



## Canadian Tobacco Control Research Initiative

10 Alcorn Ave., Suite 200, Toronto, ON M4V 3B1 • T: 416.934.5666 • F: 416.961.4189 • E: info@ctcri.ca • www.ctcri.ca

*Please see below for an important message on behalf of the Board of the Canadian Tobacco Control Research Initiative (CTCRI). After careful consideration, the partnership has decided not to renew the Memorandum of Understanding beyond March 31, 2009.*

March 11, 2009

In the late 1990's it was recognized that there was a real need for research to support tobacco control efforts. In response to this need several organizations including the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS), the National Cancer Institute of Canada (NCIC), Health Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council formed a unique partnership that came to be known as the Canadian Tobacco Control Research Initiative (CTCRI). The partnership was later joined by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR). Productive collaborations also ensued with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Lung Association.

The mandate of this interagency partnership was to support excellence in tobacco control research in all of its facets, and to fill a huge void by funding high-impact research into decision-making for programs and policies in tobacco control and for methods to move research results into policy and practice, ideally by including the decision-makers as part of the research agenda setting process.

CTCRI has had a profound impact in tobacco control since its initiation 10 years ago. CTCRI actively participated in the development of new tobacco control research programs and mechanisms, built capacity among new investigators and interdisciplinary teams and worked to facilitate the development of a comprehensive tobacco control research program in Canada through its strategic activities. CTCRI has succeeded in developing a vibrant and collaborative research community and has supported high quality research that made and is making a difference. Collaborative efforts have resulted in major successes in several areas of tobacco control including policy, legislation and understanding the biology behind smoking and nicotine addiction.

When CTCRI was conceived and established, however, it was never envisaged that this would be a program that would exist in perpetuity. Indeed, ten years later, the partners of CTCRI have recognized that CTCRI has fundamentally succeeded in what it was charged to do – build the tobacco control research community and support high quality, high impact research. Of course, that doesn't mean that we can all declare victory and go home - there is still much that can be and must be done, and it will require innovative and concerted efforts on the part of all members of the tobacco control community. But as the second phase of CTCRI comes to an end on March 31, 2009, it was time for the partners to pause and ask if this was still the best mechanism to meet those future needs the way it met the past needs.

Indeed, the 2009 environment is very different than the environment in which CTCRI was formed. Not only has the tobacco control research community matured in that time, so too have the partner organizations themselves changed significantly. The recent integration of the NCIC with the CCS has provided the CCS with a new impetus and new strategic and program opportunities to align several of its tobacco control streams of activity from research to advocacy, to prevention, to youth health, to community programs for tobacco cessation. The CIHR has also grown tremendously over that same period of time, and is itself in a period of planned leadership renewal with a new President and new leadership in place or pending for the two Institutes that have been a mainstay of CTCRI - the Institute of Cancer Research and the Institute of Neuroscience Mental Health and

Addiction. Both CCS and CIHR (and indeed many of the cancer research funders in Canada) are undergoing full strategic planning exercises over the next year to revitalize and refocus their cancer research and cancer control efforts to achieve greater impact.

Despite these changes, make no mistake that the partner organizations remain totally committed to tobacco control research. But they each feel that now there may be better and more strategic opportunities to forge ahead via programs that CCS and CIHR will develop and deliver in tandem rather than by perpetuating the CTCRI mechanism, successful though it has been in getting us to this watershed point. It is in this spirit that the partners have agreed that each will continue to promote and support complementary tobacco control research, but as of April 1, 2009 this will be through their own internal programs, or via new programs to be developed that take advantage of the unique strengths of each of the CCS and the CIHR.

As part of that continued commitment to tobacco control research, the partners have also agreed that the April 1, 2009 Idea and Policy Grant competitions be fully supported during the time that new programs are being developed and put in place within the individual partner organizations. CTCRI staff will be available until June 30, 2009 after which arrangements will be made for the seamless administrative support for all current programs and activities.

In summary, this change in the way the partners commit to tobacco control research in the future should not be seen as bad news or as any pullback of support for the cause. On the contrary, this is a natural evolution, borne of our collective and individual desires to do more and to do better; it is forged from a platform of past success. The successes and legacy of CTCRI are shared by the entire tobacco control research community. The CTCRI partners all look forward to new and exciting gains in tobacco control research that will be made in the coming decade.



