



Canadian Health Services Research **Foundation**
Fondation canadienne de la recherche sur les services de santé



CHSRF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2009 - 2013

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Making
Research
Work
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INTRODUCTION

In Canada today, individuals and organizations who deliver health services have never faced more intense scrutiny.

Citizens and governments want to understand where and how their healthcare dollars are being spent and whether this spending ultimately results in improvements to people's health. They want to know if the processes to allocate healthcare funds are fair and effective, and if Canadians are getting value for their money.

These concerns are likely to accelerate during tough economic times.

At the same time, healthcare providers and organizations are anticipating longer-term issues of their own, such as dealing with the impacts of an aging population and a shrinking healthcare workforce. Addressing these issues, while balancing the needs and expectations of Canadians, presents significant challenges.

Providers and organizations will not be able to face these challenges by themselves. Implementing strategies to improve the health of Canadians demands the collaboration of many, including legislators, policymakers, managers, providers, and the public.

Health stakeholders need to be increasingly aware of the broader dimensions of health, including disease prevention, health promotion, and the social factors that contribute to ill health and inequities. They will need to look for opportunities to collaborate in non-traditional partnerships in other sectors and communities. New ways of working and new ways of thinking are required, along with innovative approaches to systems of payment, funding, and financing.

For more than a decade, the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation has brought researchers and decision makers together to create and apply knowledge to improve health services for Canadians. The Foundation and its partners have funded researchers to explore solutions to problems experienced by decision makers, and provided opportunities for decision makers to shape, and then use, the knowledge generated by research. Together with many other national, provincial and regional players in healthcare, CHSRF has helped Canada to become an international leader in evidence-informed decision-making.

In Canada, it is well accepted that the processes and decisions to organize and provide health services should be guided by the best evidence available. Endorsement of this approach has been reflected by a steady increase in funding for applied health research at the federal level, particularly through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. It is also demonstrated by the growing number of provincial organizations with a mandate either to fund health services research or to promote its use. Organizations that deliver health services, particularly teaching hospitals, are now embedding the production and use of research in their work and care. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there is great interest and capacity among Canadian citizens and communities to work to improve health.

In planning for its next decade, the Foundation is taking stock of this changing landscape and repositioning itself to make the most useful and effective contribution it can – as an independent, not-for-profit organization with a proven track record of funding research and supporting its use.

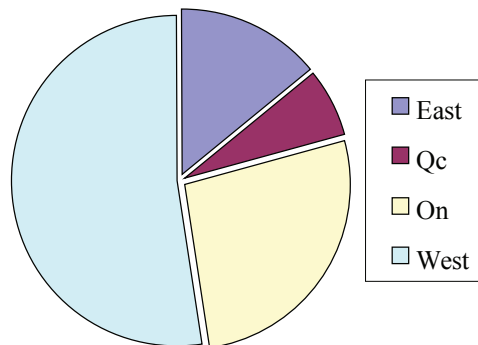
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CHSRF 2009-2013 STRATEGIC PLAN

- Recognizing the benefits of including the public in issues and decisions related to the delivery of health services, we introduce innovative strategies to engage citizens and encourage information-sharing.
- We outline activities and initiatives to support organizations in managing change; specifically, policy or management changes that result from implementing evidence-based decisions.
- We acknowledge the many advantages of forging new and non-traditional partnerships, both for ourselves and for the organizations we work with, and promote efforts to adopt novel, effective ways of thinking and working.

OUR CONSULTATION PROCESS

Between November 4 and December 4, 2008, a team of staff led by the Vice-President of Knowledge Exchange consulted with 105 stakeholders across Canada on the Foundation's evolving strategic plan.

These 105 stakeholders represented researchers (42%) and decision makers (58%) and all 10 provinces. Participants were either interviewed directly by Foundation staff or were reached as part of consultations conducted by stakeholders on behalf of the CHSRF.



VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

OUR VISION

Timely, appropriate and high-quality services that improve the health of all Canadians.

OUR ROLE AND MISSION

The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation works to improve the health of Canadians by:

- 1) Capturing the best evidence about services that improve the health of Canadians.
- 2) Filling critical gaps in evidence about how to improve the health of Canadians, by funding research and evaluation.
- 3) Supporting policymakers and managers to develop the skills necessary to apply the best evidence to improve the health of Canadians.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 1) Engaging and supporting citizens
- 2) Accelerating evidence-informed change
- 3) Promoting policy dialogue

OUR STRATEGY: LINKAGE AND EXCHANGE

Our programming is grounded in ongoing interaction, collaboration, and exchange of ideas and information – at the individual or population level – between those who study how to improve health and those who make decisions that improve health.

OUR OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Innovation:

- We are committed to creative ideas and solutions.

Collaboration:

- We work with others to share knowledge, achieve goals, and sustain highly effective partnerships.

Transparency:

- Decisions are made openly and we accept responsibility for their outcomes.

Flexibility:

- We adapt our thinking and our approaches to meet changing needs and expectations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1: ENGAGING AND SUPPORTING CITIZENS

Canadian citizens have a critical role to play in managing their own health. This role includes not only choosing healthy behaviours, but also making informed choices about the use of services that can improve and maintain their health.

An analysis by the Canadian Council on Learning shows, sadly, that 60 percent of Canadians do not have the health literacy skills needed to find and use basic health information and services, and subsequently, to adequately self-manage their own health and healthcare needs. This finding should be a major concern for everyone involved in providing health information, including researchers who study healthcare and organizations that deliver services. If Canadians are to be capable of navigating the health system and becoming true partners in their own care, major efforts will be needed to make good quality, evidence-based information easily accessible to them.

From 2009 - 2013, the CHSRF and its partners will undertake programming that will:

- Support healthcare organizations and providers to do a better job of engaging the public, including exploring ways to report effectively to the public about healthcare quality.
- Help healthcare providers access and apply information about the patient experience, particularly in primary healthcare.
- Connect citizens with information about what they should expect from their interactions with health services.
- Invest strategically in implementing and evaluating community-based initiatives designed to improve health.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2: ACCELERATING EVIDENCE-INFORMED CHANGE

In recent years, Canada has invested significantly in a number of experiments – including research programs and pilot projects – designed to improve health services. Some of these experiments may have demonstrated the potential to improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of healthcare. In far too many situations, however, these experiments have remained just that: promising yet unproven approaches. In some cases, the results are not well understood throughout the complex organizations in which the experiments have taken place, let alone across health systems that have different players and competing interests.

These experiments represent the potential for widespread and positive change across Canada. To realize these benefits, we will need to invest much more significantly in tracking experiments, evaluating their effectiveness and communicating the results. To maximize benefits, we will need to support both the application of lessons learned and the necessary changes that result.

From 2009 - 2013, the CHSRF and its partners will undertake programming that will:

- Fund research that provides a better understanding of the processes of change and learning within innovative Canadian health organizations, and that identifies lessons learned about overcoming major barriers and being catalysts for change.
- Provide a national resource centre to support local change initiatives, which will include linkages to expertise in operations, research, and evaluation.
- Support communities of practice that provide enhanced sharing of information among organizations and providers.
- Lead a series of organizational learning initiatives that bring organizations together to focus on some of the most persistent problems in Canadian healthcare, supported by research, evaluation expertise, and best practice.
- Continue to invest in building the capacity of senior managers to understand and apply research evidence in their work, by capitalizing on the success of the Executive Training for Research Application (EXTRA) program.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3: PROMOTING POLICY DIALOGUE

As an independent knowledge brokering organization with a mandate to fund research and promote its use in Canada, the CHSRF is uniquely positioned to bring diverse stakeholders together to discuss, debate, and learn about some of the most significant healthcare problems of our time. The overriding objective is to see research used to a greater degree in the process of developing policy and management decisions. In the coming five years, the CHSRF will play a more active role in bringing high-quality research to today's policy debates.

From 2009 - 2013, the CHSRF and its partners will undertake programming that will:

- Provide formal and informal opportunities for sharing policy challenges and emerging strategies across Canada's provincial health systems.
- Develop, encourage, support, and sustain new and non-traditional partnerships.
- Actively promote the social and economic benefits of investing in health services research and of its application in Canada.

SUMMARY

Over the next five years, the CHSRF will invest strategically to identify, develop, evaluate and apply new ideas to improve the health of Canadians. As part of its strategy of "innovation incubation," it will become a national resource for change, with the capability to recognize emerging challenges in healthcare –as well as promising practices to address them. The CHSRF will assemble and sustain partnerships that are innovative, effective, and productive in order to best support those with a mandate, and a passion, to improve health and health services.

Finally, all of the CHSRF's strategic activities will be driven by the understanding that improving health is not just about providing more healthcare: in truth, tremendous potential is held by citizens and communities to make improvements happen, if they are supported in doing so.