



# The Need to Know...

Funded by Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
(Community Alliances for Health Research)  
Director: Patricia Martens

Volume 5, Issue 1  
October 2003

Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP)

## Continuing to Build Capacity: Team Meeting #7

This summer's *Need to Know* meeting incorporated an wide array of topics, including a number of "101 Sessions" designed to help NTK team members continue to build the skills necessary for interpreting and using data to support decision-making.

As with every meeting, team members had the opportunity to work collaboratively on several project components. The first activity involved the 'homework' assignment from the previous meeting. Each team member presented an outline of their organization's information dissemination plan in terms of who needs to get the information, how it is used, how it "moves" in the organization and the most effective method(s) for reaching specific stakeholders. Following the presentations, team members worked together to create a list of 'best practice' guidelines to follow when disseminating information in their region.

Other collaborative activities included discussion of (i) issues relating to the project's second research report (the Mental Health deliverable), (ii) preparations for the upcoming 10th Annual Rural & Northern Health Care Day, and (iii) findings and recommendations from the project's evaluation report.

Team members who had attended conferences since the previous meeting reported on conference highlights

and information relevant to the NTK team.

101 sessions focused on the areas of ethics, library searches and survey research. Dr. Alan Katz, former chair for the University of Manitoba Health Research Ethics Board, presented information on guidelines for RHA research, including requirements for ethical review, balancing harms and benefits, and informed consent. In the Library 101 session, team members learned about services available through the University of Manitoba's Health Sciences Library, including useful search strategies using *PubMed*. The Survey Research 101 session gave members an opportunity to design their own mini-survey. This exercise provided insight into the issues associated with survey design and how this affects subsequent analysis (see page 2 for more on surveys).

Other information included training opportunities in health services research available through the Western Regional Training Centre, presented by Dr. Anita Kozyrskyj (see below for more details).

The dinner meeting at Café Carlo gave team members a chance to critique an instrument used to identify mediation styles—but not before we had to use it to determine OUR OWN styles! There was no shortage of laughter and surprising results.

## The Western Regional Training Centre (WRTC) for Health Services Research: A Collaborative Training Initiative

The Western Regional Training Centre (WRTC) is a collaborative training initiative for graduate students at the University of Manitoba, Department of Community Health Sciences and the University of British Columbia, Department of Health Care and Epidemiology.

The overall goal of the program is to increase the number of health services researchers who have been trained to meet the research needs of a wide array of health-care policy makers.

WRTC builds on the multidisciplinary education offered by these departments by providing opportunities for applied training and funding for qualified students.

WRTC is also creating linkages with other regional training centres, university departments (e.g. The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and *The Need to Know* Team) and health-care decision-makers as a means of further enriching the program. A recent WRTC survey of health-care decision-makers in Manitoba (Feb 2003) revealed that the most needed skills for students were in the areas of research methodology (e.g. survey design, focus group facilitation) and data analysis. Moreover, the survey helped to establish an important connection between the WRTC and provincial decision-makers.

See the FYI section of this newsletter for WRTC contact information.



Dr. Anita Kozyrskyj  
University of Manitoba  
WRTC Director

## Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP)

**Brodie Centre**  
**University of Manitoba**  
**4th Floor, Room 408**  
**727 McDermot Avenue**  
**Winnipeg, MB**  
**R3E 3P5**

Newsletter contact:  
 Elaine Burland  
 Phone: (204)789-3875  
 Email: elaine\_burland@cpe.umanitoba.ca

MCHP website: [www.umanitoba.ca/centres/mchp](http://www.umanitoba.ca/centres/mchp)  
 (link to the NTK website from here)



## Survey Design 101: The Do's & Don'ts

Designing your own survey seems easy at first—just think of some questions to ask participants, right? Wrong! There is much more to the design of a good survey than meets the eye. The following are some of the important points to keep in mind (from Woodward & Chambers, 1983):

### Do's

- Keep wording simple, direct and familiar
- Make questions clear and as specific as possible
- Ensure that questions apply to all respondents
- Do a pre-test to ensure the survey is both valid (i.e. measuring what it was intended to measure) and reliable (i.e. are questions interpreted similarly by all respondents?)



### Don'ts

- Avoid double questions (e.g. Do you agree with putting in more screening procedures and rehab services?)
- Avoid double negatives (e.g. Lack of funding is not a problem for our RHA)
- Avoid questions that are too demanding (e.g. Rank the top 20 difficulties faced by your region)
- Avoid biased questions, such as those that mention only some alternatives (e.g. How should doctors be paid; by salary or government transfers?)

### NTK Team Members:

#### RHA MEMBERS:

- Jody Allan
- Faye White (Assiniboine)
- Bev Cumming
- Nancy McPherson (Brandon)
- Albert de Villiers
- Jim Bentley (Burntwood)
- Shelley Buchan (Central)
- Donna Champagne (Central)
- Margaret Fern (Churchill)
- Tannis Erickson
- Doreen Fey (Interlake)
- Sue Crockett
- Catherine Hynes (Nor-Man)
- Eilish Cleary
- Bonnie Frith (North Eastman)

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

#### MANITOBA HEALTH MEMBERS:

- Deborah Malazdrewicz (Manager of Decision Support Services)
- Lorraine Dacombe Dewar (Director of CHA & Regionalization)
- Valdine Berry (Consultant, Accountability, Monitoring & Evaluation)

#### MCHP PROJECT STAFF:

- Pat Martens (Director)
- Sarah Bowen (Evaluator)
- Randy Fransoo (Co-ordinator)
- Elaine Burland (Research Assistant)
- Laurel Jebamani (Research Assistant)
- Charles Burchill (System Analyst)
- Linda Kostiuik (Planning)
- Eileen Pyke (Website/Software)
- Darlene Harder (Planning)

## New MCHP Art Highlights Manitoba's Diversity

The long hallway leading to the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy has been given a facelift. This summer, 12 new oil paintings were added, each background a different colour of the spectrum. Together these represent the diversity of Manitoba's population and physical geography, and illustrate the broad determinants of population health—social support, education, employment, physical environment and healthy child development.

These paintings were done by local artist and recent graduate of the University of Manitoba's School of Art, David Macri. Funding was provided through the generosity of a private donor.

### F.Y.I.

- *The first NTK Deliverable—The Manitoba RHA Indicators Atlas: Population-Based Comparisons of Health and Health Care Use' was released in June 2003. The following month, the pdf version of this report on the website received over 22,000 hits. Contact MCHP for copies @ (204) 789-3805 or visit the MCHP website (see above for URL).*
- *Are you interested in a career in Health Services Research? For information about the "Western Regional Training Centre in Health Services Research" (WRTC) contact Elaine Dunn: (204)789-3368 or edunn@ms.umanitoba.ca*



MCHP Hallway and New Paintings