

# LEARNING, ENGAGING AND COMMUNICATING

## PROJECT ACTIVITY UPDATE

### Healthy Aging in Place

This study addresses the growing health needs of seniors living in rural and northern communities. Using an innovative model of population health research, Cantor's Social Care Model, researchers will attempt to understand how policy and community level interventions impact seniors' aging in place by identifying effective interventions at the policy, community, and kin levels that support healthy aging in place.

This research addresses two major objectives: 1) to identify the policy, community and kin social support systems that influence health outcomes for rural and northern



seniors; and 2) to create an assessment framework to monitor the range and impact of these interventions in supporting seniors' health outcomes.

This longitudinal qualitative study will include semi-structured interviews with 40 seniors from Watrous (20 seniors), and Wolseley (20 seniors) over a period of three years. Each participant will be interviewed 3 times, on an annual basis, to follow their experiences of aging in these communities. In the future, we hope to expand this study to include Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal seniors living in northern areas to examine the impact of policy, community, and kin level interventions on rural and northern seniors' health.

The Healthy Aging in Place research team includes Bonnie Jeffery, Sylvia Abonyi, Diane Martz, Shanthi Johnson and Juanita Bacsu.

Funding for this project is provided by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF), Health Research Group Phase 3, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) via the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture (CCHSA).

### OUR RESEARCH

Researchers from a range of disciplinary backgrounds bring a wide selection of research interests creating a diverse team where various perspectives and expertise are harnessed in a collaboratively driven environment giving SPHERU the ability to undertake critical population health research.

### Falls Prevention Research

Shanthi Johnson, in partnership with Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region (RQHR), is working to address the health issues of an increasingly aged Saskatchewan population. This study is working to address the health issues of Saskatchewan seniors through improving functional capacity and preventing seniors' falls in community and long-term care settings.

At least one in three seniors over 65 years of age falls each year burdening the Canadian healthcare system even further with a current estimated cost of \$6.2 billion annually. Johnson's team is working on solutions that will improve an individual's capacity to carry out activities of daily living and that will decrease the frequency of debilitating falls experienced. Through discovering the issues seniors face and implementing practical solutions, this research is expected to make a real impact on the lives of seniors as well as the cost to the health care system.

It is also expected that the results of this intervention and community-based research will provide the evidence needed for practitioners and policy-makers to create strategies that can be applied broadly at the provincial, national, and international levels.

Funding for this project is provided by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).



## OUR RESEARCH TEAM

### University of Regina

Bonnie Jeffery, Director  
Shanthi Johnson, Research Faculty  
Tom McIntosh, Research Faculty  
Mary Hampton, Research Associate  
James Daschuk, Research Faculty  
Gloria DeSantis, Post Doctoral Fellow

### University of Saskatchewan

Sylvia Abonyi, Research Faculty  
Paul Hackett, Research Faculty  
Diane Martz, Research Faculty  
Nazeem Muhajarine, Research Faculty  
Pammla Petrucka, Research Faculty  
Nazmi Sari, Research Faculty  
Hongxia Shan, Post Doctoral Fellow

### WHO WE ARE

SPHERU is an interdisciplinary team of population health researchers from the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan with sites in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. Established in 1999 and funded by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, with additional project specific funding provided by other provincial and national health research funding agencies, SPHERU is the first bi-university research unit of its kind in Saskatchewan.

## OUR RESEARCH AREAS

SPHERU's research promotes health equity by addressing health disparities through policy relevant research. We conduct our work within four interrelated research areas, which are derived from our understanding of health outcomes of populations and issues that are particularly relevant to Saskatchewan. In Northern and Aboriginal Health we study the role that culture plays as a determinant of health. The Healthy Children area considers how contexts shape children's health and development outcomes. Rural Health focuses on the impacts of socio-economic determinants of health in rural populations. SPHERU also conducts Evaluation Research and studies the effectiveness of various programs and policies in making social and environmental conditions healthier and more equitable.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Community-Based Health Research Summer Institute: Weaving the Tapestry

Join researchers, academics, policymakers, community practitioners and graduate students for expert presentations, hands-on learning, and informative keynote speakers from June 19-24, 2011 at the University of Regina in Regina Saskatchewan. The institute will provide knowledge and applied training in community-based research using a population health approach.

The summer institute is developed in partnership with the Saskatchewan Population Health Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU), Prairie HIV Community-Based Research Program, and the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (IPHRC).

Online registration information is available on the Community-Based Health Research Summer Institute website at <http://www.uregina.ca/spheru/cbrsi/>.

Contact Diana Fedosoff, Program Coordinator (SPHERU) at 306-966-1732 or via email, [cbhrsi@uregina.ca](mailto:cbhrsi@uregina.ca).

### CONGRATULATIONS!

**Dr. Gloria DeSantis** has been appointed as a Post Doctoral Fellow in History of Health and Social Services with SPHERU for a two-year period beginning April 1, 2011. Gloria, who will work under the supervision of Dr. Bonnie Jeffery and Dr. Paul Hackett, has developed an important research program that will make a significant contribution to SPHERU's History Project, part of our new SHRF funded health research.

## PUBLICATIONS



### Population Health Research in Canada: New Directions and New Voices:

This compilation of papers and presentations to the 2008 New Directions in Population Health Research: Linking

Theory, Ethics, and Practice Conference is available for purchase through the Canadian Prairie Research Centre (CPRC) Press, <http://www.cprcpress.ca/publications/Redistributing-Health>.

### Alberta Centre for Active Living Research Update:

Research Update, published by the Alberta Centre for Active Living (<http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/>), summarizes and promotes research of interest to academics and practitioners in health promotion and physical activity. The work of SPHERU researchers is published biannually in the spring and fall editions of Research Update.

Evaluating Chronic Disease Self Management in Northern Saskatchewan (Vol. 17 / No. 3 September 2010) highlights the work of Dr. Bonnie Jeffery.

"Ocanku Dua Amani" (Dakota for Paths to Living Well) (March 2011) highlights the work of Dr. Pammla Petrucka.



## MEET OUR RESEARCHERS



Bonnie Jeffery, Director (Research Faculty, University of Regina), based out of SPHERU's Prince Albert office, has been the Director of SPHERU since July 1st, 2006 and a Research Faculty member since 2000. As a social work educator, 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 (Research Faculty, University of Regina), based out of SPHERU's University of Regina office, is a Professor and Associate Dean (Research and Graduate Studies) at the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina. Her research program is twofold: 1) Epidemiological research related to the surveillance and monitoring of falls and

fall-related injuries among seniors; and 2) Intervention research focusing on the understanding the underlying mechanisms of factors associated with falls among seniors in community and long-term care settings. Specifically the role of exercise and nutrition to improve an individual's capacity to carry out activities of daily living and to decrease the frequency of debilitating falls are examined. Her research interest also extends to the cross-cultural study of aging, rural-urban differences, and health beliefs and practices related to chronic diseases such as osteoporosis.

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