



February 2012 » E-news

NSHRF NEWS



Welcome everyone to the first article of The REAL Issue. Each month, I will write about topics that are meaningful to the NSHRF and Nova Scotia's health research enterprise. The title of this section comes from our development of innovative programs to ensure that best knowledge available is used as part of the decision making process. Decision makers need varying levels of knowledge that is **Relevant** to the decisions being made, **Excellent** in its quality, **Accessible** in a format and language that is easily understood and **Legitimate** by having the methodological rigor and standards to ensure it is in keeping with the body of knowledge. This is **REAL** knowledge and this is how we can help. I look forward to starting conversations and sharing my thoughts.

The REAL Issue

The week of January 9, 2012, the Chronicle Herald ran a series of articles which discussed how the health care system in Nova Scotia can be improved. The articles were written 'by people who know the "health" system well and who have some good ideas on making it top-notch, timely and financially sustainable,' *Operating on Health*, January 14, 2012. In reading the articles on this important topic, I noticed a common theme - the need for 'facts' and the importance of evidence, research and evaluation.

This was not surprising; the health care system is incredibly complex. Informed decision making is essential if we are to make any headway on meaningful reform. George Cooper highlighted the need for evaluation in his article, *Good governance first step toward curing system ills*, and I could not agree more. We, the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation (NSHRF), have recognized this need and created an evaluation service to provide support to the health care system. Evaluation plays a key part in our drive for informed decision making.

Over the past 11 years, we have supported the health care system to our full capability. At some points this has been challenging, as we are a small organization and our resources are continuously stretched. Despite this, we have managed to grow as an organization. This has been done through an entrepreneurial spirit, partnerships and sound management. This growth has helped us contribute to the Nova Scotia health research community and has provided the evidence needed for informed decision making for policies and programs that impact the province and its citizens.

All of this shows that we can be part of the solution for addressing the health care system in Nova Scotia. We are a resource that already exists and can be built upon to help the province. If the Government was to increase funding support for the NSHRF, the evaluation aspect of our programs could be enhanced, thus addressing the need that Mr. Cooper raised. We are a neutral arms length organization that has proven to be fiscally prudent while performing at a high level. We are seeing a return on provincial investment for health research and we are looked to nationally as a leader in supporting health research and informed decision making.

When considering alternative approaches for the health care system, we encourage those decision makers to examine the current high performers, take advantage of investments already made by the province and the expertise that has been developed. Build on what is working and not only focus on what is not.



Krista Connell, CEO

Stepping into social media

Almost every week it seems there is a new form of social media. We are stepping into social media by announcing the launch of our Twitter account. You can follow us @NSHRF_info. We'll be sharing information on funding opportunities, workshops, events, news from our partners and other NSHRF happenings. We want to create an open dialogue, so send us a tweet!

Celebrating Nova Scotia's health research community

On Wednesday, February 8, we celebrated Nova Scotia's health research community and the great research that is happening in our province. The evening recognized our recent [funded applicants](#) in all three of our programs – [Research Enterprise Development Initiatives](#), [Research Programs](#) and [Knowledge Programs](#), and Nova Scotia's recent fellows to the [Canadian Academy of Health Sciences](#).

Dr. Tom Marrie, Dean of Medicine, Dalhousie University and Board Chair of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences presented our congratulations to Dr. Jocelyn Downie and Dr. Gerry Johntson on their recent fellowships to the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS). CAHS fellows are those who have a history of outstanding performance in the academic health sciences in Canada.

We welcomed nine new inductees to our [Decade Club](#). The Decade Club recognizes individuals who have been involved in the NSHRF for 10 consecutive years, helping establish us as a leading health research foundation. All of our Decade Club members have played a key role in making us the organization we are today.

Two research trainees' received special awards. Every year we recognize a research

trainee who demonstrates the greatest promise and potential for excellence in health research through [The Quest, The John Ruedy Award](#). In addition to receiving the recognition, Capital Health contributes an annual award of \$5,000 to help the recipient further their research. Dr. Kevin Vessey, Chair of NSHRF's Research Advisory Committee, Associate Vice-President Research and the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Saint Mary's University presented this year's award to Jennifer Wong. Jennifer is pursuing a Master's degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology at Saint Mary's University.

This was the first year for us to recognize a research trainee with [The Colleen Elliott Award](#). The Colleen Elliott Award was established to recognize and honour [Colleen Elliott's](#) contribution to supporting the advancement of the health research enterprise in Nova Scotia. The Award is presented to a research trainee who demonstrates the greatest promise and potential for excellence in cancer research. We were pleased to have Colleen's son, Brendan Elliott, with us to present this year's recipient, Sheri Roach, with the award. Sheri is studying at Dalhousie University where she is pursuing her Master's in Nursing and Master's in Health Administration.

Call for Peer Reviewers

We are currently accepting nominations for the 2012 Peer Review Committees. Our Biomedical Peer Review Committee and the Health Policy, Health Services, Health Outcomes Peer Review Committee review grant applications for funding. Further information on the Peer Review Committees and the nomination process can be found on our [website](#). If you are interested, please contact us by April 6, 2012.

2012-13 Scotia Scholarship funding opportunity

We are pleased to announce the launch of the 2012-13 Scotia Scholarship funding opportunity. The Scotia Scholarship will be offered to both the Master and Doctorate levels this year. Students interested in being considered for a Scotia Scholarship are to review eligibility criteria, application requirements and evaluation criteria details on our [website](#), and then check with their university for internal deadlines and processes.

Call for applications: CONSUP- Research Team Development Award

The Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP) is looking for a research team that will conduct a survey to support their initiatives on generating awareness and understanding within the university student community about the long-term value of healthy food choices and active lifestyles.

CONSUP is committed to supporting a healthy environment for students, faculty and staff at Nova Scotia's universities. In order to better understand the current status of student food choices, lifestyles and related issues and to support the long-term program objectives, the working group intends to identify a research team to design and conduct a benchmark survey that examines food choices, lifestyles and other health issues of

undergraduate students across Nova Scotia's universities and the Nova Scotia Community College system.

This Team Development Award is intended to support the development of a research team that will apply for additional funding in order to conduct the benchmark survey. The team may choose to apply to any provincial, national, or international research funding competition that is peer reviewed. This Award will support activities related to team and proposal development.

For more information on the Award and apply, please visit our website. Applications are to be submitted by **April 5, 2012**.

OTHER NEWS

Registration now open – Knowledge in Healthcare: Creating. Accessing. Implementing.

Registration is now open for the Knowledge in Healthcare: Creating. Accessing. Implementing. Symposium. We are partnering with the [Health Association Nova Scotia](#) for the April 12-13, 2012 event. You can learn more [here](#).

To register please click [here](#).

For more information please contact Sonya Stevens: 902-835-8528 or sonya.stevens@healthassociation.ns.ca

CIHR 2012 Large-Scale Applied Research Project Competition in Genomics and Personalized Health

The 2012 Large-Scale Applied Research Project Competition in Genomics and Personalized Health registration deadline is February 27, 2012 and the application deadline is April 10, 2012.

The project competition aims to support projects that will demonstrate how genomics-based research can contribute to a more evidence-based approach to health and improving the cost-effectiveness of the health-care system. Genome Canada and CIHR are working together to advance the personalized health research agenda. CIHR Institutes participating in this exciting initiative include: CIHR Institute of Aging, CIHR Institute of Cancer Research, CIHR Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health, CIHR Institute of Genetics, CIHR Institute of Health Services and Policy Research, CIHR Institute of Infection and Immunity, CIHR Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis, and CIHR Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction.

CIHR's participation in this competition marks the launch of the [CIHR Personalized Medicine Signature Initiative](#) and represents the first in a series of funding opportunities to be launched under this initiative.

For more information about the competition, including the CIHR Institute of Cancer Research targeted areas of interest, please visit their [website](#).

CIHR Innovation Team Grants in Community-Based Primary Healthcare

We are pleased to partner with CIHR for the Innovation Team Grants: Community-Based Primary Healthcare (CBPHC) funding opportunity. The CBPHC funding opportunity will provide funding for teams undertaking programmatic, cross-jurisdictional and interdisciplinary research to develop, implement, evaluate and compare innovative models for chronic disease prevention and management in CBPHC and improving access to appropriate CBPHC for vulnerable populations.

You can learn more about the full funding opportunity [here](#).

Funding

- Up to \$ 31,665,000 over five years is available through this funding opportunity to support Canada-based teams (additional funds through partners in Australia and New Zealand will available to components of the teams based in those countries).

Important Dates

Competition: Phase 1: Letter of Intent

Application Deadline: 2012-05-01

Anticipated Notice of Decision: 2012-07-03

Funding Start Date: n/a

Competition: Phase 2: Full Application

Application Deadline: 2012-10-15

Anticipated Notice of Decision: 2013-04-01

Funding Start Date: 2013-04-01

Webinar: CIHR is hosting an information webinar for interested applicants to learn more about the launch of the Innovation Team Grants: CBPHC funding opportunity (e.g., objectives, eligibility, review process, etc.). Please RSVP for the webinar, which will be held February 9 at 2:30 p.m. EST.

IN PROFILE: NOVA SCOTIA RESEARCH

Project Title: **Oncolytic Potential of Measles for Treating Colorectal Cancer**

Co-principal Investigators: Christopher Donald Richardson

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, an estimated 22,000 Canadians are diagnosed with colorectal cancer each year. Approximately 760 of those live in Nova Scotia.

The measles virus has been proven to have tumor-killing properties. These properties have been observed in individuals with Burkitt's and non-Hodgkin's lymphomas and have shown that they can go into remission following a natural infection with measles.

Dr. Richardson's laboratory has previously discovered and studied 2 cellular receptors for vaccine and wild type isolates of measles virus (CD46 and CD150) that permit the virus

to bind and enter the host cell. They have also discovered the existence of another receptor that is highly upregulated on many adenocarcinomas, including those associated with colon cancer. It has been observed that many cell lines derived from these tumors are susceptible to measles virus infections. Dr. Richardson and his team are continuing their research in a two part study.

The first part of the study identified the cell surface receptors or tumor cell markers that make colon cancer cell susceptible to measles virus infections. This is a major accomplishment and has been recognized in both public and scientific media.

Dr. Richardson and his team are currently working on the second part of the study, where they are assessing the oncolytic potential of measles virus against colorectal tumors in mice. Preliminary results are showing that the tumors are specifically targeted by a measles virus that expresses the green fluorescent reporter protein. The tumor killing potential of the measles virus could eventually lead to the development of a therapeutic cancer vaccine against colorectal adenocarcinomas.

DID YOU KNOW?

Looking for a colleague, possible collaborator, or expert source of information? Take a look through the [Nova Scotia Directory of Health Researchers](#), available online at the NSHRF website.

If you are a Nova Scotian researcher working in a discipline either directly or indirectly related to health, please take a minute to add your name to the directory through your [Canadian Common CV](#).

KEEP IN TOUCH

To stay up-to-date on NSHRF announcements, visit www.nshrf.ca. To keep informed of announcements and other health research related information from NSHRF, sign up for our E-News/funding opportunities mailing list. Please contact info@nshrf.ca to subscribe or unsubscribe.