



# The Need to Know...

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Director: Patricia Martens

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Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP)

## The Need To Know Meeting #11: A Review of Preliminary Data for the 'Sex Differences' Deliverable

There was a full agenda for *The Need to Know* Meeting #11 (September 27, 2004). The primary goal was to discuss the progress of the third Team deliverable, which is about sex differences - several indicator graphs were reviewed and discussed by the Team. Suggestions were made regarding some of the indicators, the results of which will be discussed at the January 2005 meeting.

Dr. Malcolm Doupe, a new researcher at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP), met with *The Need to Know* Team briefly in the morning to discuss and get feedback about personal care homes (PCHs) for his upcoming deliverable on PCH quality of care.

Following lunch, there was a discussion regarding 'best practices' for the dissemination of reports and information. Some practices mentioned were (i) the identification of the target audience, (ii) striving to identify and include previously forgotten groups, and (iii) taking advantage of times when Regional Health Authority (RHA) members are together (e.g., Rural and Northern Health Care Day) to begin planning for dissemination in the region. As well, concrete plans for the distribution of the recent Mental Illness deliverable were discussed. Team members shared their ideas and

plans, including using the Intra-net for internal communication and distribution, assigning a lead person to take charge of and track dissemination, and creating policies and procedures to ensure consistent, timely dissemination.

Plans are in the works for the MCHP *Need to Know* Team members to conduct site visits in the RHAs starting in early spring 2005. Part of the afternoon session was devoted to discussing the logistics of these visits. Representatives from each RHA were invited to outline their 'dream' visit in terms of possible models and the five W's - who would be involved, what the content would be and why, and when where it would take place. Ideas included replicating the format used for MCHP's Rural and Northern Health Care Day (i.e., a presentation on one or two reports followed by a facilitated discussion of data relevant to the region), and using tele-health to link up with other regional activities going on simultaneously.

The meeting closed with a facilitator training session during which Team members and MCHP personnel were briefed on reports to be presented the following day at The Rural and Northern Health Care Day (see bottom of page).



The Need to Know Team - September 2004

## Record Attendance at MCHP's 11th Annual Rural and Northern Health Care Day

This year's Rural and Northern Health Care Day was a resounding success! Attendance hit an all-time high—approximately 180 people registered this year.

The focus of this year's facilitated roundtable discussion was mental health. Following the presentation of two MCHP reports - *Patterns of Regional Mental Illness Disorders Diagnoses & Service Use in Manitoba: A Population-Based Study* (Dr. Patricia Martens) and *Population Mobility & Mental Health Service: A Geographic Analysis* (Dr. Lisa Lix) - representatives convened with others from their RHA to discuss report findings.

The afternoon began with a presentation by Winnipeg-born Dr. Michael Rachlis. The physician-turned-health-policy-consultant and associate professor at the University of Toronto, presented encouraging information from his new book *Prescription for Excellence: How Innovation is Saving Canada's Health Care System*, in which he argues

that there are solutions to many of today's most pressing problems.

The afternoon closed with presentations from some of *The Need to Know* Team members (*Evidence-based Innovation in Manitoba—RHA stories*) and from Dr. Marni Brownell (*How Do Educational Outcomes Vary by RHA and Socioeconomic*



Dr. Lisa Lix

*Status? Key Findings from the Manitoba Child Health Atlas 2004*). RHA representatives also had the option of attending a concurrent computer session - "*There for the Taking*": Accessing Data from MCHP's Web Resources (by MCHP researcher Randy Fransoo).



Dr. Marni Brownell



Patti Fries  
(The Need to Know Team member)

Feedback on the day's activities was overwhelmingly positive.

## Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP)

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## F.Y.I.

- **The Need to Know Team meetings:** Jan 31/Feb1, 2005;  
May 30/31, 2005
- the 2nd annual **MCHP / Manitoba Health Day** was February 22, 2005 at the Caboto Centre (1055 Wilkes Ave.)

## Quasi-Experimental Design: 101

Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) - move over and make way for non-randomized quasi-experimental designs! There is ever-growing support for non-randomized experimental designs. In fact, as Des Jarlais et al. (2004) point out, evidence-based public health *necessarily* involves designs other than the old stand-by: the RCT. Many public health interventions do not practically or ethically lend themselves to randomized evaluation designs (e.g., withholding an effective treatment from one experimental group). Moreover, non-randomized designs can generate important information on intervention effectiveness and when possible, should be integrated with other designs to produce a more comprehensive picture of the evidence. Some basic quasi-experimental designs include:

1. quasi-experimental pretest—posttest
2. time series quasi-experiments
3. time series quasi-experiment with comparison group
4. one of the proposed designs for *The Need to Know* proposal “*What Works?*” *Evaluating Manitoba’s Rural and Northern Regional Health Programs and Policies at the Population Level*”; O’s represent outcome measures potentially available at MCHP (i.e., administrative data)

1.

Region A	0 X 0	
	-----	← groups <b>NOT</b> randomly assigned (---)
Region B	0 0	

X = an intervention  
0 = an outcome measure

\* region B is the ‘control group’ that receives no treatment; region A is compared with region B

2.

Region A	0 0 X 0 0
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3.

Region A	000000 X 00000000
	-----
Region B	000000 00000000

4.

Region A	000000 X <sub>1</sub> 00000000
	-----
Region B	000000 00000000
	-----
Region C	000000 00000000
	-----
Region D	000000 00000000
	-----
Region E	000000 000 X <sub>2</sub> 00

X<sub>1</sub> & X<sub>2</sub> = similar programs in Regions A & E (e.g. teen pregnancy reduction programs)

- regions B, C & D had no comparable programs (control groups)

etc.

### 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 (Central)
- Steve Todd (Churchill)
- Randy Gesell (Burntwood/Churchill)
- Tannis Erickson
- Doreen Fey (Interlake)
- Sue Crockett
- Catherine Hynes (Nor-Man)

#### MCHP PROJECT STAFF:

- Bonnie Frith
- Suzanne Dick (North Eastman)
- Maggie Campbell (Parkland)
- Betty MacKenzie
- Patti Fries (South Eastman)
- Maria Cendou (WRHA Liaison)
- Pat Martens (Director)
- Randy Fransoo (Researcher)
- Sarah Bowen (Evaluation Researcher)
- Elaine Burland (Research Coordinator)
- Charles Burchill (Systems Analyst)
- Linda Kostiuk (Finance Coordinator)
- Janine Harasymchuk (Website & Software)
- Darlene Harder (Planning Coordinator)
- Jeremy Dacombe (Research Assistant)
- Deborah Malazdrewicz
- Lorraine Shooshtari Dewar
- Valdine Berry
- Shirley Dzogan
- Shahin Shooshtari
- Heather Sparling
- Rachel McPherson

#### MANITOBA HEALTH MEMBERS:

## Conference Updates

The Need to Know Team was busy this past fall highlighting the project at various conferences.

A large contingent of Team members presented posters at this year’s Provincial Health Conference at the Winnipeg Convention Centre (September 29 & 30, 2004). Posters focused on *The Need to Know* project and the community health assessments recently conducted in the regions, many of which included data from MCHP reports generated through the Team.

The Need To Know project was also well represented at the ‘Rural Health: Celebrating Diversity and Strength’ conference in Sudbury Ontario (October 21-23, 2004). There were six posters and one oral presentation. Poster themes focused mainly on the Mental Illness Report; topics included: (i) patterns of pharmaceutical use among Manitobans with mental illness disorder diagnoses, (ii) suicide and suicide attempts in Manitoba, (iii) home care and personal care home use among Manitobans with mental illness disorders, and (iv) overall mental illness treatment prevalence in Manitoba by region, sex and income. There was also a poster on the evaluation of knowledge translation initiatives. The topic of the oral presentation was the health service use of people in Manitoba with mental illness disorders.