in 2008.

Fellowships

As part of the Centre’s mandate to support the training and development of new health researchers in the province, the Fellowships Program is designed to facilitate applied health research through awards to students and post-doctoral fellows studying in Newfoundland and Labrador. Fellowships are awarded in three categories: Master’s Fellowships, Doctoral Fellowships, and Post-Doctoral Fellowships.

For the 2007-2008 competitions, NLCAHR received eight applications for Master’s Fellowships and awarded two fellowships of \$18,000 per year, each renewable for up to two years. We received two applications for Doctoral Fellowships but neither of these was selected for funding by the review committee. Of three Post-Doctoral fellowship applications received for the 2007-2008 funding cycle, one was successful. The Master’s and Doctoral Fellowships are funded on the basis of an arrangement for partial co-funding with Memorial University’s School of Graduate Studies.

Grantee	Program	Project Title	Award
Sarah Hollett	Master of Science, Psychology	"Perceptions of Quality of Medical Care: Perspectives from Children and Adolescents and their Parents"	\$ 18,000 per year for up to 2 years
Zhuoyu Sun	Master of Science, Community Health and Humanities	"Dietary factors and microsatellite Instability in sporadic colorectal cancer"	\$ 18,000 per year for up to 2 years
Stacey Wareham	Post-doctoral, Sociology	"Exploring the Health Impacts of Newfoundland and Labrador Make-Work Projects: A Community-Based, Participatory Action Approach"	\$38,000 (plus up to \$5,500 for additional expenses) per year for up to 2 years
Total fellowships for the 2007-2008 funding cycle			\$ 79,500

Funding is continuing for the following fellowships that were awarded in the previous fiscal year:

Grantee	Program	Project Title	Award
Kelly Butt	Master of Science, Community Health and Humanities	"Opinions of municipal water quality in Newfoundland and Labrador"	\$ 18,000
Duyen Nguyen	Master of Science, Psychology	"Peer victimization experiences of children and adolescents with cleft lip and/or palate"	\$18,000
Kelly Warren	PhD, Psychology	"Injury prevention: what parents know and what they teach their children"	\$ 20,000
Andrea Kitta	PhD, Folklore	"Lay Perceptions of Pediatric Inoculations and Anti-Vaccination Discourse."	\$20,000
Total fellowships for the 2007-2008 funding cycle			\$ 76,000

Visiting Lecturer Program

NLCAHR's Visiting Lecturer Program assists Newfoundland & Labrador research and academic organizations to bring in scholars from out of the province to engage in capacity development and knowledge transfer activities with local researchers. NLCAHR provided the following funding in 2007-2008:

Sponsoring Unit	Topic	Award
Discipline of Genetics, Faculty of Medicine	The First NL Nutritional Genomics Seminar – hosted by Dr. Guang Sun; 11 speakers	\$763
SafetyNet	Dr. Hester Lipscomb, Associate Professor of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Duke University Medical Center, Durham, NC. "Improving Occupational Health & Safety Research"	\$1,000
Community Health, Faculty of Medicine	Hannah Conference: "Sickness and Health in Northern Remote and Rural regions during the 19 th and 20 th Centuries." Travel support for invited speakers	\$3,500

Scholar-in-Residence Program

This program, introduced in 2004, aims to bring to the province established scholars who are actively involved in research linked to the Centre's priority themes. The second holder of the Scholar-in-Residence award was Dr. Roger Pitblado, a health geographer who recently retired from the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research at Laurentian University. Dr. Pitblado worked at NLCAHR for the semester beginning September 2007. During this time, Dr. Pitblado gave a public lecture entitled "*Where have all the rural health care providers gone?*" Other activities included taking part in the Speakers Series of the Faculty of Medicine's Division of Community Health and Humanities. The title of his presentation was "*Welcome to rural Canada doc, how long will you be staying?*" He also participated in our Research Affinity Group on Rural, Northern and Aboriginal Health.

Visiting Scholar	Sponsoring Unit	NLCAHR Contribution
Dr. Roger Pitblado	Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University	\$ 7,500 (+\$ 2,000 travel expenses)

Establishment Grants

The Establishment Grant program was created in 2005 to facilitate the recruitment of new applied health researchers to faculty positions at Memorial by providing research funding to top up employment offers. The grants are not meant to replace existing research funding that would be provided as part of a start-up package, but are designed to make it possible for academic units to attract and retain the strongest candidates through enhanced employment offers. Grants of up to \$15,000 are available to academic units intending to hire full-time, tenure-track or tenured academic staff and are also open to appointments of clinical professors if their position includes at least 33.3% fully protected time for research (in addition to clinical and teaching responsibilities).

During its first two years of operation, this program has elicited only limited interest from departments and programs at Memorial University; the Centre's Board plans to re-evaluate its design during the coming year.

Collaborative Activities

1. Collaboration with Other Newfoundland & Labrador Research Organizations

As in previous years, the Centre has been working with a number of other health research organizations in the province. These include the Clinical Epidemiology Research Unit, the Health Research Unit of the Division of Community Health of the Faculty of Medicine, the Harris Centre for Policy Research, the E-Health Research Unit; the Primary Care Research Unit; and the Population Therapeutics Research Unit. In addition, NLCAHR has continued to work with the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information on a number of joint activities and in ongoing discussions about how to enhance the secondary use of the province's administrative health data by the research community.

2. Rural Health Research

The Centre continues to play an active role in the development of rural health research in this country. The Director serves on the executive of the Canadian Society for Rural Health Research. In addition, the Centre has been involved in a number of rurally-oriented research projects this year. The Director has been a co-applicant on a large CIHR grant application on the subject of rural dentistry in Atlantic Canada. This application is currently at the Letter of Intent stage. The Director and staff researchers have been developing a strategy paper on the delivery of health services to rural and remote communities by means of mobile units. The Centre has also been working with the Dean of Medicine on the idea of a provincial Rural Health Research Network for Newfoundland and Labrador. Finally, we have played a leadership role in a team that is developing a grant application on methods of improving health services and health outcomes for rural NL seniors with low levels of health literacy. This application will be submitted to the Lupina Foundation in September 2008 (additional details below).

3. National Alliance of Provincial Health Research Organizations

As in previous years, the Centre has been an active member in NAPPHRO, which brings together the directors of the country's principal provincial health research funding organizations. The Alliance is currently co-chaired by the CEO of the Quebec's FRSQ and the Director of the Nova Scotia Foundation for Health Research. The group meets two to three times a year to share best practices in the management and allocation of health research grants and to discuss mutual concerns. In addition, the Director has also joined, as part of the NAPPHRO group, a larger national organization, the National Forum of Health Funders, which brings together the provincial funders of health research, the major national funding agencies (CIHR, CHSRF and SSHRC) and the principal national health charities that provide research funding. Like NAPPHRO, this group meets two or three times a year to discuss shared concerns and activities. Participation in these groups gives the Centre a voice at these important tables, insights into the approaches and best practices of related organizations, and ideas for new programs. For example, our new web-based inventory of researchers and research in applied health research, with its reliance on the national Common CV as a core source of data, was inspired by presentations to NAPPHRO by Quebec's FRSQ on the system it developed.

4. Network of Centre Directors in Health Services and Policy Research

After serving as co-chair of this organization, the Director has recently taken over as chair. The network brings together, both through telephone conferences and through bi-annual face-to-face meetings, the directors of eleven

university-linked applied health research units from various parts of the country to share ideas on administrative approaches, knowledge exchange and capacity development; to facilitate data sharing and collaborative research activities; and to coordinate efforts to enhance national funding of applied health researchers and centres. The network has recently been awarded enhanced multi-year funding and administrative support from CHSRF and CIHR's Institute for Health Services and Policy Research. The Network's next face-to-face meeting will be held in Gatineau, Quebec in June 2008.

5. Research Canada

The Centre has also maintained its membership, initiated in 2002, with Research Canada (formerly, the Canadian Coalition for Health Research), an organization of health research centres and teaching hospitals across the country working to publicize the achievements and needs of health research organizations and to lobby for increased research funding.

6. Canadian Institutes of Health Research

The Centre has collaborated with CIHR on several initiatives this year. We were invited to participate in a one-day "Funders' Dialogue on Knowledge Translation" in February 2008; this meeting brought together research funding agencies to discuss evaluation of KTE activities. CIHR's objective is to build a community of practice for funders who support knowledge translation and to further discuss evaluation and other common issues. Theresa Mackenzie was also appointed as a CIHR community reviewer and will participate in her first peer review process in May 2008. In addition to building relationships within CIHR, Ms. Mackenzie's participation will provide information that will be used to support researchers in preparing grant proposals. NLCAHR was also consulted by CIHR on revisions to the Partnerships for Health System Improvement program.

7. "Learning for Life" Rural Health Literacy Project

The Centre has taken a leadership role in coordinating a health literacy project grant application to the Lupina Foundation, based in Toronto. The project will seek to pilot and evaluate models for a sustainable, community-based initiative to improve health literacy, access and self-management among rural older persons in Newfoundland & Labrador. The Centre has brokered a partnership between the Seniors Resource Centre of Newfoundland & Labrador and a university-based research team lead by Dr. Wendy Young, the incoming Canada Research Chair in Healthy Aging in the School of Nursing. The Centre has also developed its own partnership with the Seniors Resource Centre and the Literacy Council of Newfoundland & Labrador, and now has representation at the latter.

8. Evidence-Based Practice Council

NLCAHR continues to collaborate with Eastern Health's Evidence-Based Practice Council. The EBPC is a committee established to support and encourage the development, implementation and evaluation of evidence based practice within the organization. The EBPC brings together clinical and administrative committees from within Eastern Health to foster research initiatives and knowledge translation and uptake, as well as to develop a working model for EBP within the organization.

9. Wellness Plan Evaluation Committee

The Centre participates in the evaluation committee of the Provincial Wellness Plan. This Committee is overseeing an external program evaluation of the Wellness Plan's implementation and administration.

10. Aboriginal Medical Education Project

Under the leadership of the Dean of Medicine, Stephen Bornstein coordinated a team that developed and submitted a successful grant application to the Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative competition. The proposal involves a substantial reconfiguration of Faculty of Medicine's recruitment, admissions and student affairs procedures, its undergraduate curriculum, and the curriculum of the new master's program in public health. The objective of these proposed changes is to increase the Faculty's recruitment and retention of aboriginal students. It is also hoped that the changes will make the Faculty's programs more sensitive to the needs and concerns of aboriginal students and that the training provided will be more attentive to aboriginal issues.

11. NLCAHR Participation at Meetings & Conferences

Event	Date	Staff
HTA Executive Seminar, St. John's	May 22-23 2007	Stephen Bornstein, Janice Butler
Meeting of the National Alliance of Provincial Health Research Organizations, Montreal	May 28-29 2007	Stephen Bornstein, Pablo Navarro
Forum of Health Research Funders, CIHR, Ottawa	June 7 2007	Stephen Bornstein
CAHSPR meeting, Toronto, Ontario	June 12 – 15 2007	Stephen Bornstein
Making the Connections Conference, St. John's	October 5 2007	Stephen Bornstein, Pablo Navarro, Tyrone White, Annette McGrath, Janice Butler, Todd Jeans
Centre Director's Meeting, Ottawa	November 28 2007	Stephen Bornstein
Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative, St. John's	Jan 15, 2008	Stephen Bornstein, Theresa Mackenzie
Funders' Dialogue on Knowledge Translation, Ottawa	February 15, 2008	Theresa Mackenzie
IPPH Coordinating Centre, Corner Brook	Feb 26 2008	Stephen Bornstein
CHSPR Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia	March 3 – 5 2008	Stephen Bornstein, Pablo Navarro, Theresa Mackenzie
Cochrane Conference in Edmonton, Alberta	March 6 – 7 2008	Stephen Bornstein, Pablo Navarro
CHRSP Conference, Western Health, Corner Brook	March 11 2008	Stephen Bornstein, Janice Butler
CHRSP Conference, Eastern Health, St. John's	March 14 2008	Stephen Bornstein, Janice Butler
CHRSP Conference, Central Health, St. John's	March 17 2008	Stephen Bornstein, Janice Butler
Science Advisory Board meeting, Ottawa	March 25-27 2008	Stephen Bornstein
NLCAHR Research Forum on Aging, St. John's	March 31 2008	Stephen Bornstein, Pablo Navarro, Theresa Mackenzie, Tyrone White, Annette McGrath, Shaina Goudie, Todd Jeans

Research and Knowledge Exchange Activities

1. Research Workshops

In conjunction with the Aging Research Affinity Group, NLCAHR organized a research forum and Café Scientifique on aging research. *New Directions in Aging Research* was a one-day research forum hosted in St. John's. It consisted of four panels that presented on major developments in aging research and current research in aging demographics and the health care system, healthy aging in the community, and mental health and aging. Panel presenters consisted of experts from across the country as well as local researchers. The presentations were followed by remarks from an invited discussant and a question-and-answer session with the audience.

The forum opened with an announcement by the Honorable Ross Wiseman, Minister of Health and Community Services, announcing the launch of a new aging research funding initiative that will be administered by the Centre. Over 120 people attended the forum in person. It was also webcast simultaneously across the province (a first for the Centre). Attendees represented the full spectrum of health research users and producers, including university faculty, staff and students, clinicians, administrators, association and non-profit representatives and interested members of the public. Local media were on hand to cover the event which was reported on television and radio, and in print. Feedback from the forum was overwhelmingly positive. Presentation files and video of the presentations are archived on the Centre's website.



Aging Research Forum 2008: Stephen Bornstein, Parminder Raina, Suzanne Brake, Sharon Buehler

On the evening of the research forum, the Centre organized a CIHR 'Café Scientifique' to engage members of the public in discussion of issues in aging research. Several researchers and more than 30 participants attended this informal event. Evaluations of the event were extremely positive. We hope to organize more of these sessions in the future.

[Link: New Directions in Aging Research](#)

2. Applied Health Research Directory

In 2007-2008, the Centre developed and implemented an online Applied Health Research Directory. It is modeled on a similar directory developed by Quebec's funding agencies (health, natural sciences, social sciences & humanities) that is being adopted by several provinces across the country (including BC, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba). The NLCAHR AHR Directory is an online database into which researchers can enter information describing their interests and their research. The Directory is now publicly searchable and is intended to be a resource for building research teams, forming peer review committees, identifying experts and assessing applied health research capacity and gaps in the province. The Directory currently holds information on more than 100 applied health researchers in the province, including university faculty, staff and students, as well as researchers from regional health authorities and government. Over the summer of 2008, the Directory will be expanded to include research partners and research users in the health system.

[Link: Applied Health Research Directory](#)

3. Workshops on Producing Effective Research Posters & Presentations

The Centre has produced two comprehensive workshops in developing and delivering effective research posters and research presentations. The workshops are structured around a two-hour presentation and provide guidance in basic theory, organization, design and delivery of posters and presentations. The workshops are primarily intended for applied health researchers at the university, but have also been attended by basic health science researchers and research staff from the health system. The workshops will continue to be given on an annual basis.

4. NLCAHR Orientation Sessions

In November 2007, NLCAHR offered a series of information sessions designed to increase awareness of our funding programs and activities throughout the university. These sessions attracted over 90 people and gave the team from the Centre a chance to share information on our programs, distribute documentation and answer questions. It is our intention to repeat these sessions every other year.

5. Collaboration with NLHBA

On October 5th, 2007, NLCAHR and the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association (NLHBA) jointly hosted a forum entitled *Making the Connections: The Health and Community Services System and Researchers*. The



Making the Connections Conference, October 2007

objectives of the forum were: to explore and build upon the collaboration between researchers and the provincial health and community services system in order to facilitate the use of research in health practice; and to provide an opportunity for researchers and research users to meet, share research ideas, and share research results.

As a result of the positive response to the forum, and based on the feedback received from those in attendance, NLCAHR and NLHBA decided to continue collaborating on activities of shared interest. The

specific outcomes from this continuing partnership include plans for:

- an annual knowledge transfer symposium which will, among other things, provide an opportunity for input from research users into the identification of potential topics for the Centre's Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program (CHRSP);
- the creation of a KTE Affinity Group as part of the Centre's program of Research Affinity Groups;
- redesigning part of the Development Grants program to require partnerships with health decision makers,
- expanding the Centre's Applied Health Researcher Directory to include policy makers, administrators and clinicians in the provincial health system who are interested in research and its application; and
- hosting matchmaking sessions to broker interactions between small groups of decision makers interested in a specific topic and selected researchers.

[Link: Making the Connections documents](#)

6. Communication Activities

Reports on Activities of Grant Recipients

NLCAHR collects and disseminates reports on research projects funded through the Centre. To date, we have secured 20 research reports from grant recipients; these reports are now posted on our website with links to published articles where available. Recently-added reports include: Dr. Joan Crane, *Transvaginal Ultrasonography in the Prediction of Preterm Birth After Treatment for Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia*; Michelle Ploughman, *Does Treadmill Exercise Improve Performance of Cognitive or Upper Extremity Tasks in People with Chronic Stroke? A Randomized Cross-Over Trial*; and Dr. Fabien Basset, *Effect of Short-Term Normobaric Hypoxia on Substrate Utilization in Sedentary Overweight Males: A Pilot Study*.

Link: [NLCAHR Research Reports](#)

NLCAHR Website

NLCAHR continues to develop its website, updating it on a daily basis with news and information that is relevant not only to applied health researchers but also to students, decision-makers, clinicians, and the general public. New sections have been added to highlight the work of our Research Affinity Groups.

Link: [NLCAHR Website](#)



NLCAHR Newsletter and E-bulletin

NLCAHR distributes a quarterly newsletter highlighting research being conducted within Newfoundland and Labrador. We also distribute, on a frequent basis, an electronic bulletin. The e-bulletin draws attention to special events, funding opportunities, and other items of interest to the research community. More than 500 people are now on the mailing list for these publications.

Link: [NLCAHR Publications](#)

Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program

NLCAHR has developed an innovative approach to providing decision makers in the provincial health and community services system with evidence to help in the making of key decisions. Our new Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program (CHRSP) involves a consultation process in which the Centre's researchers and health-system decision makers work together to develop a priority list of questions of pressing concern to the health system and a research process in which researchers and decision makers work together to develop, for each selected topic, a synthesis of the best available scientific evidence that is tailored for relevance to this province's needs and capacities.

CHRSP focuses on two types of issues: health services/health policy and health technology assessment (HTA). The approach taken to the synthesis varies from topic to topic, but we generally begin with consultations with the province's health decision makers and health professionals to identify topics that are of the greatest interest to the provincial health and community services system and to prioritize those on which a substantial body of high quality research is available.

For each topic that is selected, a team is created to gather and synthesize the findings of this research and then contextualize it to the requirements, resources, and circumstances of Newfoundland and Labrador. An external reviewer then reviews the work of the project team, providing feedback to ensure validity.

The results of the synthesis project are then communicated to the province's decision makers and health professionals in formats and forums designed to maximize their uptake into the local decision-making process.

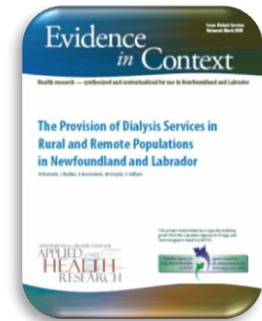
CHRSP: Dialysis

The first project completed under CHRSP was funded by a capacity-building grant from the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH). Under the leadership of Dr. Brendan Barrett, the research team, including Dr. Stephen Bornstein and Janice Butler from the Centre, Susan Gillam from Western Regional Health

Authority, and economist Dr. Mike Doyle, sought to answer the following research question: *In meeting the needs for dialysis services in rural and remote populations, what are the differences among the available treatment options with regards to efficacy/effectiveness, cost, acceptability, and feasibility in Newfoundland and Labrador?*

The final report was released in March 2008. Stephen Bornstein and Janice Butler visited with each Regional Health Authority to launch our new Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program, to report on the dialysis synthesis project, and to seek input on potential topics for CHRSP 2008. The full report and executive summary are available on the NLCAHR website.

[Link: Dialysis Reports](#)



CHRSP: Interventions for Childhood Obesity

This synthesis is focused on assessing non-clinical prevention and treatment interventions for childhood obesity. The research team is being led by Dr. Sara Kirk, Canada Research Chair in Health Services at Dalhousie University. The team includes Dr. Stephen Bornstein and Pablo Navarro from NLCAHR. The research question is: *What are some of the most effective non-clinical interventions that could be applied to prevention and reduction of childhood overweight and obesity rates in Newfoundland and Labrador?* The project is expected to be finished in the summer of 2008.

CHRSP: PET/CT Technology

NLCAHR has begun another CHRSP to answer the question: *given the geographic, demographic, fiscal and political context of Newfoundland and Labrador, if the province purchases a PET/CT scanner, what is the most appropriate, effective, and efficient way to operate it so that the population derives the maximum benefit at the best possible cost?* The project is funded by CADTH, and the team leader is Dr. Sandor Demeter, Head of Nuclear Medicine at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The team, coordinated by Research Officer Janice Butler, includes Stephen Bornstein, Louise Jones (CEO of Eastern Health) and local subject experts Drs. Peter Hollett and Benvon Cramer. The project focuses on the clinical effectiveness and the cost-effectiveness of PET/CT technology, including the important associated question of whether or not the province should also purchase a cyclotron to produce the radioactive isotopes used by the scanner. The final report is expected to be available by September 2008, and knowledge transfer and dissemination of the report are planned for the fall.

CHRSP: Future Projects

In March and April 2008, as part of the knowledge transfer activities of the Centre and coinciding with the release of the dialysis synthesis report, Stephen Bornstein and Janice Butler met with senior executives of the four Regional Health Authorities, either in-person or via videoconference, to describe the CHRSP and to initiate deliberations for next year's priority topics.

The response from the Regional Health Authorities was overwhelmingly positive, and we continue to work with key stakeholders to identify new research topics of pressing interest to health decision makers in the coming year. To date, we have collected 50 potential topics for contextualized research synthesis. Through a priority-setting process, we have narrowed the list to 14 topics of high priority to the decision makers in Regional Health Authorities.

The next step is to filter out topics for which there is no high-quality systematic review research evidence. In June 2008, the CHRSP team will meet with the CEOs of the health authorities to select the final topics for CHRSP 2008.

[Link: CHRSP](#)

Capacity Development Activities

As noted in our strategic plan, one of the Centre's goals is to help build human capacity for undertaking and supporting high-quality applied health research in the province. The Centre's capacity development strategy included activities and programs that address training, networking and other support needs. Capacity development activities of the Centre include:

Research Affinity Groups

The Research Affinity Group program continues to be one of our most successful capacity development activities. It brings together, on a regular basis, people from the university, the health system and the community who share a common interest in a key area within the domain of applied health research. Building on our initial research affinity group on Rural, Northern and Aboriginal Health formed in 2005, the Centre has now formed groups on: Aging; Applied Genetics; Women's Health/Gender and Health; Qualitative Analysis in Applied Health Research; Quantitative Analysis in Applied Health Research; Environment and Health; Arts and Health; and Substance Abuse. These groups have produced very positive feedback from participants and provide valuable networking opportunities. The idea for this year's Research Symposium, as well as the planning and leadership of the event, emerged out of our highly active research affinity group on Aging. The topic for our research symposium for next year comes from another group - Women's Health/Gender and Health.

[Link: Research Affinity Groups](#)

Applied Health Researcher Support Program

To provide increased support for new applied health researchers in Newfoundland and Labrador, NLCAHR administers the *Applied Health Researcher Program*. As part of this program, researchers are able to obtain access to research advising, proposal pre-review, networking events and grantsmanship training activities.

Participants in the program are also offered the opportunity to work with a research mentor; these mentors are volunteers from our community who have solid research track records. Among other things, mentors may: help new researchers become familiar Memorial's research policies and procedures; offer feedback on the researcher's current and planned work; assist the researcher in networking; help identify appropriate sources of research funds and strategies for applying to them; provide advice, support in grant proposal writing; and assist in identifying colleagues and external experts who can provide a 'pre-review' of the researcher's draft grant proposals.

Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Training Seminar

On May 22 and 23, 2007, the Centre organized and delivered a second round of HTA Executive Training Seminars for health system administrators and policy makers. The 2-day program was a continuation of the executive training offered in 2005, and was made possible with support from a capacity-building grant from the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH). The objective of the seminar was to enhance the capacity of Newfoundland and Labrador health decision makers to understand the principles of HTA, utilize HTA products more effectively, assess the benefits and limitations of HTA, and interact more effectively with HTA agencies.

On Day 1, Introductory Level HTA Training was provided to health executives who had not attended the Executive Seminar held in October, 2005 or an equivalent session. It provided an introduction to the fundamentals of HTA, its uses and its limitations. Day 2 offered Intermediate Level HTA Training intended for those who had attended the 2005 training seminar and for participants from Day 1 of this year's seminar who wished to examine more complex issues related to the effective use of HTA in decision-making processes.

The training session included health executives and researchers from across the province as well as representatives from Ontario and Alberta. NLCAHR was pleased to welcome back a key member of the teaching team, Dr. Don Juzwishin, CEO of the Health Council of Canada, and former Director of Health Technology Assessment at the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research. The response from health executives to the seminars was very positive; all participants indicated that they would like to continue to receive HTA training in the future. In 2008, the Centre plans to expand its HTA training program to include health professionals and front-line workers in the healthcare system.

Other Resources and Activities

In addition to the capacity-building activities described above, NLCAHR has continued to use its website to provide details on new and recurring funding opportunities, upcoming conferences, and other information of use to our stakeholders.

Financial Overview

For the fiscal year April 1 2007- March 31 2008

Income for Fiscal Year 2007-2008	
Balance as of March 31, 2007	337,883
Health and Community Services	500,000
Total Income	837,883

Expenditures April 2007 – March 2008	
Salaries and benefits	369,612
Operations/travel/conferences	68,244
Awards Programs	215,527
Other Funded Research Activities	170,000
Total Expenditures	823,383

Balance as of March 31, 2008	14,500
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For **Fiscal Year 2008-2009**, we project a moderate increase in overall costs in order to continue our activities at the same level as last year, allow for ongoing fellowship commitments, upgrading of staff and inflation as well as costs to continue new programs including 4 new Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program (CHRSP) studies.

Future Directions

In the coming year, NLCAHR will continue to emphasize its KTE collaboration with the provincial health system with a strong focus being placed on our Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program, which is designed to provide up-to-date, policy-relevant and locally specific evidence to our decision making partners, especially the province's four Regional Health Authorities and their organization, the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association. We will also continue to seek to enhance our interactions with health-system decision makers beyond the St. John's area by using our limited travel budget as well as teleconferencing, videoconferencing and webcasting to make our activities more accessible 'beyond the overpass'.

The Centre will also be devoting considerable time and energy to working with the Department of Health and Community Services to design and implement the new funding program for research on healthy aging that Minister Wiseman announced at our March Forum on Aging Research.

We will also be continuing to develop the 'umbrella function' referred to in last year's Annual Report, that is, our mandate to help link researchers to one another, research units to one another, and researchers to decision makers. We will do this in a variety of ways. We will continue to support the activities of a growing array of Research Affinity Groups, including two new ones (Environment and Health, Arts and Health) that bring together researchers and research users with a shared common interest.

In the coming year, we will also enhance our new Applied Health Research Directory. We will be putting the directory of researchers that we developed during the past year onto our website in combination with a powerful

search engine that will help readers determine who is doing research on what in the province. And we will be developing a module of the directory for research users—decision makers, policy makers, health professionals—so that researchers can use the search engine to find partners for research and knowledge exchange projects.

Finally, NLCAHR plans to work with the Women's Health/ Gender and Health Research Affinity Group to organize a research forum on women's health, and with CADTH and the Cochrane Collaboration to hold a two-day introductory workshop on Cochrane Reviews and Health Technology Assessments.