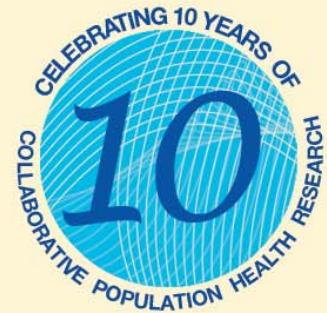




SASKATCHEWAN POPULATION HEALTH AND EVALUATION RESEARCH UNIT



# ANNUAL REVIEW 2009-2010



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## FUNDERS AND PARTNERS



### Saskatchewan Health Research

#### **SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

The Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) funds the work of researchers, facilitates efforts that grow the province's research enterprise, and promotes the knowledge borne of health research. As lead agency for the provincial government's Health Research Strategy, SHRF works as a catalyst supporting the work of individual researchers and those working in teams such as SPHERU. The Health Research Strategy identifies research priorities that reflect the province's geography and people. This includes the health needs of Saskatchewan's Aboriginal people and seniors, innovative health care delivery models, and research into mental health and addictions. Prevention of chronic lifestyle related diseases such as obesity and diabetes is also a priority. These priorities align well with SPHERU's efforts to actively involve communities, non-governmental organizations, and policy makers in the research enterprise itself and in making policy and program changes consistent with research evidence.

#### **UNIVERSITY OF REGINA**

The University of Regina focuses its research, teaching, and service on areas in which it has established strengths and interests. Health research at the University of Regina includes the multidisciplinary study of the impact of health determinants on various populations, as well as research on aging, stress, and policy and program interventions designed to improve health determinants and people's equitable access to health services. The Office of the Vice-President (Research) at the University of Regina congratulates SPHERU on reaching a ten year milestone. Through the provision of in-kind support and office space in both Prince Albert and Regina, the University of Regina continues to support SPHERU enabling the production of quality and policy relevant research.

University  
of Regina



### UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

#### **UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

The University of Saskatchewan, has supported SPHERU in helping to redefine the way people think about health determinants and to chart new territory in actively engaging communities, non-governmental organizations, and policy makers in the research enterprise. With a wide range of health science colleges and programs, the University of Saskatchewan is committed to expanding health research and is home to SPHERU's Saskatoon based offices. SPHERU's association with the University of Saskatchewan affords researchers a number of opportunities to expand their research under the themes of Healthy Children, Rural Health, Northern and Aboriginal Health, and Evaluation. SPHERU's association with the College of Medicine has enabled SPHERU's work to continue and achieve success in reaching our goals. The University of Saskatchewan provides some funding and in-kind support for SPHERU and is home to SPHERU's Saskatoon based researchers and staff. The University of Saskatchewan congratulates SPHERU on its achievements over the past decade and looks forward to building upon this excellence.

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to present the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit's (SPHERU) 2009 – 2010 Annual Review, which outlines the research activities of our team over the past year. As we move through our tenth year of operation, we are celebrating our successes and looking forward to continuing this journey.



In 1999 SPHERU was established to develop capacity in population health research in Saskatchewan. The five founding partners, Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF), Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO), Saskatchewan Health, University of Regina, and University of Saskatchewan, aimed to provide an environment where researchers from different backgrounds and disciplines could come together to address health inequities in Saskatchewan. This cross-disciplinary collaboration with faculty and staff from two universities, in three locations (Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert), has grown to include collaborative relationships with government ministries, research and health service agencies, and community based organizations. Our beginnings were marked by strong alliances, which have continued in our ten years of conducting collaborative population health research.

Over the past ten years, SPHERU researchers have broadened the understanding of population health and those social determinants of health that are crucial for reducing health inequities. To this end, our research team has grown to include a wider array of disciplines and perspectives which, in turn, has provided numerous training opportunities for new population health researchers in Saskatchewan. Together, we share our knowledge so we can learn from each other, whether we are researchers, trainees, or government and community partners.

Building upon a strong foundation has enabled SPHERU researchers and partners to maintain a strong commitment to the promotion of health equity by understanding and addressing population health disparities through practice and policy relevant research.

*Bonnie L. Jeffery*

Dr. Bonnie Jeffery  
Director, Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit

## MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP



As chair of the Management Advisory Group (MAG), I am delighted to congratulate SPHERU on reaching a ten year milestone of producing quality, relevant, and innovative population health research. SPHERU is now entering a new stage where building upon past accomplishments aids in developing new research programs that prepare both faculty and staff to usher in another ten years of success.

MAG, representative of both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, provides advice and direction to SPHERU on management level issues. We consist of senior university administrators who are appointed by the Vice-President of Research at both the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan. Over the past year we bid farewell to Dr. Murray Knuttila and welcomed Dr. Michael Tymchak to our team. We thank Dr. Murray Knuttila for his expertise over the years and welcome the service of Dr. Michael Tymchak.

We are very proud of the reputation and achievements of SPHERU and its faculty. SPHERU's research programs have informed an understanding of population health that has spread beyond the borders of Saskatchewan, and even Canada. SPHERU's research is recognized internationally as being high quality, policy-relevant, and innovative in the area of population health research. SPHERU faculty remains successful in receiving a high proportion of the grant and contract monies that they seek. They are an award-winning team. We would like to congratulate both SPHERU faculty and staff for their achievements and successes over the past ten years and encourage the attainment of future goals over the next ten years.

Through its multidisciplinary and cross-sector partnerships, SPHERU has bridged gaps between disciplines, organizations, and communities. SPHERU has catalyzed community transformations through innovation and the creation of new knowledge and engagement. This work would not have been possible without the support of funding agencies, community partners, the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, and current and past SPHERU faculty, students, and staff. This collaborative spirit has enabled the success of SPHERU in the past, continues to result in prosperity in the present, and will most assuredly facilitate success in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Beth Horsburgh'.

Dr. Beth Horsburgh  
Chair, Management Advisory Group

### ***SPHERU Mission:***

***The promotion of health equity by understanding and addressing population health disparities through policy relevant research.***

## MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP...

The Management of SPHERU is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. This MOU outlines the cooperative agreement to support the work of SPHERU and highlights the role of the Management Advisory Group (MAG) in providing consultation and advice to the Director and members of SPHERU. The members of this group are appointed by the Vice-Presidents Research at each university and biannual meetings allow for an update of research and financial activities of the Unit as well as the provision of collegial support to the research program.



**DR. M.E. (BETH) HORSBURGH** was appointed Associate Vice-President Research Health at the University of Saskatchewan and Vice-President Research & Innovation at the Saskatoon Health Region on July 1, 2007. The overarching purpose of this joint position is to support excellence in health research and innovation and to create synergies between the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatoon Health Region. Dr. Horsburgh is a key participant in strategic planning related to health research at both the Saskatoon Health Region and the University of Saskatchewan. This includes developing and implementing strategies and programs with community stakeholders and leading efforts to

translate research knowledge into clinical innovation, evidence based policies, practices, and decision making. A member of both the Office of the Vice-President Research Executive Committee at the University of Saskatchewan and the Senior Leadership Team of the Saskatoon Health Region, Dr. Horsburgh plays an important role in ensuring the integration of health research and innovation initiatives between the University and the Health Region.

**DR. JIM THORNHILL** is the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies at the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan since 2002. As well, he is also a Special Advisory to the Health Research Office of Dr. Beth Horsburgh, a joint office between the Saskatoon Health Region and the University of Saskatchewan to promote clinical research. He received his Ph.D. in Pharmacology from the University of Western Ontario in 1978 and did Post-Doctorate work at the University of Calgary from 1978-80 in the Department Medical Physiology. He joined the University of Saskatchewan, Department of Physiology in 1980 and worked through the ranks over twenty two years as an active instructor and well funded researcher, and was Department Head from 1988-94. His research was in the area of stroke, investigating the effects of temperature on the ischemic insult, with findings that lead to both publications and patents. As part of the University's Second Integrated Plan, he is currently one of twenty Commitment Leaders to be appointed by the University Provost, his specific portfolio being to investigate ways to accurately assess and promote Research Collaboration and Success at the university. In 2009, he was presented with the Award of Merit by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada for his long term, exceptional service to the mission of heart and stroke disease in Canada.



## MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP...



**CRAIG J. CHAMBERLIN**, B.P.E., M.P.E. (UBC), Ph.D. (Louisiana State), is an associate professor and Dean of the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina. He was hired into this position in 2002 and is currently serving in a second five year term. Dr. Chamberlin's area of specialization is in motor learning and control. Dr. Chamberlin's research interests are investigating powerful variables that impact on the learning of motor skills. In particular, he is interested in the structure of practice and the use of simulators and virtual reality in enhancing the learning process. He has published in journals such as the Journal of Motor Behavior, Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, Perceptual and Motor Skills, and Police Practice and Research. He has an extensive record of administrative service and currently serves as the secretary-treasurer for the Canadian Council of University Physical Education and Kinesiology Administrators (CCUPEKA) and on the Partners Advisory Group for Saskatchewan in motion.

**DR. MICHAEL TYMCHAK**, Ph.D., has served the University of Regina for the past eighteen years. He served as Dean of Education from 1992 to 2000 and again from 2006-2008. During his tenure as Dean, he served as Chair of the The Role of the School Task Force and Public Dialogue created by the Minister of Education, which resulted in SchoolPLUS and the focus on inter agency initiatives in public policy. He also served as research consultant and coordinator of the Transdisciplinary Project at the University of Regina which sponsored dozens of inter-disciplinary teaching and research projects throughout the university. Currently, he is the Director of the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit (SIDRU), and Professor of educational foundations in the Faculty of Education.



## WHO WE ARE

SPHERU is a bi-university interdisciplinary research unit committed to critical population health research. We currently have ten Faculty Researchers, one Associate Researcher, and two post doctoral fellows working from the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan and based out of three Saskatchewan sites: on the main campus at both universities; and at a satellite office and research lab in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Established in 1999, SPHERU is the first bi-university health research unit of its kind in Saskatchewan and is funded by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF), with additional project specific funding provided by other provincial and national health research funding agencies.

The unit's mission – the promotion of health equity by understanding and addressing population health disparities through policy relevant research – is incorporated into all of our research projects. SPHERU research is categorized by four inter-related types of research:

- The creation of new knowledge;
- Independent policy analysis;
- Collaborative research with policy makers around shared research questions and evaluation of policies and programs; and
- Collaboration with communities on strategies to reduce health inequities.



*Dr. Ron Labonte  
SPHERU Director  
(2000-2004)*



*Dr. George Maslany  
SPHERU Acting Director  
(November 2004-June 2006)  
SPHERU Associate Director  
(September 2002-August 2005)*



*Dr. Bonnie Jeffery  
SPHERU Director  
(July 2006-present)*

## RESEARCH FACULTY



### **SYLVIA ABONYI, Ph.D.**

Dr. Abonyi is an anthropologist working primarily in the area of Aboriginal health. She explores the role of culture in health with a number of research projects located in northern and remote Saskatchewan and across the prairie Provinces. She is an Associate Professor with the University of Saskatchewan's Community Health and Epidemiology Department and holds a Tier II Canada Research Chair in Aboriginal health.

### **PAUL HACKETT, Ph.D.**

Dr. Hackett's interests focus on the impact of cultural change on community health. Research projects include examining the factors that helped set the stage for the current epidemic of Type II diabetes among First Nations in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and investigating the history of tuberculosis among the western First Nations. Dr. Hackett is an Assistant Professor with the University of Saskatchewan's Geography Department.



### **MARY HAMPTON, Ph.D.**

Dr. Mary Hampton focuses her research interests on developing materials to increase cross cultural knowledge and facilitate delivery of culturally appropriate end of life care for Aboriginal families. She is the Academic Research Coordinator for Research and Education Solutions to Violence and Abuse (RESOLVE) and a Professor of Psychology with Luther College, University of Regina.

### **BONNIE JEFFERY, Ph.D.**

Dr. Jeffery has been the Director of SPHERU since July 2006 and a Research Faculty member since 2000. In her position as Professor with the Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, Dr. Jeffery has maintained a long standing commitment to access to post secondary professional education for rural and northern residents. Dr. Jeffery's research work is concentrated mainly in the Northern and Aboriginal Health and Rural Health research themes.



### **SHANTHI JOHNSON, Ph.D.**

Dr. Johnson is a Professor and Associate Dean (Research and Graduate Studies) with the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina. Her research interests involve health promotion and falls prevention among older adults with a multidisciplinary perspective. She has been examining the role of nutrition and exercise interventions in improving functional capacity and reducing falls in seniors. Other research interests include population health, rural health, health services research, and global health.

## RESEARCH FACULTY...

### DIANE MARTZ, Ph.D.

Dr. Martz mainly works in the area of rural women's health. She brings extensive experience in working in large research teams, along with a research focus on the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of rural health along with established relationships with many Saskatchewan and Alberta rural communities to the SPHERU research team. She is co-investigator with other SPHERU Research Faculty on several projects and aids in the development of an evaluation framework, workshops, and supporting materials for communities evaluating Aboriginal health projects.



### TOM MCINTOSH, Ph.D.

Dr. McIntosh joined SPHERU in 2002 and brings expertise on public policy making and knowledge transfer and exchange to numerous SPHERU projects. He is presently the principal investigator on an evaluation research project for the Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative (AHHRI) and the Aboriginal Health Transition Fund (AHTF). Dr. McIntosh is also developing a program of research in northern and rural health human resources policy. He is co-investigator on other projects with members of the SPHERU Research Faculty in the areas of Healthy Children and Northern and Aboriginal Health. Dr. McIntosh is currently an Associate Professor with the Department of Political Science at the University of Regina.

### NAZEEM MUHAJARINE, Ph.D.

Dr. Muhajarine is a social Epidemiologist and leads SPHERU's Healthy Children research area. Dr. Muhajarine's current involvements include conducting an evaluation on the Saskatchewan Government's *KidsFirst* Program, studying the prevalence of antenatal depression, determining the readiness of school age children through the Understanding the Early Years projects, and establishing a provincial Early Years knowledge network. Dr. Muhajarine is a Professor and Chair for the University of Saskatchewan's Community Health and Epidemiology Department.



### PAMMLA PETRUCKA, Ph.D.

Dr. Petrucka's research interests include Aboriginal health, rural women's health, informatics in health care, and international health. She currently leads/co-leads various community based research projects with three Aboriginal groups in Saskatchewan. Dr. Petrucka is an Associate Professor at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Nursing.

### NAZMI SARI, Ph.D.

Dr. Sari is a health economist with specific research interest in quality and efficiency issues in hospital markets, provider reimbursements and health care financing reforms, and economics of smoking and physical activity. He is an Associate Professor of Economics with the University of Saskatchewan since 2004.



## RESEARCH ASSOCIATES



### **JAMES DASCHUK, Ph.D.**

Dr. Daschuk joined the SPHERU team in 2008 and brings experience as an historian with a background in anthropology. He has been researching and teaching in the field of Aboriginal health for nearly twenty years. He is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina.

## POST DOCTORAL FELLOWS



### **GLORIA DESANTIS, Ph.D.**

Dr. DeSantis is a new Post Doctoral fellow in the area of socio-health. Working under the direction of Dr. Tom McIntosh, Dr. DeSantis will continue to advance interdisciplinary research on voluntary sector social service agencies that work with vulnerable populations toward the creation of healthier communities through their service delivery and public policy advocacy roles. She focuses her research interests on health inequities and social justice, health impacts of the voluntary social service sector, community involvement in health / social policy development, knowledge creation and translation from the ground up, and structural and political determinants of health.

### **HONGXIA SHAN, Ph.D.**

Dr. Shan is a recent graduate from the adult education and community development program at the University of Toronto. Her research interests include immigration, health, qualitative methods, gender studies, and community development. Under the supervision of Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine, Dr. Shan joins the Healthy Children research team. She brings an interdisciplinary perspective and mixed methods to understanding the health of marginalized communities within Saskatchewan.



*"SPHERU's contribution to our UEY project in Moose Jaw South Central has been invaluable. The team generously shared their knowledge, skills, and experience to guide our project over the past three years. Their involvement and expertise has made the success of this project a reality."*

*Melody Mitchell  
Community Coordinator (Moose Jaw )  
Understanding the Early Years*

## ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM



**JUANITA BACSU, PROJECT COORDINATOR  
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Juanita joined SPHERU in 2009 as the Project Coordinator for the SPHERU Team Project. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree as well as a Master's in Political Studies from the University of Saskatchewan. Prior to joining SPHERU, Juanita has worked as a communications manager and a research associate.

**COLLEEN HAMILTON, RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR  
PRINCE ALBERT SITE, UNIVERSITY OF REGINA**

Since joining SPHERU in 2002, Colleen has worked as Project Coordinator on a number of research projects located within the Northern and Aboriginal Health theme. She also provides research support to faculty members, particularly in the areas of budget development and community partner liaison, and coordinates the administrative activities of SPHERU's Prince Albert site. Colleen has been with the University of Regina since 1988, and was administrative coordinator with the Faculty of Social Work's Prince Albert Community Education Centre prior to joining SPHERU.



**RICHELLE LEONARD, RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR  
UNIVERSITY OF REGINA  
ON LEAVE APRIL 2009 – APRIL 2010**

Richelle Leonard joined SPHERU in 2008 as Research Administrator for the Regina site. Her role with SPHERU is to coordinate the administrative and financial activities for both the unit as a whole and for individual researchers. Prior to her work with SPHERU, she was the administrative assistant with the Office of Resource Planning and also served as a casual executive administrative assistant with the President's Office. Richelle has been with the University of Regina since 1995. Her expertise in database management, her skill in developing and preparing publications, and her knowledge of the University of Regina financial and human resource systems are assets that she brings to SPHERU.

**MEAGHAN MATCYK, RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR  
UNIVERSITY OF REGINA  
APRIL 2009 – APRIL 2010**

Meaghan joined SPHERU in 2009 as Research Administrator for the Regina location. She managed the financial and administrative activities for both the site and individual researchers. Meaghan has been with the University of Regina since 2007. Prior to her work with SPHERU, she was employed as transcripts analyst with the Office of the Registrar. In April 2009, she received her Diploma of Business Administration from the University of Regina. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, specializing in Human Resource Management.



## ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM...



### **JANICE MICHAEL, RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Janice Michael, B.Ed., joined the SPHERU team as Research Administrator for the Saskatoon site in April 2007. As a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, College of Education, she welcomed the chance to return to the University environment. She is currently pursuing a Certified General Accountant designation and brings to SPHERU experience in health services, administration, and finance. Her role with SPHERU is to coordinate the administrative and financial activities for both the unit as a whole and for individual researchers.

### **BONNIE ZINK, COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE OFFICER UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Bonnie joined the SPHERU team in 2008, and currently handles communications and knowledge exchange activities for the unit in a half-time role. Prior to this, she served as a term Research Officer for SPHERU's Healthy Children research program. Bonnie holds a Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in English and Political Science from the University of Regina. She has extensive previous experience with health care associations, including roles as a policy writer and research



analyst for the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, as a member of Medical Services with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, and as a researcher contractor with the Canadian Policy Research Networks. She is a member of the Professional Writers Association of Canada and the Saskatchewan Writers Guild.

*"Working with the research team at SPHERU, under Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine, brought a credibility to the South East Saskatchewan Understanding the Early Years project, which has gained interest regionally, provincially, and nationally. Their knowledge as to early years development trends and issues, along with their expertise in data assessment, and evaluation strongly under girded the work of this project. Their standard of academic excellence, as well as professionalism and respect, has made it both a privilege and an honour to work and collaborate with SPHERU."*

*Ruth Barker  
Community Coordinator  
South East Saskatchewan  
Understanding the Early Years*

## RESEARCH STAFF

Amanda Cook  
 Walter Deller  
 Diana Fedosoff  
 Joel Fonstad  
 Deepal Gajadeera  
 Paula Ghiglione  
 Jody Glacken  
 Kathryn Green  
 Julia Hardy  
 Phyllis Hartwick  
 Hedi Hother-Yishay

Karolayna Isley  
 Laura Jones  
 Heather Kuttai  
 Taban Leggett  
 Kristjana Loptson  
 Scott MacNeil  
 Fleur Macqueen Smith  
 Trevor McKenzie-Smith  
 Penny McKinlay  
 Kathleen McMullin  
 Ross Minett

Jastein Misfeldt  
 Rob Nesdole  
 John Ng  
 Darren Nickel  
 Chad Nilson  
 Judy Peddle  
 Shainur Premji  
 Tracy Ridalls  
 Jeff Smith  
 Jessica Stolar  
 Savhanna Wilson

## RESEARCH TRAINEES

### UNDERGRADUATES

Miranda Brown  
 Britney Cross  
 Janelle Grainger  
 Karolayna Isley  
 John Jutras  
 Jillian Lunn  
 Chelsea Millman  
 Tara Robertson  
 Karen White

### GRADUATES

Claire Betker  
 Deanna Bickford  
 Nana Bonsu  
 Meredith Burles  
 Jennifer Cushon  
 Mitch Daschuk  
 Dennis Duro  
 Garry Ewart  
 Jessica Grant

### GRADUATES continued

Jonathan Harris  
 Stephanie Konrad  
 Colleen Krushelinski  
 Jennifer Langille  
 Amanda LaVallee  
 Tina Leckie  
 Yang Liu

*"Working with the healthy children's research team has provided me the opportunity to learn about the importance of community based research, population health based research, and their roles in shaping policy."*

*Rob Nesdole, Research Assistant  
 University of Saskatchewan*

### GRADUATES continued

Natalie Ludlow  
 Michelle (Rene) Martin  
 Briana Melia  
 Sarah Nickel  
 Ana Novakovic  
 Meric Osman  
 Chassidy Puchala  
 Danielle Salmon  
 Stacey Shand  
 Riddhi Shukla  
 Melissa Stoops  
 Sultana Stylianidou  
 Hayley Turnbull  
 Lesley Wiebe  
 Karen Wood  
 Megan Woods  
 Lakelyn Wylie

## WHAT WE DO

SPHERU's research focuses on three main themes: Northern and Aboriginal Health, Healthy Children, and Rural Health. Our themes are derived directly from our understanding of population health outcomes and from issues that are particularly relevant to Saskatchewan.

**NORTHERN AND ABORIGINAL HEALTH RESEARCH** seeks to develop culturally relevant health frameworks and examines the role that culture plays as a health determinant.

**HEALTHY CHILDREN RESEARCH** considers how contexts shape children's health and development outcomes.

**RURAL HEALTH RESEARCH** focuses on the impacts of socioeconomic determinants of health in rural populations.

**EVALUATION RESEARCH** studies the effectiveness of policies and programs against their desired outcomes.

SPHERU researchers take a collaborative approach to population health research working with communities and policy makers through:

- Mobilizing and building upon the expertise of our researchers, students, trainees, and research partners;
- Ensuring our research questions and results are relevant to improving the health of Saskatchewan residents; and
- Exchanging our research knowledge through engagement with communities and policy-makers.



# NORTHERN AND ABORIGINAL HEALTH

SPHERU research in the area of northern and Aboriginal health is situated in the global context of Indigenous frameworks and indicators discourse and broadly framed through the lens of culture as a health determinant. We know that Indigenous peoples around the world continue to experience disproportionate health burdens with large disparities in most social and health indicators.

In order to measure progress toward reductions in health disparities, it is essential that quality health data exist. This requires conceptual level progress in the area of culturally relevant definitions of health, accompanied by the development of indicators suitable to these new frameworks. Both areas of research are unfolding in a national and global context that explicitly recognizes culture as a health determinant, but are limited in their application by our poorly developed understanding of what that means and of how culture intersects with other, better defined determinants such as income, social status, education, and employment.

We recognize the particular importance of culture in the health of Aboriginal people in Canada. Our projects explore the role of culture in population health by looking at culture as a determinant of health, by considering culturally relevant definitions of health, and through refining cultural identity as an indicator of health.



*Elder Wayne Goodwill speaks to youth participants at the Paths to Living Well Project for on-reserve Aboriginal youth (Standing Buffalo First Nation).*



*Director Carol Soles (l) and Support Services Worker Theresa Lanigan (r) in the newly renovated kitchen of the Prince Albert Safe Shelter for Women*

## Working Towards Improved Community Programs

Much of our research aims to improve programs and services offered to communities across Saskatchewan. Through collaboration with institutions, community partners, and a number of other interested stakeholders we are seeing our research begin to effect change at the community level resulting in the implementation of strategies aimed at addressing the underlying causes of prevailing social issues.

*"We have already seen an impact from our involvement in the study. Through informal contacts with study participants, we identified the need for continuing support services to women who have received services and are now back in the community, and were able to create a new position."*

*Carol Soles, Director  
Prince Albert Safe Shelter for  
Women*

## NORTHERN AND ABORIGINAL HEALTH...



***The Healing Journey: A Longitudinal Study of Women Who Have Been Abused by Intimate Partners*** is the first study of its kind in Canada. Since 2004 SPHERU researchers have been examining the experience of intimate partner violence and the consequences it has on the lives of women in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta over a four year period. The Saskatchewan portion of the study is led by Dr. Mary Hampton, a SPHERU researcher and Psychology professor at Luther College. SPHERU Director, Dr. Bonnie Jeffery, is also a member of the research team overseeing the project in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Working with the academic researchers are community agencies, forming partnerships to create results that will help to understand the cycle of abuse and the intervention and prevention strategies implemented to address the cycle.

With the completion of project activity, findings of the study are now being translated into policy and service delivery adjustments and improvements. Prince Albert's community agency partner, The Prince Albert Safe Shelter for Women, has been involved with the study from its beginning and an invaluable contributor. Director, Carol Soles, notes that they have been "embraced as equals" throughout the research process and looks forward to seeing positive results in the delivery of future services and programs.

*"My work on the Healing Journey team examining service use patterns in rural and northern survivors of intimate partner violence has been a valuable experience. I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this area to help understand the effect of isolation on healing from violence."*

*Meghan A. Woods  
Graduate Student in  
Clinical Psychology*



*Conference Organizer & RESOLVE Saskatchewan Project Coordinator, Ann Bishop(l) and Provincial Academic Research Coordinator for RESOLVE Saskatchewan, Dr. Mary Hampton(r) during the 2009 RESOLVE Research Day.*

This project is funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council Community-University Research Alliance (SSHRC-CURA) and the Prairie Action Foundation (PAF). For more information on the project please contact the Prince Albert SPHERU office or visit <http://www.uregina.ca/resolve/RESOLVE/research.htm>.

## HEALTHY CHILDREN



*Fleur Macqueen Smith and Nazeem Muhajarine, of SPHERU's Healthy Children research team, with three of their community partners. From left to right: Fleur, Brenda Ives (Coordinator, Understanding the Early Years in Northeast Saskatchewan), Nazeem, Ruth Barker (Coordinator, Understanding the Early Years in Southeast Saskatchewan) and Melody Mitchell (Coordinator, Understanding the Early Years in Moose Jaw-South Central Saskatchewan).*

Children are an example of a population group whose compromised health has consequences, not only for their life course, but also for society. Our research addresses the limitations of previous studies and incorporates a critical population health approach.

Evidence has shown that neighbourhood effects on children are observable, but that these effects were very small after accounting for individual differences. This conclusion is at odds with studies that show not only that there are neighbourhood effects on child health outcomes independent of individual level factors, but that these neighbourhood factors may have an even greater impact on child health outcomes than previously understood. Policy makers lack an evidence base to support interventions that are contextual and locally based.

Research on the impact of physical and social environments on healthy childhood development is complex, and research to date suffers from a lack of conceptual clarity, lack of data at the level of place of residence, lack of activity that is meaningful to subjects, and little incorporation of social theories that explain the importance of context in the lives of individuals.

Overall, work in the area of Healthy Children contributes to a deeper understanding of how the various contexts (family milieu, neighbourhood social and physical environment, and school environment) shape child health and developmental outcomes, and to learning how successful our community based intervention efforts are in producing better outcomes for children. Through this research and by working closely with decision makers, we contribute to achieving better health and development for all children in Saskatchewan.



*Healthy Children research team member, Hongxia Shan, SPHERU Post Doctoral Fellow, and her son Jeff Jiefu Zhu participating in the 2010 Transcultural Health Conference held in Calgary Alberta (May 2 - 4, 2010)*

*"We were very fortunate to access SPHERU's considerable early childhood research expertise to form a university and rural Saskatchewan community partnership in 2007 and 2008. Through our collaboration with Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine and the SPHERU team we produced a number of excellent research and knowledge transfer documents which continue to inspire community action in northeast Saskatchewan."*

*Brenda Ives, Coordinator  
North East Understanding  
the Early Years*

## HEALTHY CHILDREN...



*Sue Delaney, Special Project Coordinator for Child and Youth Friendly, kidSKAN, and Kinsmen Activity Place. The above photo is from the Community Health and Epidemiology 50th Anniversary Celebration (March 26, 2010)*

### Linking Research And Policy

One of the end goals of our research is to ultimately effect public policy for the betterment of Saskatchewan communities. Through creating networks that enable policy makers, academic researchers, and community partners to come together and share knowledge we are beginning to realize this goal.

### ***(kidSKAN) Early Years Knowledge to Action Network: Linking Community, University, and Government for Child Health and Wellbeing***

In late 2007, Saskatoon's Understanding the Early Years project, co-led by Sue Delaney of Communities for Children, and Nazeem Muhajarine of SPHERU's Healthy Children research program, wrapped up. Subsequently, we launched a provincial network, now known as **kidSKAN**, the Saskatchewan Knowledge to Action Network for early childhood development. In late 2008 we received a Knowledge to Action grant for this network from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (2009-2012).

kidSKAN is a provincial community of practice researchers, practitioners, and policy makers in academia, government, and the community who have an interest

in early childhood development in Saskatchewan. It builds on the momentum from the seven Understanding the Early Years projects in Saskatchewan from the past decade, other collaborative research projects, and the provincial government's recent decision to measure children's school readiness across the province using the Early Development Instrument, which is the same tool used in the Understanding the Early years projects.

kidSKAN's mandate is to facilitate stakeholder networking and knowledge sharing in early childhood development, to facilitate appropriate policy and practice change, and to identify and facilitate new opportunities for collaborative research. Organization of knowledge sharing opportunities and development of a website ([www.kidskan.ca](http://www.kidskan.ca)) for sharing and collaboration have aided organizers to fulfill this mandate.

*"I have been working with Nazeem Muhajarine and members of his Healthy Children research team since SPHERU's inception ten years ago. Not only has this relationship been valuable to me personally, but also professionally as an advocate for children and youth in Saskatchewan. With our partnership, and the research that we have conducted together, we know that we have been able to encourage improvements in policy and practice for young children in Saskatchewan, such as new programs and services like literacy and numeracy programs in the Saskatoon school boards, a new Saskatoon library branch, and more speech and language pathology services. People understand the community's needs much better, as well as the important role that research plays in all that we do. We also know that our focus on research and knowledge transfer has moved early childhood issues up on many people's agendas across the province."*

*Sue Delaney, Special Project Coordinator for Child and Youth Friendly, kidSKAN, and Kinsmen Activity Place*

## RURAL HEALTH

Rurality is a powerful determinant of health. Rural people's poorer health status is a result of significant inequities in health-determining conditions, as compared to their urban counterparts. Some of the contextual factors unique to rural settings have been identified as exacerbating or mitigating health outcomes of rural residents.

In Saskatchewan, thirty six percent of the population lives in rural areas. These areas have been hard hit by factors such as:

- Economic restructuring in agriculture and forestry;
- Loss of young people;
- Deteriorating infrastructure; and
- Restructuring of the provision of services in health and education.

Rural health research projects conducted by SPHERU continue to provide a better understanding of the impact of economic and cultural determinants on the health of rural women, men, and youth.



### Healthy Rural Communities

SPHERU research is often conducted *with* communities and not merely *on* communities. Involving stakeholders and partners in the research process early and often ensures that the research outcomes are in the hands of the decision makers that have the ability to affect change at the local level, creating healthier communities where Saskatchewan people can thrive.

### *Role of Social Systems in the Health of Seniors Living in Rural Saskatchewan*

Recent government cutbacks to health and social programs have led to a severe decline in the provision of primary services in rural areas. As a result of these cuts, rural communities are becoming increasingly reliant on community organizations and residents to deliver care and services to an aging population. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between social systems and the health of seniors living in rural Saskatchewan.

Dr. Bonnie Jeffery leads a pilot project that examines the views of residents from two different sized health regions on the capacity of rural communities and their social networks to address the health care needs of seniors. The project is funded by the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture (CCHSA) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). For further information on this project, and SPHERU's other rural health research projects, please visit [www.spheru.ca](http://www.spheru.ca).

## EVALUATION RESEARCH

SPHERU also conducts evaluation research that studies the effectiveness of policies and programs in their efforts to make social and environmental conditions healthier and more equitable. These evaluations are usually undertaken in partnership with policy and program personnel, so that their knowledge can contribute to evaluation design and their engagement in the process can better equip them to put the findings in to practice.

### *Evaluation of the Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative (AHHRI) and Aboriginal Health Transition Fund (AHTF)*

Since 2007, SPHERU has been contracted by the First Nations and Inuit Health (FNIH) of Health Canada to develop evaluation frameworks on two FNIH initiatives: the Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative (AHHRI) and the Aboriginal Health Transition Fund (AHTF). Building upon the work of Phase I and Phase II, SPHERU has released its final report in January 2010.



The evaluation frameworks provide FNIH with the necessary tools and a plan to undertake an evaluation to determine whether the goals and objectives set out in the AHHRI and AHTF frameworks were met successfully in the Saskatchewan region. SPHERU first undertook a review of research evidence on program evaluation and evaluation framework development, which informed the development of evaluation frameworks for both initiatives, during Phase I. Training workshops, consultations, progress on the regional review plan, and summarizing next steps to complete the regional review plan outlined the work completed during Phase II. Phase III is the culmination of this work. Provision of ongoing advice and support to individual projects, an overview of the evaluation approach, and summary of the work completed are contained within the Final Report, Phase III: Regional Review of the Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative and Mid-Term Progress Review of the Aboriginal Health Transition Fund (January 2010).

This project was funded by Health Canada. Further information on this and other evaluation projects is available on SPHERU's website, [www.spheru.ca](http://www.spheru.ca).

# KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND EXCHANGE

SPHERU brings researchers together in an environment that promotes and supports collaboration among academics and between academic and community partners. Researchers developing projects are able to draw on their colleagues' disciplinary expertise, experience, and relationships that they have with other researchers, policy makers, and community members.

SPHERU's knowledge translation and exchange activities are conducted as an integral part of our collaboratively driven research strategy. We begin by identifying potential users of research knowledge, involving them early and often, and working with them to generate research questions. SPHERU has developed and tested promising practices for effective knowledge translation and exchange throughout the research process, including:

- Developing collaborative research projects with many stakeholders;
- Publishing research findings in more accessible, plain language documents;
- Producing videos to share findings;
- Developing toolkits of findings for communities to use as resource guides;
- Developing research networks for knowledge exchange; and
- Delivering and participating in presentations, forums, and expert dialogues.



This approach to integrated knowledge translation and exchange helps strengthen capacity for researchers, students, policy makers, and communities to act on shared findings, ensuring that new understandings are in the hands of those who can affect changes that address health disparities associated with social inequities.

While each of SPHERU's research projects integrate knowledge translation throughout the research process, SPHERU also shares findings and experiences on an ongoing and regular basis. 2009 and 2010 provided several opportunities for SPHERU and a number of our researchers to share their knowledge:



## THE MANITOBA CENTRE FOR HEALTH POLICY 20TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE – GOING FOR THE GOLD

March 8 and 9, 2010  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Creating new knowledge that informs health and social policy and exploring the connections between research, policy, and practice lay at the heart of this conference. "Going for the Gold" presented an opportunity for SPHERU to share our experience in knowledge translation practices. A poster presentation described how SPHERU defines knowledge translation, integrates knowledge translation best practices into the research process, and shares research findings through a variety of knowledge translation methods to a diverse audience, which included practitioners, policy makers, and other academics.

## KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND EXCHANGE...



### “EATING OUR HEARTS OUT: HOW A CENTURY OF CHANGE HAS PRODUCED POOR HEALTH IN THE LAND OF PLENTY”

Café Scientifique  
November 30, 2009  
MacKenzie Art Gallery  
Regina, Saskatchewan

Café Scientifique is a Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) program that brings together CIHR funded researchers and members of the public in an informal setting such as a restaurant, café, or other public meeting place. Together with the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) and the University of Regina, SPHERU researchers were afforded the opportunity to share their research and knowledge with the public.

The Café, held in conjunction with SHRF’s Health Research week, provided a forum where the public had direct access to several experts working within this topic. James Daschuk (SPHERU, University of Regina), Paul Hackett (SPHERU, University of Saskatchewan), and Bruce Reeder (Professor, Community Health and Epidemiology, University of Saskatchewan School of Public Health) lent their expertise in population health, social history, and nutrition to the exploration of how and why Canadians currently face epidemics in obesity, diabetes, and other related illnesses. Tom McIntosh (SPHERU, University of Regina) acted as moderator and provided a political science perspective to the discussion.

### COFFEE HOUSE CONTROVERSIES

Tom McIntosh  
“Why is the Recession Good for Health Care Reform?”  
October 1, 2009  
Regina, Saskatchewan

Mary Hampton  
“Does Culture Matter at the End of Life?”  
October 15, 2009  
Regina, Saskatchewan

Coffee House Controversies is an ongoing public lecture series presented by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Regina in cooperation with Chapters Bookstore (Regina, Saskatchewan). Each event is a twenty minute, informal “hot topic” discussion led by a University of Regina Faculty of Arts Professor followed by twenty minutes of audience questions.

SPHERU faculty, Tom McIntosh and Mary Hampton, led discussions revolving around central topics such as governments and population health issues and on death and dying and the important role culture plays at this stage respectively. The lectures were well attended and afforded the public, university community, government representatives, and other attendees the opportunity to engage with both SPHERU researchers and their work.



# PUBLICATIONS

## SPHERU NEWS: LEARNING, ENGAGING AND COMMUNICATING

This newsletter is published bi-annually during the spring and fall of each year. SPHERU News offers project activity updates, profiles on SPHERU researchers and their accomplishments, as well as information on upcoming publications. SPHERU news is available on our website and distributed electronically to anyone who is interested in learning more about population health and the social determinants of health.

To subscribe to SPHERU news electronically please send a request to [bonnie.zink@usask.ca](mailto:bonnie.zink@usask.ca).

## ALBERTA CENTRE FOR ACTIVE LIVING'S RESEARCH UPDATE

*Research Update*, published quarterly in the Alberta Centre for Active Living (<http://www.centre4activeliving.ca>), summarizes and promotes recent research of interest to practitioners in health promotion and physical activity. The work of SPHERU researchers is published bi-annually in the spring (March) and fall (September) editions of *Research Update*.



*Volume 16, Number 1, April 2009:* Shanthi Johnson's article, "Osteoporosis: Improving Screening and Management Strategies," highlights a SPHERU study in which researchers focus on the bone health of populations in rural and urban areas. The aim: to improve the diagnosis, management, and prevention of osteoporosis, which is both preventable and treatable.

*Volume 16, Number 3, September 2009:* Nazmi Sari highlights a study that estimates the impact of physical inactivity on the Canadian health care system in the article entitled "The Impact of Physical Inactivity on Canadian Health Care."

*Volume 17, Number 1, March 2010:* Jim Daschuk explores the root causes of current health epidemics, such as the rise in obesity, through examining historical trends that have led to an increasingly sedentary society in the article entitled "Examining the Prevalence of Today's Chronic Diseases – How did we get here?"

For further information regarding our knowledge translation and exchange activities please visit [www.spheru.ca](http://www.spheru.ca).



## CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

### **CANADA-INDIA LINKAGES IN HEALTHY AGING RESEARCH**

*SPHERU Researcher: Shanthi Johnson (Principal Investigator)*

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Meetings, Planning, and Dissemination Grant

\$15,065 (2009 – 2010)

This grant supported the development of Canada-India linkages in healthy aging with funding for a two-day meeting in India. Experts met to discuss healthy aging research and to plan cross-cultural research within specific areas, including the production of an edited volume for dissemination.



### **KIDSFIRST QUALITATIVE STUDY**

*SPHERU Researcher: Nazeem Muhajarine (Principal Investigator)*

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education

Amount: \$161,000 (2009 – 2010)

*KidsFirst* is an early childhood intervention program that supports families in difficult circumstances in nine sites in Saskatchewan. In this qualitative portion of our evaluation of *KidsFirst*, we examined experiences of changes in families attributable to participation in *KidsFirst*, along with understandings of how those changes may have come about, and factors that have facilitated or hindered the overall effectiveness of *KidsFirst*. Researchers conducted 84 interviews and 27 focus groups involving 242 participants at all nine *KidsFirst* sites.

### **NEURODEVNET**

*Dan Goldowitz, University of British Columbia (Principal Investigator),*

*SPHERU Researcher: Nazeem Muhajarine (Director/Platform manager, Knowledge Transfer and Exchange)*

Government of Canada – Networks of Centres of Excellence

\$19.5 million (total project) (2009 – 2014)

\$1 million (University of Saskatchewan portion) (2009 – 2014)

NeuroDevNet is the first trans-Canada initiative dedicated to studying children's brain development from both basic and clinical perspectives. The network will receive \$19,572,000 in funding over five years to accelerate the pace of understanding the causes of neurological deficits, with an initial focus on autism spectrum disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and cerebral palsy. Researchers will explore how the normal brain develops, how to detect abnormalities, and how to repair the damaged brain. NeuroDevNet will also train the next generation of researchers in pediatric brain development, and it will disseminate new knowledge into improved diagnosis, treatments, and interventions to inform care delivery and policy decisions.



## CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS...

### **PREVENTING FALLS AND FALL-RELATED INJURIES AMONG SENIORS IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES**

*SPHERU Researcher: Shanthi Johnson (Principal Investigator)*

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Catalyst Grant

\$49,685 (2010 – 2011)

Unintentional falls are one of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity among older adults. This pilot project supports existing research aimed at reducing falls and fall related injuries among residents of Long Term Care facilities. This objective is realized through positive, collaborative action by those who are at risk and those who are responsible for their care and safety. The pilot will test the study protocol in two long term care facilities (one rural and one urban) in Saskatchewan.

*“Working on the project concerning Fall Prevention Strategies in Long Term Care facilities in Saskatchewan has allowed me to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to real life situations and it has also given me greater insight into population health based research.”*

*Nana Bonsu  
SPHERU Research Assistant  
University of Regina*



### **REVIEW OF PUBLIC POLICY AND PRACTICES IN WESTERN CANADA TO ENHANCE SCHOOL PREPAREDNESS IN CHILDREN AT KINDERGARTEN**

*SPHERU Researcher: Nazeem Muhajarine (Principal Investigator)*

Institut national du sante public du Quebec (INSPQ) for the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (Contract)

\$60,000 (2010)

SPHERU researchers have contracted with the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP) to prepare a paper based on a review of public policy and practices in Western Canada to enhance school preparedness in children at kindergarten. The proposed work will: a) identify policies and programs implemented in the four western Canadian provinces to address school readiness that corroborate with key benchmarks set out in a recently developed integrated framework; b) identify policy gaps in each of the four western Canadian provinces as they relate to the policy benchmarks and school readiness; and c) identify and compile available evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of the policies and programs in addressing school readiness and determine why they are effective or ineffective.

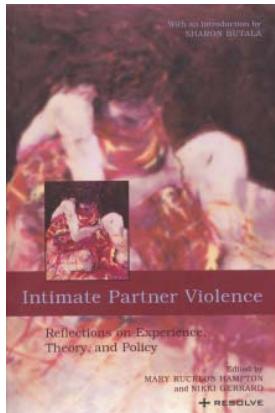
## CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS...

### **ROLE OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS IN THE HEALTH OF SENIORS LIVING IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN**

*SPHERU Researchers: Bonnie Jeffery (Lead Principal Investigator); Shanthi Johnson (Co-Principal Investigator); Sylvia Abonyi, Diane Martz & Juanita Bascu (Co-investigators)*

Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture/Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
\$20,000 (2010 – 2011)

This pilot project will gather preliminary information to examine the relationship between social systems and the health of seniors living in rural communities in two different sized health regions in Saskatchewan. Researchers will develop, implement, and test a conceptual framework and methodology and compare a largely urban health region with one that is more rural to reveal if differing views exist of both the capacity of rural communities to address the health care and service needs of seniors and the ways in which social systems influence seniors' health.



### **RURAL AND NORTHERN COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

*SPHERU Researchers: Mary Hampton (Principal Investigator); Bonnie Jeffery, Paul Hackett, Diane Martz (Co-Investigators)*

Social Science and Humanities Research Council  
Community-University Research Alliance (CURA)  
Letter of Intent Grant  
\$19,937 (2010 – 2011)

This CURA project, led by RESOLVE Saskatchewan at the University of Regina, will build upon the established connections among the three RESOLVE provincial research offices, and justice and community family violence agencies across the provinces. The project will conduct research to enhance our understanding of current community responses to intimate partner violence in rural and northern regions of the Canadian Prairie Provinces in order to expand support in targeted areas experiencing abuse and violence.

## CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS...

### **RURAL POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF THEIR CAMPUS COMMUNITIES**

*William Care, Brandon University (Lead Principal Investigator),*

*SPHERU Researchers: Bonnie Jeffery, Pammla Petrucka (Co-Investigators)*

Manitoba Health Research Council

\$90,729 (2010-2012)

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Operating Grant \$85,044 (2010 – 2011)

In this project students, community partners, and researchers will create partnerships to identify and take action on factors that contribute to the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of university and college students at postsecondary institutions in Brandon, Manitoba and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Focus groups, workshops, campus meetings, and the use of photography in addition to a website, student blog, and online survey are research strategies that will be used to gather data to create a student community health framework and set of indicators that will be used to measure student health and quality of life.

### **A SURVEY OF FALLS PREVENTION STRATEGIES IN SASKATCHEWAN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES**

*SPHERU Researcher: Shanthi Johnson (Principal Investigator)*

Social Science and Humanities Research Council General Grants and President's Fund

\$5,000 (2009 – 2010)

This study will examine the falls incident reporting protocol and falls prevention strategies currently in place in long term care institutions in Saskatchewan, which will form the benchmark for future falls prevention research in Saskatchewan. This work will support Dr. Johnson's current research program that is aimed at reducing falls and fall-related injuries among residents of Long Term Care (LTC) facilities.

### **TIER 2 CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR IN ABORIGINAL HEALTH**

*SPHERU Researcher: Sylvia Abonyi*

Canada Research Chairs (CRC) Secretariat / University of Saskatchewan

\$500,000 (2010 – 2015)

This CRC renewal continues a program of study exploring the role of culture in the health and wellness of Aboriginal peoples. Conducted from a framework of community based collaboration and participation and centered around the Tools 2 – Community health and wellness indicators reflecting daily life in Saskatchewan's isolated far north project. The primary goals of the research program are to: 1) test and further develop indicators of community health appropriate to a northern Saskatchewan health organization; 2) complete the construction of a database populated with baseline quantitative and qualitative indicator data; and 3) use the database to explore the relationships between various determinants and their impact on community health. An important aspect of this research is building capacity in the communities to maintain, update, and appropriately access the community health indicators database that will be the major deliverable of the research program.



*Sylvia Abonyi, SPHERU Researcher and Canada Research Chair (Photo courtesy of University of Saskatchewan)*

## CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS...



*Photo courtesy of Colleen Leonard photographie*

### ***TOWARDS A MORE INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE FUNDING AND DELIVERY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN SASKATCHEWAN: A DISCUSSION PAPER***

*Sue Delanoy, Communities for Children (Principal Investigator),  
SPHERU Researchers: Nazeem Muhajarine; and Fleur Macqueen-Smith (Working Group Members)*  
Muttart Family Foundation (contract)  
\$20,000 (2009 – 2010)

SPHERU has entered into a contract with the Muttart Foundation, a private charitable foundation based in Edmonton, Alberta, whose work includes a focus on early childhood education and care. SPHERU and the foundation will work together to develop a discussion paper that considers the benefits and challenges (arguments) associated with the move towards a more integrated and comprehensive approach to the funding and delivery of early childhood education and care in the province of Saskatchewan.

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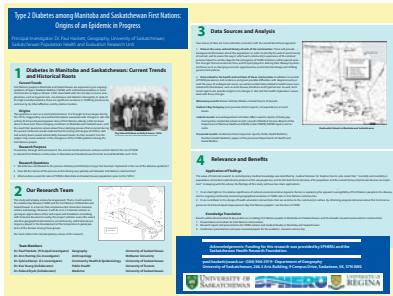
### ***YOUTH SMOKING SURVEY, SASKATCHEWAN***

*Steve Manski, University of Waterloo (Principal Investigator),  
SPHERU Researcher: Nazeem Muhajarine (Saskatchewan Provincial Collaborator)*  
Health Canada  
\$50,000 (2010 – 2011)

SPHERU has subcontracted with the University of Waterloo to implement a national youth smoking survey with high school students in Saskatchewan. The survey will include students from 28 schools across the province.



## CONTINUING RESEARCH PROJECTS



### **ATLAS PROJECT**

*Project Members: Paul Hackett, Bonnie Jeffery, Diane Martz, and Nazeem Muhajarine*  
Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation  
Health Research Team Grant (2008 – 2011)

The goal of this project is to develop a digital atlas of Saskatchewan in which to showcase the work conducted by the SPHERU team. While the final product will provide the full range of SPHERU researchers' work, the initial focus will be on a selected group of projects.

### **CANADIAN OBSERVATORY: RESEARCHING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM'S RESPONSE TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

*Carmen Gill, University of New Brunswick (Principal Investigator),  
SPHERU Researcher: Mary Hampton (Co-Investigator)*  
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council  
\$2,200,000 (2007-2012)

Observatories are proactive investigators providing strong political messages that inform policy making. The Canadian observatory mobilizes knowledge by creating and sustaining a synergy among those who are studying intimate partner violence and the justice system response, and by facilitating the sharing and transferring of knowledge across the country and abroad.

*"Working on the Canadian Observatory on Intimate Partner Violence project in the policy section has given me a greater appreciation for the work our Canadian policy makers do, as well as provided me with a more solid understanding of intimate partner violence laws across the country."*

*Karolayna Isley, Research Assistant  
Observatory Project  
University of Regina*

### **A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EMERGENCE OF TYPE II DIABETES MELLITUS AMONG THE FIRST NATIONS OF MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN: 1945-1970**

*SPHERU Researchers: Paul Hackett (Principal Investigator); Sylvia Abonyi (Co-Investigator)*  
Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation  
New Investigator Establishment Grant  
\$108,871 (2007 - 2009)

This study examines the changing socio-cultural and environmental conditions among First Nations people in Manitoba and Saskatchewan that contribute to the rise of type II diabetes mellitus between 1945 and 1970. It seeks to understand the process by which ongoing cultural change led to changing dietary practices and activity levels. The study's findings cast light on the present varied pattern of Type II Diabetes Mellitus in the two provinces and contribute to the implementation of more culturally sensitive intervention programs among the First Nations.

## CONTINUING RESEARCH PROJECTS...

### ***THE DETERMINANTS OF TUBERCULOSIS (TB) TRANSMISSION IN THE CANADIAN-BORN POPULATION OF THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES***

*Richard Long, University of Alberta (Lead Principal Investigator) SPHERU Researcher: Sylvia Abonyi – Co-Investigator*  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
Operating Grant  
\$902,410 (2006 – 2011)

This study reflects a regionwide, multifaceted, and programmatic approach to informing TB elimination strategies. One goal of the project is to translate the results into practical solutions to help those who need it most. The study has the potential to influence social determinants of health in marginalized communities, provide impetus for improved outcomes for Aboriginal people, and explore a regional model of coordinated activity.

### ***HISTORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE IN SASKATCHEWAN THE ORIGINS AND IMPORT OF HEALTH INEQUITIES IN SASKATCHEWAN, 1905-1985***

*Project Members: Jim Daschuk, Gloria DeSantis, Paul Hackett, and Tom McIntosh*  
Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation  
Health Research Team Grant (2008 – 2011)

Despite Saskatchewan's long standing commitment to providing health care for all, the province manifests among the most extreme disparities in health outcomes in the nation. These disparities have been long entrenched, and yet ongoing attempts to achieve a solution have been largely historical. This project seeks to understand the root causes of these current health inequities through the use of an historical approach. This approach will identify the past patterns of health in Saskatchewan, how they have changed over time, and how key medical, policy, and other interventions impacted, and were impacted by, the inequitable distribution of health for specific sub-populations.



### ***HIV/AIDS, MATERNAL HEALTH AND MOTHER IDENTITIES: NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS, HEALTH-RELATED BEHAVIOURS, AND PROGRAMMING IMPLICATIONS***

*Pamela Downe, University of Saskatchewan (Principal Investigator), SPHERU Researcher: Sylvia Abonyi (Co-Investigator)*  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
Operating Grant  
\$231,627 (2008 – 2011)

This community based research determines the inter-relationship between women's experiences with motherhood and HIV/AIDS in a context where HIV/AIDS is highly indigenized. It assesses how mother identities affect the health related beliefs and behaviours of women accessing the services of AIDS Saskatoon and determines what HIV/AIDS related resources and services in Saskatoon and regionally are empowering to mothers infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

## CONTINUING RESEARCH PROJECTS...

### **INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS FOR INFANT, CHILD, AND FAMILY HEALTH**

Janet Smylie, St. Michael's Hospital (Principal Investigator), SPHERU Researcher: Sylvia Abonyi (Co-Investigator)

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Operating Grant

\$980,000 (2008 – 2013)

This knowledge translation project has the goal of improving the content and flow of Indigenous and Western public health information into community health programs for young First Nations and Metis families in Ontario and Saskatchewan. Our transdisciplinary team of scientists and Indigenous knowledge apply a cutting edge mixed method evaluation of knowledge products and processes.

### **(KIDSKAN) EARLY YEARS KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION NETWORK: LINKING COMMUNITY, UNIVERSITY, AND GOVERNMENT FOR CHILD HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

Sue Delaney, Communities for Children; Steven Whitehead, Saskatoon Public Health Observatory (Co-principal Investigators), SPHERU Researchers: Nazeem Muhajarine, Diane Martz (Co-Principal Investigators); Fleur Macqueen Smith (Co-Investigator)

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Knowledge to Action Grant

\$200,000 (2008 – 2011)

This initiative is focused on improving the well being of children. It is our aim to take what has been primarily a Saskatoon based knowledge-to-action early childhood research network to one that has greater relevance provincially - to Aboriginal and rural and northern communities in Saskatchewan.

**kidSKAN**  
Announcing kidSKAN:  
the Saskatchewan Knowledge to Action  
Network for early childhood development

[www.kidskan.ca](http://www.kidskan.ca)

In late 2007 Saskatchewan's Understanding the Early Years project co-lead by Sue Delaney of Communities for Children and Nazeem Muhajarine of the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit wrapped up.

To continue our work on enhancing and improving the social environments in which young children are being raised—our families and communities—we have launched kidSKAN, the Saskatchewan Knowledge to Action Network for early childhood development. We recently received funding for the Network from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

**What are our objectives?**

1. To broaden the reach of our Network and strengthen its effectiveness by creating formal partnerships; encouraging face-to-face and online interaction with frequent meetings and networking events; creating research evidence bridges on early childhood development issues of interest to members;
2. To work with Network members to develop a set of quantifiable, community-based indicators for child and youth well-being in Saskatchewan and beyond;
3. To document, reflect on and evaluate the impact of our Network activities, sharing these findings outside the network itself through publications and presentations, with the intention of evaluating the Network itself when it is more mature.

**Who is involved?** Currently at the table are a wide range of stakeholders, including academics, policymakers, and practitioners from universities, the government, school boards, health organizations, regional instructional committees, Understanding the Early Years projects, community groups, and other organizations.

**Join us!** [www.kidskan.ca](http://www.kidskan.ca)

KIDSKAN  
(Saskatchewan Knowledge  
to Action Network)  
Contact: Fleur Macqueen Smith  
516-244-2011  
fmacqueen@communitiesforchildren.ca  
www.kidskan.ca

### **MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY: INCREASING AWARENESS IN SASKATCHEWAN**

Angela Bowen, University of Saskatchewan (Co-Principal Investigator), SPHERU Researcher: Nazeem Muhajarine (Co-Principal Investigator)

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Meetings, Planning and Dissemination Grant

\$40,000 (2009)

A social marketing campaign targeted at pregnant and postpartum women and health professionals who work with them aims to increase awareness and identification of antenatal and postpartum (maternal) depression. Strategies include supporting these activities with a recently established provincial Knowledge Translation (KT) network and working with the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute who are experts in social marketing, to develop and disseminate products. Promoting awareness and increasing access to existing resources will also be a focus of the project.

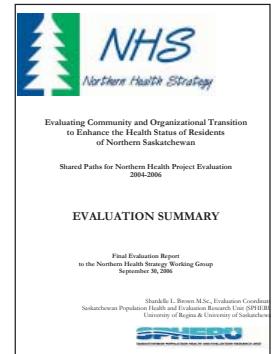
## CONTINUING RESEARCH PROJECTS...

### NORTHERN HEALTH STRATEGY PROGRESS EVALUATION

Team Lead: *Bonnie Jeffery*

Northern Health Strategy Working Group  
\$80,000 (2008 –2010)

The Northern Health Strategy Working Group (NHSWG), a partnership of thirteen government, non-government, and First Nation health organizations engaged in the delivery of health care in Northern Saskatchewan, has contracted with SPHERU to conduct an evaluation of their current project funded under the integration initiatives of the Aboriginal Health Transition Fund. The NHSWG work cooperatively and collaboratively across the multiple jurisdictions that have responsibility for service delivery in the North, with the goal of achieving better integrated and adapted services. This progress evaluation follows an earlier evaluation completed by SPHERU of NHSWG's "Shared Paths for Northern Health Project".



### OSTEOPOROSIS CARE GAP AMONG THE ELDERLY: FROM SCREENING TO EVIDENCE-BASED MANAGEMENT

SPHERU Researchers: *Shanthi Johnson (Principal Investigator)*  
Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation  
New Investigator Grant  
\$79,947 (2008 – 2010)

This project studies the effectiveness of current screening tools for osteoporosis and evaluates the use of relatively inexpensive quantitative ultrasound (QUS) testing as a supplement to current bone mineral density testing (BMD) tools. The study of the osteoporosis care gap looks at preventative actions and management strategies following the assessment of an individual's bone status. This research will help to improve the management process and protocols following bone density testing, with potential benefits to the health care system as well as older adult health.

### REDUCING MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES THROUGH POPULATION HEALTH PROMOTION: TRANSLATING KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE - PRACTICE INTO KNOWLEDGE

Lewis Williams, Caroline Tait, University of Saskatchewan (Co-principal Investigators)

SPHERU Researchers: *Sylvia Abonyi, Mary Hampton (Co-Investigators)*

Canadian Institutes of Health Research Interdisciplinary Capacity Enhancement Teams Grant Program  
\$900,000 (2006 – 2011)

Through knowledge development and translation activities this project aims to understand and address mental health disparities among vulnerable populations, specifically Indigenous and racialized immigrant women. This project mobilizes a trans-disciplinary and multifaceted research program that creates new knowledge in mental health promotion theory, policy and practice, achieved by bringing together a unique blend of research scientists, policy and decision makers, and community-based practitioners.

## CONTINUING RESEARCH PROJECTS...

### **RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY MAPPING FOR SASKATCHEWAN**

#### **UNDERSTANDING THE EARLY YEARS (UEY)**

*SPHERU Researchers: Nazeem Muhajarine (Principal Investigator); Fleur Macqueen-Smith*

Human Resources Skills and Development Canada

Moose Jaw UEY

\$40,000 (2007 – 2010)

Northeast Saskatchewan UEY

\$29,000 (2007 – 2009)

Southeast Saskatchewan UEY

\$85,050 (2007 – 2010)

UEY is a national initiative that helps community members understand the needs of the children in their communities so that they are better able to develop programs and services to meet these needs. Each UEY research team conducts research in their own community and works with other community members to share this knowledge and address local issues. The SPHERU Healthy Children research team provides expertise in conducting community based research, neighbourhood mapping, and knowledge transfer and exchange to three UEY projects: Moose Jaw-South Central Saskatchewan project, Northeast Saskatchewan project, and Northeast Saskatchewan project.



### **ROLE OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS IN THE HEALTH OF SENIORS LIVING IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN**

*SPHERU Researchers: Sylvia Abonyi, Juanita Bacsu, Bonnie Jeffery, Shanthi Johnson, and Diane Martz*

Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation

Health Research Team Grant (2008-2011)

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between social systems and the health of seniors living in rural Saskatchewan. Using a population health approach, the study will examine the capacity of rural communities to address the health care needs of seniors and to focus on the ways in which social systems influence seniors' health. The exponential growth of seniors in rural areas makes collecting information on the rural aging imperative. In the absence of existing research, this study will provide groundbreaking data on rural seniors' health and rural communities' capacity and sustainability to care for an aging population.

## CONTINUING RESEARCH PROJECTS...

### ***TOOLS 2 – COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS INDICATORS REFLECTING DAILY LIFE IN SASKATCHEWAN'S ISOLATED FAR NORTH: IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION***

*SPHERU Researchers: Sylvia Abonyi, Bonnie Jeffery (Co-Principal Investigators)*

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Operating Grant

\$543,355 (2007 – 2011 )

This project builds upon previous work in which a conceptual framework that reflected northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal views of a healthy community was created. The former study addressed what is a healthy community and how we measure that. This study will now address how healthy a community is and why measurement is important in the domains of food security, identity and culture, and services and infrastructure-housing. Community and health authority representatives on the research team see the purpose of this research as leading to their goals of providing information to the public, as well as to administrators, program planners, policy makers, and funders to identify where programs are making a positive impact as well as identify challenges and gaps.



### ***WORKING UPSTREAM: EFFECTING HEALTHY CHILDREN THROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN (SMART CITIES, HEALTHY KIDS)***

*SPHERU Researcher: Nazeem Muhajarine (Principal Investigator)*

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Childhood Obesity Prevention and Treatment

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada Health Research Foundation

\$447,000 (2008-2011)



This research attempts to understand whether municipal policy linked to neighbourhood built environment makes a difference in children's physical activity levels. Combining expertise, knowledge about physical activity, built environment, urban planning, public health, geography, and municipal decision making will create new knowledge and apply this knowledge to local decision-making and new neighbourhood development.





SASKATCHEWAN POPULATION HEALTH AND EVALUATION RESEARCH UNIT

*Celebrating 10 Years of  
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10  
Years





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