

# Respiratory Research Update

*March 2011*

In November 2009, the Canadian Lung Association (CLA)/Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) convened a national workshop to consult and collaborate with a wide-range of stakeholder groups in order to strengthen its research program by creating a strong National Respiratory Research Agenda. It was concluded that the future of successful respiratory research lies in establishing an effective agenda that promotes capacity for collaborative research, translational research, excellence in training of clinical and basic science researchers, and strong support for researchers at all career levels. Moreover, to attain this objective, immediate strategic planning to establish and implement a National Research Plan, with leadership from CLA/CTS, is essential.

Shortly thereafter, the CTS created a Research Steering Committee, chaired by Andrew Halayko, to further refine the national respiratory agenda and develop a work plan for the implementation of the agenda. The CTS and CLA carried out the following activities:

- 1) Conducted a survey of academic respiratory division directors across Canada to gather their views on the state of respiratory research in Canada, and inform the development of the research agenda;
- 2) Recruited leading basic and clinical scientists to prioritize research questions, using the Delphi method, in collaboration with CTS guidelines committees, in order to ensure research investments are optimally targeted;
- 3) Advocated successfully in June 2010 for an increase in CLA funding for fellowships and studentships, resulting in an additional contribution of \$242,000 from the CLA in the 2010-2011 fiscal year;
- 4) Produced a statistical report in July 2010 on the burden of respiratory diseases in Canada, focusing on mortality, morbidity, treatment and economic costs;
- 5) Advocated for increased federal funding over five years to reflect the heavy burden of respiratory diseases by forwarding a budget submission to the government in August 2010;

As a result:

- ◆ CTS and CLA were invited by the finance parliamentary committee in November 2010 during the budget consultations to expand on some of our key arguments listed in the submission;
- ◆ CTS and CLA met with the Federal Minister of Health on November 25th to discuss respiratory research and the need for a respiratory research network aligning with the new CIHR Strategy on Patient-Oriented Strategy (SPOR);

- ◆ In December 2010, the Federal Minister of Health met with the CIHR President, Alain Beaudet and raised our issues with him. He indicated that senior CIHR staff are aware of the current under-funding of respiratory research and will make addressing it a high priority;
  - ◆ CTS met with CIHR staff to explore opportunities for us to leverage funding with CIHR on the operating grant cycle following the current format of the regional partnership programs and to discuss the opportunities under the patient-oriented research strategy;
  - ◆ CTS was invited to submit an expression of interest to the CIHR-Institute for Aboriginal People's Health to help them build their research business case for the initiative on Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples
- 6) CTS is now represented on the CIHR—Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health Advisory Board (IAB) by Dr. Denis O'Donnell, CTS Past President. Denis attended his first IAB meeting in January 2011. This was also the first IAB meeting for the new Scientific Director, Dr. Jean Rouleau. At this meeting Dr. Rouleau identified the need to establish a pulmonary research network. This pan-Canadian research network will take into consideration the various respiratory disease categories, knowledge translation, population health, etc. The first concept of a pulmonary research network will be shared with various stakeholders in April/May 2011.
- 7) The CIHR Scientific Council approved the following initiatives:
- ◆ The Canadian Epigenetics Environment and Health Research Consortium initiative, including the mandate to join the International Human Epigenome Consortium (IHEC);
  - ◆ The Community Based Primary Health Care (CBPHC) initiative, which will be aligned with the overall Strategy on Patient Oriented Research strategy including the re-design of the Clinician Scientist Program;
    - \* CTS hosted a conference call with CIHR—Institute of Health Services and Policy Research in February 2011. This initiative will be launched at the end of March/beginning of April.  
**CBPHC Priorities:**1) Better Systems: Chronic Disease Prevention and Management  
2) Access to Appropriate Care for Vulnerable Populations
  - ◆ The Personalized Medicine initiative; and
  - ◆ The Inflammation and Chronic Disease initiative.
    - \* **ICRH** will lead a workshop in May 2011 to address inflammation priorities for respiratory and circulatory.
- The Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples initiative, the International Collaborative Research Strategy for Alzheimer's Disease and the Clinical Trials Networks/Support Units initiative have been asked for more information prior to approval to move forward.
- 8) CTS was invited to attend a stakeholders roundtable discussion to review the CIHR – Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health in February . The CTS Research Committee's comments were shared with the international expert panel: Professor Stephen Holgate (Chair), Dr. Joseph Loscalzo and Professor Victor Dzau.
- 9) CTS will host the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Canadian poster session for trainees at the upcoming American Thoracic Society Conference in Denver Colorado in May 2011. This session will include special presentations by senior investigators on their work and career paths in basic and clinical research.

All of these efforts culminated in the development of a national research strategy which was approved by the Canadian Lung Association Board of Directors at its meeting in February (see summary of the strategy on the next page).

With the approval in principle by the CLA Board, the CTS and CRHP will subsequently need to identify the requirements to operationalize the program components of this agenda and bring forward an implementation plan for review by the CLA Board later this summer or fall.

Between February and June (or September if necessary), the CTS/CRHP will need to:

- ⇒ Develop a new capacity program
  - ⇒ Create an awards program
  - ⇒ Establish a national strategic funding program (using priorities identified by the Delphi process)
  - ⇒ Put in place a strong clinical research program and process
  - ⇒ Get commitment from partners to implement a respiratory research network
- Note:** A conference call will be scheduled in April or May. ICRH will host a workshop with respiratory stakeholders in the fall of 2011
- ⇒ Disseminate and market the Lung Researchers' Network (developed by CTS, funded by the National Lung Health Framework) as a communication tool to tie in all of our initiatives and processes

As you can see, we have covered a lot of ground in the past year but 2011 is where we get set to make things happen. We are in a great position to capitalize on several key opportunities with our stakeholders, especially with CIHR.

I would be pleased to discuss this further with you should you have any questions or need clarification on any of the initiatives and/or actions mentioned above.



Anne Van Dam  
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## Respiratory Research Strategy: Next 5 years

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE	SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH PROGRAMS	SUPPORT FOR NETWORKS AND KT
<p><b>1. CREATE Capacity Program</b> (Canadian Respiratory Education and Training Excellence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strike a Committee to develop core curriculum for the <i>CREATE</i> program.</li><li>• Expand personnel awards to address gaps and increase partnerships.</li></ul> <p><b>2. Research Awards and Fundraising Events to sustain national respiratory research programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strike a Committee to develop awards and nomination process.</li><li>• Develop fundraising initiatives for research.</li></ul>	<p><b>1. Provincial Grant-in-Aid Program</b> Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta provide annually basic and clinical research grants which are peer reviewed by national panels. Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan will join in 2012. Exploring possibility of making this a national grant-in-aid competition.</p> <p><b>2. National Strategic Fund</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exploring opportunities to partner with CIHR on Operating Grants and fund applications that fall within CTS/CRHP strategic priorities (e-Delphi exercise underway).</li><li>• Exploring partnerships with CIHR institutes to fund relevant strategic research priorities (i.e. CIHR-ICRH Chronic Disease Team Grant competition; and CIHR-IAPH Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples).</li></ul> <p><b>3. CTS Clinical Trials Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strike a Committee to develop a program and to ensure the necessary methodological support is in place to make this successful.</li></ul>	<p><b>1. Respiratory Research Network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CIHR is working with CLA/CTS and other key players in the respiratory community (i.e. Cystic Fibrosis) to establish a respiratory research network in the country taking into consideration the four research pillars of CIHR. This will allow the community to be ready for upcoming funding opportunities such as the CIHR Strategy on Patient-Oriented Research.</li></ul> <p><b>2. Knowledge Translation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The CTS Respiratory Guidelines Committee (CRGC) has developed a strategic plan focusing on the dissemination, implementation and evaluation KT activities. To engage stakeholders (i.e. Provincial Lung Associations, Industry, etc) to explore research and educational opportunities.</li></ul>