



## *Foundational Document*

### *Network Environments for Aboriginal Health Research (NEAHR)*

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

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# Network Environments for Aboriginal Health Research (NEAHR)

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

As one of its first initiatives, the CIHR - Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health (IAPH) established Aboriginal Capacity and Developmental Research Environments (ACADRE) centres to develop a network of supportive research environments across Canada that facilitates the development of aboriginal capacity in health research. Although there are demonstrated pockets of excellence in aboriginal health research in Canada, this field requires the systemic development of both human resources and supportive research environments in order to ensure continued growth and broad regional development. Designed to sustain and evolve the momentum of the ACADRE centres, CIHR - IAPH launched a new initiative in 2007 titled Network Environments for Aboriginal Health Research (NEAHRs).

The launch has resulted in the formation of 9 centres including the successful transition of former ACADRE centres. Seven regional centres include NEAR-BCWA (Vancouver), Alberta ACADRE Network (Edmonton), Centre for Aboriginal Health Research (Winnipeg), Indigenous Health Research Development Program (U of Toronto, McMaster), Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program (Halifax), Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (Regina), Nasivvik Centre for Inuit Health and Changing Environments (Quebec City), and 2 national centres; Anisnawbe Kekendazone - CIET (Ottawa) and National Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research (Toronto). NEAHR centres now form a national network known as the Aboriginal Health Research Networks (AHRNets) which coordinate their collaborative activity.

The objectives of the centres are:

- to pursue scientific knowledge based on international standards of research excellence
- to advance capacity and infrastructure in aboriginal health research
- to provide the appropriate environment for scientists from across the four research pillars, 1) Biomedical research, 2) Clinical research, 3) Health services/systems research, and 4) Social, cultural, environmental and population health research, to pursue research opportunities in partnership with aboriginal communities
- to provide opportunities for aboriginal communities and organizations to identify important health research objectives in collaboration with aboriginal health researchers
- to facilitate the rapid uptake of research results through appropriate communication and dissemination strategies
- to provide an appropriate environment and resources to encourage aboriginal and non-aboriginal students to pursue careers in aboriginal health research

Each centre must include a volunteer advisory board with majority membership being from the aboriginal community, facilitate development of aboriginal health researchers at all career stages and provide training opportunities for students, and facilitate health research capacity development in aboriginal communities and organizations.

The NEAHR centres focus solely on exploring critical aboriginal health issues and are the initial links in a developing network of centres across Canada responsible for developing the next generation of aboriginal health researchers and for focused research efforts on determinants of health in aboriginal communities.

To be successful in acquiring a NEAHR centre grant, applicants must demonstrate a combination of scientific merit and community partnerships. Each applicant must identify up to three major health research themes that the centre will develop as areas of primary excellence. Research themes currently focus on issues such as, but are not limited to: nutrition; violence and trauma; traditional knowledge; health services and policy; population and public health; child health, environmental influences of health and mental health.

### **NEAHR Centres**

#### Alberta Network, Edmonton

Their research has evolved in a responsive manner through collaborative community partnerships and research requests. Three research themes have evolved from community requests that will guide and enhance the work of the Alberta Network over the next three years: traditional knowledge and ethics; northern community environmental health; and community access to health services.

Telephone: 780-492-1827

Email: [acadre@ualberta.ca](mailto:acadre@ualberta.ca)

#### Anisnawbe Kekendazone, Ottawa

Initial health research priorities at the Ottawa facility are: perinatal health; youth at risk and resilience; and knowledge translation, i.e., communicating health research knowledge to aboriginal communities in a way that is readily understood. For more information about the types of projects please visit the website.

Telephone: 613-562-5393

#### Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program, Halifax

The Atlantic region-wide program fosters community-generated indigenous research in three broad areas: prevention research, such as reducing smoking and alcohol consumption; mental health and addictions research; and enhancing the understanding of health determinants, such as, housing conditions, income, and cultural and spiritual factors.

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Kloshe Tillicum (NEAHR BCWA), Vancouver

The Network Environment for Aboriginal Health Research British Columbia Western Arctic focuses on four key themes (1) Indigenous Knowledge including traditional medicine, (2) Complex interactions - determining the health of populations, (3) Infectious disease, and (4) Aboriginal research ethics.

Email: info@kloshetillicum.ca

Centre for Aboriginal Health Research, Winnipeg

Primary research themes addressed by this NEAHR Centre include: population health; health services; child health and development; and ethical issues in aboriginal health research.

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Email: cahr@umanitoba.ca

Indigenous Health Research Development Program, U of Toronto, McMaster

Research themes guiding IHRDP include: prevention and control of chronic diseases; mental health of women and children; and culture, health and healing.

Telephone: Toronto, 416-978-0298

Ohswéken, 519-445-0023 ext. 236

Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre, Regina

A collaboration between the University of Regina, First Nations University of Canada, and the University of Saskatchewan, with broad support from various health boards and Aboriginal health organizations, IPHRC is supported by CIHR-IAPH and the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF). Funding provided to IPHRC is primarily focussed on building capacity in health research among Aboriginal people through trainee support, and promoting research into areas of Aboriginal health: 1) Chronic diseases, nutrition and life style, 2) Indigenous healing: addiction (included FAS), mental health, and the judicial system; 3) health delivery and control (includes ethics, community development and governance; and 4) prevention and environmental health.

Telephone: 306-337-2461

Nasivvik Centre for Inuit Health and Changing Environments, Quebec City

The Nasivvik Centre (Université Laval NEAHR) is investigating the complex interactions which determine the health of populations in the theme areas of food, water, and traditional and natural medicines and remedies while actively engaging Inuit and other students and community individuals in the four Inuit regions of the Canadian North: Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

Telephone: 705-748-1011 ext. 7242

National Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research

NAMHR developed in December 2001 as a partnership between Aboriginal communities and academic researchers. It is a network of researchers from across Canada with extensive experience in Aboriginal health and related areas. The priority of the Network is to develop research capacity. To that end, the emphasis is on networking and training for existing researchers and conducting a series of pilot projects that provide a basis to seek funding for larger scale projects from other sources including regular CIHR competitions, federal and provincial programs and Aboriginal organizations.

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