



A M H B

ALBERTA MENTAL HEALTH BOARD

... Advancing Mental Health

Mental Health Research Program Progress Update

March/April 2007

An opportunity for rural mental health professionals

The AMHB and SEARCH Canada have partnered in a pilot initiative to build capacity for applied, practice-driven mental health research in Alberta's health regions. To advance the objectives of Alberta's Mental Health Research Partnership Program, the AMHB is sponsoring two mental health professionals working in rural areas of regional health authorities to attend the two-year SEARCH VI program. In addition, the AMHB is supporting a mental health researcher to join the SEARCH faculty team to provide instruction and mentorship for program participants.

A number of strong applications were received, and participants from Palliser Health and Peace Country Health Regions were selected to begin SEARCH VI training in late April. Competition for a mental health SEARCH faculty member is ongoing and the successful candidate will soon be chosen. For more information on the SEARCH VI program and this partnership, visit www.amhb.ab.ca or SEARCH Canada at www.searchca.net.

AMHB Summer Employment Research Program (ASERP) 2007

Twenty-two health employers in Alberta are currently recruiting students for summer research employment. The AMHB has completed the application and selection process for the 2007 ASERP program. Of the 22 subsidized positions awarded, 14 went to Regional Health Authorities, six to not-for-profit organizations and two to Aboriginal community groups.

Successful employers will receive a wage subsidy of \$7 per hour to employ university students to work on mental health research, evaluation, and quality improvement projects. The term of employment is 10 to 16 weeks.

Program objectives include building research capacity and providing students interested in mental health with experience in service settings and advancing the mental health research agenda through project work related to at least one of the priority theme areas.

Watch for more information on ASERP, including information on individual project themes, soon.

Research Chairs search update

By mid-March, several applications for the new Mental Health Research Chairs were received from national and international researchers. The Recruitment Steering Committee (RSC) continues to guide the chair recruitment process. This committee, co-chaired by the AMHB and Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, includes representatives from health regions, various ministries and the universities of Alberta, Calgary and Lethbridge.

All applications for Chair positions were reviewed by the RSC, and several have been forwarded to an international Expert Advisory Panel for scientific merit review and potential for advancing the goals of the Research Program.

Applications are still being accepted to fill three mental health research Chair positions. The long term goal of the program is to recruit a total of nine Mental Health Research Chairs to Alberta within the next five years. A final short list of candidates will be invited to Alberta for interviews that will include visits with Alberta's universities and select health regions.

The successful Chairs will be working in mental health services and population health research, with expertise in one of the four mental health research priority theme areas.

MHTA pilot program underway

The new Mental Health Technology Assessment (MHTA) recruit is currently working with stakeholders to develop a research question of importance in workplace mental health. The AMHB and the Institute of Health Economics (IHE) have partnered to offer a full-time skills development opportunity in Alberta in applied (synthesis) research in the area of mental health. This pilot project has been designed to explore ways in which mental health systems and service delivery can be improved, and evidence better integrated into policy, decision-making, and practice.

Lisa Bergerman is training in IHE's health technology assessment unit for a six month period. Once the research question has been determined, Lisa will undertake a systematic literature review to determine the quality of existing research and best practices, compile the data into a summary report and disseminate findings to stakeholders. Please join the AMHB in congratulating and welcoming Lisa to this position!