

Project Advisory Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

March 12, 2007

The Need to Know:

Collaborative Research by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, Regional Health Authorities, and Manitoba Health

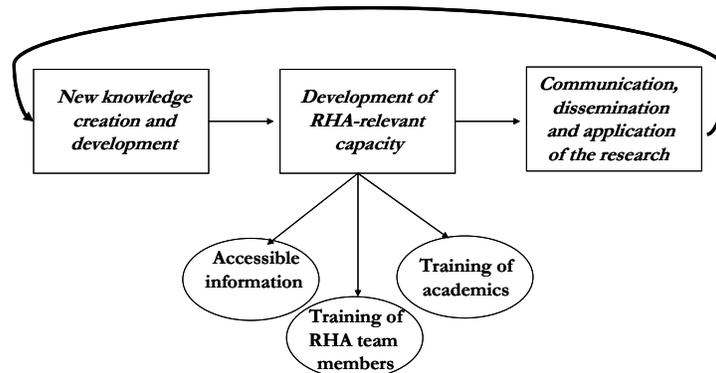
Background: *The Need to Know* Project

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 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).

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.

***The Need to Know* Advisory Committee**

An Advisory Committee will provide input to *The Need to Know* project.

a) Purpose:

The mandate of the Advisory Committee is to provide advice to the Director(s) of *The Need to Know* project, over the five-year period during which the project is funded. The purpose of the Committee is to:

- Promote the project and contribute to its success
- Facilitate development of collaborative working relationships with all stakeholder groups
- Ensure that the Project Director(s) and Advisory Committee are informed, in a timely manner, of trends, issues, and events that may impact the project
- Provide opportunities for reviewing project progress and identifying future options
- Provide a forum for consideration of the implications of project options for partners and assist the Director(s) in developing options for broader discussion by *The Need to Know* Team
- Ensure that concerns and priorities of stakeholder groups related to *The Need to Know* project objectives are communicated
- Assist the Director(s) in determining an appropriate set of activities to meet project goals and objectives
- Assist the Project Director(s) in promoting awareness of the project at the local, provincial and national level

The Directors of *The Need to Know* project are responsible for over-all and day-to-day administration of the project according to the conditions of the grant

b) Membership:

The Advisory Committee shall be composed of the following members:

- Project director (Dr. Patricia Martens)
- One “South” RHA Team Member
- One “North” RHA Team Member
- One Manitoba Health Team Member
- One appointee from the Regional Health Authorities of Manitoba (RHAM) Council of CEOs
- One appointee from Manitoba Health
- Director (or designate) of MCHP
- External health services researcher (Dr. Charlyn Black, University of British Columbia)

The Need to Know staff members will be ex-officio, non-voting members of the committee.

The project director will serve as Chair of the Advisory Committee.

Appointees of the RHAM Council of CEOs, Manitoba Health, MCHP, and the Team Member representatives will be selected by their respective bodies.

c) Terms of Appointment:

With the exception of the Project Director(s), individuals will be appointed for a three-year term and may be re-appointed into successive three-year terms.

d) Meetings

Advisory Committee meetings will be held a minimum of twice per year. They will usually be convened to coincide with scheduled Team meetings to facilitate attendance. Special meetings (usually by teleconference) may be called at the discretion of the Directors.