

Ontario Training Centre in Health Services and Policy Research

2005 Summer Institute Summary

July 31, 2005

With the theme “**Health Human Resources Research and Policy: A Focus on Rural and Northern Issues**,” the Ontario Training Centre in Health Services and Policy Research (OTC) successfully held its second Summer Institute at Laurentian University (Sudbury, Ontario) during the week of June 13 to June 17, 2005. The 2004 Summer Institute addressed “*Research and Policy Implications of Delivering Mental Health Services in Rural and Northern Parts of Ontario*”; and the 2006 Summer Institute will concentrate on “*Women’s Health Services Policy and Research*.”

Funded primarily by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), and with additional funding from various branches of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, the OTC is a consortium of six Ontario universities that offers graduate training leading to a *Diploma in Health Services and Policy Research* at Lakehead, Laurentian, McMaster, Ottawa, and York Universities or to an equivalent qualification through the *Collaborative Graduate Program in Health Services and Policy Research at the University of Toronto*.

OTC Summer Institutes represent intensive learning experiences whereby subject-matter experts in the selected field provide students with opportunities for advanced knowledge exchange. The OTC Summer Institutes are designed to expose students to the policy imperatives and realities of designing and delivering health care in chronically under-serviced rural/northern environments, and challenge them to: a) develop program-specific monitoring and evaluation strategies that are scientifically rigorous and culturally appropriate; and b) design dissemination approaches that would facilitate the uptake of results by the relevant decision makers.

As part of their learning activities during the week -and based on research questions on health human resources in Canada¹ - participating students² completed five team projects that had as their outcome the preparation of a Letter of Intent (LOI) according to a format typical of open grants competitions. These projects were:

- ✓ *Implications of work/life balance for nursing recruitment in rural and northern Ontario: a case study investigation.*
- ✓ *Collaborative service delivery by acute care providers and off-site pharmacists for acute myocardial infarction (AMI) patients during discharge in northern Ontario hospitals.*
- ✓ *Comparing BSc and MSc prepared nurse practitioners: is there a difference in quality of care?*
- ✓ *Retention of physicians in rural northern Ontario: the partner’s perspective.*
- ✓ *Retaining northern home care workers: perspectives on safety.*

In addition to their intensive small group work activities during the week, students had the unique opportunity to exchange knowledge with outstanding health services academics (national and international) and decision-makers, and to visit a nursing station in the northern and remote region of Killarney. Knowledge exchange was facilitated through highly focused and interactive panels held every day. Appendix I list the themes of the panels, the speakers, and the presentations.

Central to the objectives of the OTC is the opportunity for students to learn to collaborate with decision maker partners from question formulation through to dissemination of study findings. The Summer Institute provided an excellent opportunity for students to learn from decision maker partners as these partners actively participated on the planning committee, in the delivery of presentations, and the facilitation of small group

¹ Questions were prepared by a sub-group of the Summer Institute Planning Committee based on the conclusions regarding health human resources shaped during the second round of national consultations on health services priorities titled “*Listening for Direction II*” and held between November 2003 and March 2004. Partners on this national consultation were the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF), the CIHR Institute for Health Services and Policy Research (IHSPR), the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), the Canadian Coordinating Office for Health Technology Assessment, the Advisory Committee on Governance and Accountability of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health, and the Health Statistics Divisions of Statistics Canada.

² Twenty six OTC students and four officers from various branches of both the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and Health Canada who have direct involvement with health human resources issues.

work as they prepared their LOI assignments. At the end of the week each student group presented and substantiated its project at a plenary session that included fellow students, decision-makers, and faculty. Each LOI was subsequently appraised by two reviewers (one faculty attending the Summer Institute and one OTC faculty not present during the Summer Institute) and feedback was provided to each student team.

Review of student feedback indicates that the Summer Institute provided “an excellent learning experience,” “excellent speakers – diverse, knowledgeable, dynamic-,” “a great link between policy makers and researchers,” and “invaluable hands-on mentoring by experts in the field (international guests and Health Canada and Ontario Ministry of Health contacts).” The various panels, the functioning of student work groups, and the participation of decision-makers were all predominantly rated from very good to excellent. The field visit to the Killarney Nursing Station was considered excellent overall.

In addition to the base funding from CHSRF/CIHR, the institute was co-sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, the CIHR Institute for Health Services and Policy Research (IHSPR), Health Canada, and the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI).

Special thanks go to the co-sponsors for supporting this valuable learning opportunity, to Laurentian University for hosting the event, and to the Summer Institute Planning Committee for shaping up the training experience. The OTC looks forward to continued collaboration in the preparation of future health services and policy researchers.

A special acknowledgement goes to Dr. Raymond Pong, Chair of the 2005 Summer Institute Planning Committee and OTC Principal at Laurentian University, whose vision, creativity, and dedication made this institute a reality.

Appendix I
OTC 2005 Summer Institute
Panels, speakers, and topics.

Panel I: *Health Human Resources Planning and Policy: Where We Have Been and Where We Should Go.* Moderator: Alba DiCenso, McMaster University.

<i>Panelist</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Presentation Topic</i>
Gail Tomblin Murphy	Dalhousie University	How health workforce planning has been done in the past and its strengths and weaknesses; how it should be done in the future.
Jeanne Besner	Health Council of Canada	Future health workforce research, planning and policy from the perspective of the Health Council of Canada.
Marie-Gloriose Ingabire	Health Canada	National and provincial health workforce planning activities and priorities in the future.
Pascal Zurn	World Health Organization	Health workforce research, planning and policy at the international level.

Panel II: *Workplace and Worklife as Health Workforce Issues: The Case of Nursing.* Moderator: Jackie Thoms, Northeastern Ontario Medical Education Corporation.

<i>Panelist</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Presentation Topic</i>
Linda O'Brien-Pallas [Represented by R. Meyer]	University of Toronto	Deployment and Utilization of Nursing Resources: An Applied Example in the Hospital Sector
Pat Armstrong	York University	Workplace and worklife issues from a broader social and economic context.
Ellen Rukholm	Laurentian University	Workplace and worklife issues for nurses: the rural and northern perspective.
Sue Matthews	Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	Public policies and programs to address nursing workplace and worklife issues and the role play by research in influencing public policy.

Panel III: *Rural Physician Shortages and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine: From Research to Policy Decision.* Moderator: Rhonda Cockerill, University of Toronto.

<i>Panelist</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Presentation Topic</i>
Craig Veitch	James Cook University(Australia)	Research evidence on the relationship between where physicians train and where they practise – implications for the rural medical workforce.
Robert McKendry	University of Ottawa	Physician workforce supply and demand in Ontario and the Fact Finder Report's recommendations and their impact.
Diane McArthur	Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	The decision-making process within government regarding the establishment of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine and the role of research in influencing decision.
Roger Strasser	Northern Ontario School of Medicine	Anticipated impact of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine on Ontario's rural medical workforce and how NOSM plans to fulfill its expected roles.

Panel IV: Practitioner Recruitment and Retention in Rural, Northern and Remote Areas.

Moderator: Ellen Rukholm, Laurentian University.

<i>Panelist</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Presentation Topic</i>
Andrew Irvine	Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	Recruitment- and retention-related policies, strategies and programs used by MOHLTC and their successes.
Joshua Tepper	Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences	Recruiting and retaining physicians in northern/rural communities and what needs to be done in the future.
Fern Assinewe	First nation health and social services consultant	Recruitment and retention challenges facing remote Aboriginal communities and strategies that have been developed.
Site Visit		Visit to a nursing station in Killarney and discussion with MOHLTC and nursing station officials (<u>Session moderator</u> : Andrew Irvine, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care).

Panel V: From Health Workforce Data to Health Workforce Research to Decision-making.

Moderator: Chris Woodward, McMaster University.

<i>Panelist</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Presentation Topic</i>
Francine Anne Roy & Paul Sajan	Canadian Institute for Health Information	Health human resources data available at CIHI and how such data can be accessed for research purposes.
Roger Pitblado	Laurentian University	How health workforce data can be used for research purposes.
Caroline Abrahams	Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	How HHR modelling and forecasting has been used to influence policy and planning in Ontario