



# The Need to Know...

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Director: Patricia Martens

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## The Need To Know Meeting #10: Deciding on Indicators for the Sex Differences Deliverable

The main goal of meeting #10 was to decide on which indicators to include in the *Sex Differences* deliverable—the third and final report for *The Need to Know* project. *The Need to Know* Team collaborated with the project's working group to review and discuss a preliminary list of proposed indicators, following which, a final set was chosen. All indicators will be disaggregated by sex, in order to examine possible differences between women and men in terms of population health status, use of health services, outcomes of care and quality of care.

Other business included the *Mental Illness in Manitoba* deliverable—the second project due to be released at the end of September 2004. Team members reviewed final graphs and provided feedback during a discussion session with the working group. Dr. Eilish Cleary (North Eastman RHA Team member) and Dr. John Walker (working group) presented an overview of terminology commonly used in mental health as well as the rates of different mental illnesses in the population.

Team member Maggie Campbell (Parkland RHA) led the group in a facilitator skills workshop. Participants discussed challenges they have faced as facilitators, as well as techniques for dealing with these difficulties (e.g. dealing with nay-sayers, how to engage silent people, keeping the discussion focused, etc.). Team members will have a chance to put these skills to use at the upcoming

Rural and Northern Health Care Days, when they will be helping to facilitate group discussions about the *Mental Illness in Manitoba* report with representatives from their respective RHAs and Manitoba Health.

Dr. Sarah Bowen, the project's Evaluation Coordinator, presented a summary of results-to-date from the evaluation report for the period of April 2002 to March 2004. The report is due to be publicly released by October.

Patti Fries (South Eastman RHA and *Need to Know* team member) led the group in a discussion about general information dissemination strategies and how these can be used to facilitate the dissemination of information to decision-makers. See page 2 for more ("*Information Dissemination 101*").

The two-day meeting came to a close with a presentation by Dr. Lawrence Elliott (Department of Community Health Sciences) on Multiple Sclerosis in Manitoba. Information included the prevalence of MS in Manitoba and Canada, possible etiologic factors and some of the study's results so far. Some of the findings include: (i) Manitoba's incidence and prevalence are among the highest in the world, (ii) prairie provinces are a high risk region, (iii) the prevalence is gradually increasing, and (iv) rates are higher in high SES populations. For more information, contact Dr. Elliott at: [elliottl@cc.umanitoba.ca](mailto:elliottl@cc.umanitoba.ca)

## Population Health in Our Communities: 95th Annual Conference, St. John's Newfoundland

The Canadian Public Health Association's 95th Annual Conference was held in St. John's Newfoundland, June 13-16, 2004. *The Need to Know* project was very well represented with 12 delegates, two oral presentations and five posters.

The collaborative nature of *The Need to Know* project was the focus of both oral presentations: Dr. Patricia Martens' presentation highlighted how this influences health policies and programs, and in Dr. Sarah Bowen's presentation outlined how this has played a key role in the evaluation of knowledge translation initiatives.

Poster presentations highlighted both the project's contribution to the Community Health Assessment process (Heather Sparling) as well as specific *Need to Know* deliverables: The RHA Atlas (Randy Fransoo and Laurel Jebamani); the Mental Illness Report (Dr. Eilish Cleary and Elaine Burland).



Some members of *The Need to Know* Team in St. John's. From left: Donna Champagne, Eilish Cleary, Pat Martens, Catherine Hynes, Patti Fries and Heather Sparling.

## Condolences

*The Need to Know* Team extends its condolences to Connie Chapen's family. Connie was a founding member of the Team and contributor to the project until her death in July 2004.

## Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP)

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(link to *The Need to Know* website from here)

## F.Y.I.

- tentative dates for the next *Need to Know* Team meetings: January 31/February 1, 2005; May 30/31, 2005
- Two new MCHP reports have recently been released: (i) *Diagnostic Imaging Data in Manitoba, Assessment and Applications* and (ii) *How Do Educational Outcomes Vary With Socioeconomic Status? Key Findings from the Manitoba Child Health Atlas 2004*; these and other reports are available via the MCHP website (see above)



## Information Dissemination 101: The Good, the Bad... and Some Solutions!

The dissemination of information is an essential step in communicating research findings to decision-makers. Lomas (1993) defines dissemination as the receiving and transformation of information into knowledge.

The following is a brief summary of some strategies used by *The Need to Know* team members for facilitating the dissemination of information throughout their respective RHAs. Also included are common barriers to information dissemination and some ideas suggested by the group for overcoming these difficulties, to be discussed further in future Team meetings.

Effective Strategies	Barriers	Ways to Overcome Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strive for timely dissemination (e.g. integrate into health assessment process, do not overlap with other significant reports or events)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- geographic distance within regions hinders process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- enable individual access to data</li> <li>- travel to communities to present information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be available to answer questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- slow pace of organizational change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- allow sufficient time for change to occur</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- have computer support for documentation (e.g. an accompanying website)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- media related issues (e.g. lack of local press, uneasiness dealing with the media)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- learn effective ways of dealing with the media and work with them to build a productive relationship</li> <li>- involve local politicians</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ensure there is a sufficient number of hard copies available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high staff turnover rate / lack of consistency over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strive to build the use of information into daily work and strengthen overall organizational capacity to use information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- communicate information's relevance to key people in the region (e.g. other teams, boards, local politicians, the public, etc.)</li> <li>- use plain language / audience-appropriate language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of inter-sectoral integration and availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- develop best practice guidelines for report dissemination</li> </ul>

## Upcoming Conference:

The mental health deliverable, the second of three reports for *The Need to Know* project, will be highlighted at 5th National Canadian Rural Health Research Society Conference in Sudbury Ontario this October 21-23, 2004.

Five posters have been accepted, with topics ranging from treatment prevalence of specific conditions, patterns of pharmaceutical use, use of home care and personal care home services, and suicide (indicators of attempts and risk factors associated with completions). A sixth *Need to Know*-related poster was also accepted which focuses on collaborative approaches to knowledge translation.

## Congratulations Sarah!



Congratulations to Sarah Bowen, Evaluation Coordinator for *The Need to Know* project. Sarah recently completed her PhD in the Faculty of Community Health Sciences.

## The Need to Know Team Members:

### RHA MEMBERS:

- Jody Allan
- Faye White (Assiniboine)
- Bev Cumming
- Nancy McPherson (Brandon)
- Marion Ellis
- Mieke Busman (Burntwood)
- Shelley Buchan
- Donna Champagne (Central)
- Margaret Fern (Churchill)
- Tannis Erickson
- Doreen Fey (Interlake)
- Sue Crockett
- Catherine Hynes (Nor-Man)
- Eilish Cleary
- Bonnie Frith

(North Eastman)

- Maggie Campbell (Parkland)
- Betty MacKenzie
- Patti Fries (South Eastman)
- Val Austen-Wiebe (WRHA Liaison)

### MANITOBA HEALTH MEMBERS:

- Deborah Malazdrewicz
- Lorraine Dacombe Dewar
- Valdine Berry
- Shirley Dzogan
- Shahin Shoostari
- Heather Sparling
- Rachel McPherson

### MCHP PROJECT STAFF:

- Pat Martens (Director)
- Sarah Bowen (Evaluator)
- Randy Fransoo (Co-ordinator)
- Elaine Burland (Research Assistant)
- Laurel Jebamani (Research Assistant)
- Charles Burchill (Systems Analyst)
- Linda Kostuk (Planning & Finance)
- Eileen Pyke (Website/Software)