

The Need to Know:
**Collaborative Research by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy,
Regional Health Authorities, and Manitoba Health**

**RHA/Manitoba Health Team Member Job Description
June 25, 2007**

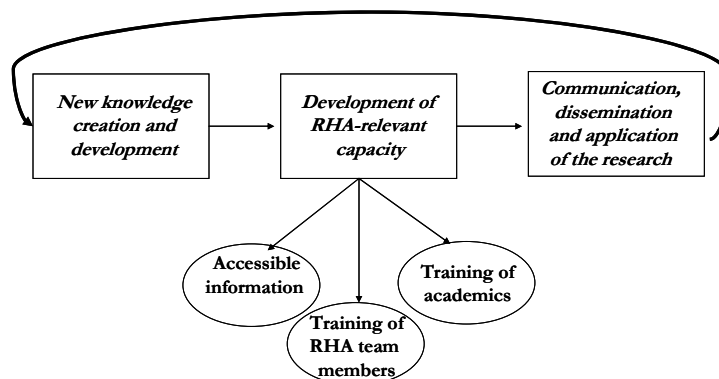
Background: *The Need to Know* Project

The Need to Know project originally began as an applied research project funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, Canada's major funder of health research. It was funded on the basis of a proposal developed by Patricia Martens and Charlyn Black and reviewed for scientific merit in a national competitive review of research projects. It was one of nineteen successful five-year projects funded in a competition of 179 proposals, announced January 2001, in a competition focusing on Community Alliances for Health Research (CAHR). Since then, *The Need to Know* Team has proven a highly successful and nationally recognized collaboration which has resulted in several research reports, publications, presentations and innovative knowledge translation activities resulting in action at the planning and policy levels. The Team has continued to meet three times a year, through a carry-over of the original funding for one year, use of funding from another CIHR-funded project called "From Evidence to Action" (co-PIs S. Bowen and P. Martens), and from funding awarded through the CIHR 2005 KT Award for Regional Impact. There are continual efforts to ensure sustainability, including support from the RHAs to defray some of the costs of one Team member from their region, and applications for funding future research projects and Team meetings through granting agencies. Because of the importance of the Winnipeg RHA, it was decided during the original project to create a liaison position representing the WRHA on the Team. After the original funding was completed (with its original focus on non-Winnipeg RHAs), the WRHA has taken on similar status with all other RHAs, with the option of having up to two Team members.

At present, the project has three major goals (Figure 1):

- 1) to create new knowledge directly relevant to regional health authorities (RHAs), both in Manitoba and as a model for the wider community;
- 2) to develop useful models for health information infrastructure, as well as for training and interaction, that will increase and improve capacity for collaborative research interaction; and
- 3) to disseminate and apply health-related research so as to increase the effectiveness of health services, and ultimately the health of RHA populations.

Figure 1:
Conceptual model of MCHP/RHA/Manitoba Health collaboration:
***The Need To Know* Knowledge Translation Model**



Under the original funding, three major research projects – identified as topics of high priority during discussions with the three stakeholders of the project, those being RHAs, Manitoba Health, and the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy – were completed that created new knowledge and provided a foundation for both the collaborative research process and for planning and decision-making by users of the information. The first of these projects focused on comparative analysis of health and health care utilization patterns of RHA regions and sub-regions, and over time (RHA Indicators Atlas, completed June 2003). The second project focused on comparative analyses of the prevalence of mental illness and use of the health care system (the Mental Illness Report, completed September 2004). The third project focused on sex differences in health status, outcomes, and the use of the health care system (the Sex Differences Report, completed November 2005). Projects are identified in partnership with the team members. The health services research projects have been co-funded by Manitoba Health, through the contractual agreement between Manitoba Health and MCHP which funds several research “deliverable” projects per year. In addition to the new knowledge created with the three research projects, *The Need to Know* project supports interaction with RHA planners and decision-makers, and provides training, capacity-building, information, and support for active application of research findings. Additionally, research into knowledge translation (KT) has evolved through findings of the ongoing evaluation of the project since its onset. Beyond the original three projects, the Team has continued its collaborative research projects through two more “deliverables” supported by Manitoba Health/MCHP’s contract. One looks at the longitudinal trends by RHA and district of health and health service use outcomes, to determine what works at a population level (the What Works project, projected completion fall 2007). The second is a revision of the health status and health service use indicators atlas, to assist the RHAs in their next planning cycle (The RHA Indicators Atlas 2008, projected completion date summer 2008). As well, a CIHR-funded project looking at barriers to, and facilitators of knowledge translation, is ongoing (From Evidence to Action).

***The Need to Know* RHA/Manitoba Health Team**

The director of *The Need To Know* project is Dr. Patricia Martens. Originally, each CEO of the non-Winnipeg RHAs (northern, south rural and Brandon) was requested to select one official designate for the RHA *Need to Know* Team. Designates were defined as “*senior-level people in the administrative teams, possibly medical officers of health, community health assessment directors, or advisors to the CEO*” (CAHR proposal, page 17). Each RHA agreed to make this position available up to a .25 FTE basis. Appointees were selected to serve for the five-year term of the project. Based upon the positive response from RHAs, and from the first year’s evaluation report by Sarah Bowen, the recommendation was brought forth in February 2003 to include up to two official designates for each RHA. One designate is funded through the original CIHR grant monies, and the other through the RHA (with travel subsidies for the northern RHA Team member). In 2005, with the recognition of the need for involvement by the Winnipeg RHA, the WRHA CEO was asked to designate one liaison person to the project Team meetings, who abided by the same terms of reference as the other RHA Team members.

Currently, each CEO of all eleven Manitoba RHAs select up to a maximum of two official designates to *The Need to Know* Team, similarly defined as senior-level people in their organizations (often including VP Planning, MOHs, Community Health Assessment people, advisors to the CEO, etc.). One person’s attendance costs are completely covered through MCHP funding. The second person’s attendance is subsidized by the RHA (travel, hotel costs,

meals not provided by MCHP funding). When funding permits, there is a travel subsidy for the second northern Team member.

Within Manitoba Health, representation from the Health Information Management group (around 3 members) and the Accountability Support Branch (around 3 members), as well as one representative from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, have been included as Team members.

Responsibilities of NTK Team Members

- To facilitate development of collaborative working relationships amongst the RHAs, Manitoba Health and MCHP
- To attend all workshops, and participate in activities related to *The Need To Know* Team
- To ensure that information on the project, its objectives, and activities is conveyed in a timely manner to the leadership of the RHA and within Manitoba Health
- To develop a dissemination strategy for research materials and related information for the RHA and within Manitoba Health
- To represent research priorities, concerns, and interests of the RHA through project activities
- To provide skills and resources acquired through the project to regional planning, research activities and RHA support
- To maintain, on behalf of the member organization, project resource binders and other research material generated through the project
- To ensure that confidentiality of materials provided through the project is maintained
- To represent, and assist in the promotion of, the project at the regional and provincial level
- To provide feedback on activities and strategies proposed by the project
- To bring issues of concern related to the project to the attention of the appropriate member of the MCHP project staff team in a timely fashion.

Benefits

All travel, accommodation and other workshop costs for three two-day workshops per year in Winnipeg are covered for one RHA designate by *The Need to Know* project. The second designate from the RHA will have all expenses covered by the RHA, with the following exceptions: (a) meals provided at the meeting; (b) all handouts and binders for the team's work; and (c) transportation costs for the remote RHAs (Nor-Man, Burntwood and Churchill) as funding permits. The latter expense coverage by the project was agreed upon through the Advisory Committee motion dated October 8, 2002: "moved that funding for a second person's airfare be provided for each RHA, if the driving time was more than five hours in one direction, travel budget permitting" (Karen McClelland/Noralou Roos).

Terms of appointment

Each team member is selected to serve in this position for the length of the project. Should a member be required to resign from this position, it is expected that (s)he will:

- Inform the Project Director and the RHA CEO (or the Manitoba Health manager) at the earliest possible opportunity
- Facilitate the selection and orientation of a replacement. The final decision of appointment to the Team is made by the RHA CEO or Manitoba Health manager. The orientation of new members is organized by MCHP project staff.

- Ensure that the official project binders, *The Need to Know* computer, and related materials are appropriately forwarded to the new representative.

Each new team member will be required to communicate with the Project Director as to the need for and attendance at an orientation session.