



**Social and Economic Inclusion Program
November 2004 Update
Linda Snyder, Program Officer**

ACEWH continues to collaborate with other researchers, decision makers and community organizations to promote interest in and understanding of the meaning of social and economic inclusion and its relationship to women's health. In the past year, we have been actively involved in the Diversity and Social Inclusion Initiative (DSI) of the Nova Scotia Department of Health. An integral feature of Primary Health Care Renewal, the DSI has encouraged District Health Authorities to organize and run day-long workshops that use a social inclusion lens to better understand the health planning needs of diverse populations within their borders. ACEWH has presented at several of these workshops and we are also involved in planning for the next stage of the initiative, which revolves around culturally competent care.

Our main research project in this area focuses on the impact of social policy on the health and well-being of lone mothers in the Atlantic region. The project, entitled "Rethinking Health Inequities: Social and Economic Inclusion and the Case of Lone Mothers" is a developmental grant funded by CIHR. It draws together a team of researchers from all four Atlantic provinces and 2 national representatives. Team members have compiled bibliographies on the subject, written papers, and begun a review of national and provincial policies. We are just finalizing our ethics application and expect to be able to proceed with focus groups and interviews in the New Year. We are very proud of this project, in part because it represents an important step in our efforts to make the Centre more truly representative of the Atlantic region. Our aim is to produce a multi-year grant application for submission to CIHR in the summer of 2005 to support a more extensive and intensive investigation of the lives of lone mothers in Atlantic Canada.

We are also involved with research projects elsewhere in the country: "Immigrant Women, Violence and Homelessness", a CIHR developmental grant led by Dr. Wilhemina Thurston, at the University of Calgary; Lone Mothers and Social Assistance, a SSHRC-CURA grant led by Dr. Lea Carragata, at York University. Finally, we are continuing to pursue relationships with researchers and decision

makers in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK who are interested in social and economic inclusion.

**Diversity Program
November 2004 Update
Yvonne Atwell, Program Officer**

During the past year and a half, ACEWH has been trying to build a diversity framework that would include, among other things, staff training in diversity issues, an affirmative action hiring policy and inclusive hiring practice guidelines, a strategic plan for building community relationships, a strategic plan for engaging students from diverse populations in the work.

We have made some headway in this program, striking a diversity management committee within the Centre to advise the Program Officer, holding staff training workshops, and developing a draft hiring policy. In the New Year, we will work with Dalhousie's Equity Officer, Bonnie Best Fleming, to finalize this policy and to develop a framework for inclusive policies and practices in every area of the Centre's work.

We are also continuing with the research on the health of Black Women in Rural and Remote Communities in Southwest Nova Scotia. The "On the Margins" project has faced many challenges in its short life, not least of which has been the retirement of the Principal Investigator, Barbara Keddy, in June 2004. Wanda Thomas Bernard, Director of the Maritime School of Social Work, and I remain committed to the project as co-directors. Our three wonderful facilitators, Louise Delisle in Shelburne, Karen Johnston in Yarmouth, and Gail Jarvis in Weymouth Falls, have done a phenomenal amount of work. We are currently transcribing and coding close to 300 in-depth interviews they completed in the past year. We expect to be able to develop some preliminary analyses in the coming months and the facilitators are working on plans for dissemination.

I must also tell you, with great regret, that Yvonne Atwell resigned from her position as Diversity Officer in December 2004 and has left ACEWH to pursue consulting work. She brought a richness of experience and perspective to the Centre that we will sorely miss, but we wish her the very best in all of her future endeavours.

Midwifery and Women's Reproductive Health Programme
November 2004 Update
Christine Saulnier, PhD, Senior Research Officer

Christine Saulnier is currently on maternity leave. During the last year, she was instrumental in organizing a national forum on midwifery, held in Halifax in July 2004. The conference, entitled "The Midwifery Way: A National Forum Reflecting on the State of Midwifery Regulation in Canada", brought together researchers, policy makers, midwives, other health care practitioners, and consumers for two days to share views, experiences, and expertise. Co-hosted by the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health and the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence, the key objectives of *The Midwifery Way Forum* were: 1) to consider lessons learned in Canadian jurisdictions that have legislated midwifery, and to provide a forum for representatives from provinces that do not currently regulate midwifery to explore the implications of those lessons; 2) to identify good practices for advancing a midwifery regulatory framework that includes marginalized or vulnerable populations, specifically single mothers, teenage mothers, low income women, aboriginal women, visible minority women, women with disabilities, immigrant and refugee women, and lesbians; 3) to share research findings related to midwifery and foster national and international linkages among social science researchers, policy makers, midwives, consumers, and other primary maternity care practitioners, and; 4) to spark and build research interest and capacity around issues that will improve maternity and newborn services across Canada so that all women have access to a comparable quality of care and choice of care providers.

In addition to the provincial and national forums on midwifery, Christine established a midwifery listserv – which she monitors – and she continues to represent the Centre on various committees and in various agencies committed to developing an appropriate, safe and sustainable strategy for introducing midwifery to the Atlantic region.

**A Healthy Balance:
A community alliance for health research on women's unpaid caregiving
November 2004 Update
Susan Nasser, Coordinator**

We have reached an exciting stage in the Healthy Balance Research Project, when several years of investment in research partnerships and community alliances is really beginning to pay off. Recently, our focus group research team (affectionately known as Team Q), completed a preliminary report on findings. This document captures the experiences of the women involved in the focus groups and will serve as a critical source document for mapping out further analyses of an exceptionally rich body of data and publication of research findings.

We are also very pleased that the population-based survey of caregiving in Nova Scotia, which has been delayed for a variety of reasons, will be launched in the New Year. We have received ethics approval from Mount Saint Vincent University and Dalhousie University, and we are finalizing a contract with a surveying company to undertake the telephone survey.

Our caregiver portraits, one of the most exciting and innovative dimensions of the project, is also yielding results. The data collection portion of the work, which involved fourteen households representing diverse communities, is now complete and the portraits themselves are being written. Data analysis will be carried out by the researchers on the team and plans for publication of results are already in the works.

The secondary analysis research team continues to examine various survey instruments to develop a deeper understanding of paid and unpaid work. Martha MacDonald and Shelley Phipps are publishing a second article, "Total Packages of Work: Why Do Women in Atlantic Canada Report More Hours?", which explores the patterns of paid and unpaid work in Atlantic Canada compared to the rest of the country and investigates the reasons why women are working more hours than men. The team is also using the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and youth to explore parental health and well-being in a family context.

The Healthy Balance Research Program extends a warm welcome to Cyndi Brannen, PhD, who joined the program as a post-doctoral research fellow on June 1, 2004. In addition to developing her own research program exploring caregiving issues for women in the military, Cyndi will be focusing on integrating the findings of the Healthy Balance research teams so that we have a comprehensive understanding of the many aspects of women's paid and unpaid work in Nova Scotia, and of how unpaid caregiving work affects women's health and well-being. She also teaches developmental psychology at Mount Saint Vincent University during the fall term. Cyndi's appointment is for two years.

A second Healthy Balance scholarship award winner successfully defended her Masters thesis this year. Marlie Manning graduated in October 2004 with an MA in Family Studies and Gerontology, also from Mount Saint Vincent University. Her thesis, entitled “Causes and Consequences: The histories of home care policies in three provinces, 1985 - 2000, “ was awarded the Graduate Thesis Award (for completing a thesis of exceptional quality). Marlie herself was awarded a Senate Medal of Distinction (for the highest aggregate GPA in her program).

Three other students are currently being supported with Healthy Balance scholarships: 1) Glenda Hawkins is working on her MA in Family Studies and Gerontology at Mount St. Vincent University. Her thesis is entitled “Patterns and predictors of home care utilization in Eastern Canada: Analyzing changes between 1996 and 2001” and she plans to defend in the spring of 2005; 2) Cortleigh Vowles is nearing completion of her MSc in Community Health and Epidemiology from Dalhousie University. Her thesis is entitled Children’s perceptions and experiences of parental Multiple Sclerosis and she plans to defend in the New Year; 3) Christine Kennedy is currently on leave from her studies at Mount St. Vincent University.

As is true of all CIHR funded research, Healthy Balance is intended to engage in research that makes a difference. One way to make a difference is to bring about changes in policies that surround and infiltrate the experiences of caregiving. The Research Management Team commissioned Richard Shillington to develop an analysis of the financial dimensions of caregiving in Canada. His paper, “Policy Options to Support Dependent Care: The Tax/Transfer System”, is receiving very positive attention from policy makers in provincial and federal governments.

In November, we joined with researchers on the Hidden Costs, Invisible Contributions Project (HCIC), a CIHR funded grant based at the University of Alberta, to co-host a day-long workshop in Ottawa. This workshop brought together researchers and policy makers to consider the strengths and weaknesses of various international models of financial compensation for caregivers, and the suitability or adaptability of these models for Canada.. In March 2005, Healthy Balance and HCIC will partner with the Canadian Policy Research Network to host a second national policy forum focussed on caregiving issues.

Gender and HIV/AIDS Program
November 2004
Barbara Clow, Executive Director
Erika Burger, Program Officer

For several years, ACEWH, in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat, has been working on the concept of an International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS (IIGHA), including organizing various workshops and conference presentations. This year, we were very excited to move from concept to reality. In June 2004, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in South Africa joined with ACEWH and the Commonwealth Secretariat to launch the inaugural IIGHA. Close to 90 participants – from Botswana, Canada, Lesotho, South Africa, and Swaziland as well as those from regional and international agencies – came together for 5 days to develop action plans for mainstreaming gender into all activities aimed at HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment, support, and mitigation. We have been busy this fall creating a framework for further collaboration in the region, including hosting Dr. Olive Shisana of HSRC to give a series of lectures in Ottawa, Halifax, and Antigonish, and consulting on the creation of a robust and adaptable website for the IIGHA. Erika has also set up a participants' distribution list for the Southern Africa Institute, and a more general listserv devoted to Gender and HIV/AIDS. In November 2004, Erika travelled to the Caribbean to begin consultations on the second IIGH, scheduled for the summer of 2005. We will return to the Caribbean in January to finalize plans.

In addition, we were able to present the IIGHA as a model for women's rights and HIV/AIDS at a satellite session of the International AIDS Conference in Bangkok in July 2004. ACEWH also contracted with Cortleigh Vowles to develop an annotated bibliography on Gender, Rights and HIV/AIDS for the session. We have also presented the case on gender and HIV/AIDS to policy makers in Ottawa in September 2004, and have had an abstract on gender and HIV/AIDS in low incidence countries accepted for presentation at the Australian Women's Health Conference in 2005.

We are making great strides in our efforts to develop a stronger regional and national presence in the area of gender and HIV/AIDS. We sit on a working group for implementing the Nova Scotia Strategy on HIV/AIDS, are part of a regional network on Hepatitis C and HIV recently funded by CIHR, and in March we are co-hosting a meeting to showcase regional work on international development, gender and HIV/AIDS.

Other

Atlantic Summer Institute on Healthy and Safe Communities

A commitment and energy for intersectoral capacity-building provided the momentum for the development of a the Atlantic Summer Institute on Healthy and Safe Communities. The inaugural Institute was held 22-25 August 2004 at the University of Prince Edward Island, with funding from the Crime Prevention Partnership Program, co-sponsored by ACEWH and the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre, and hosted by UPEI Centre for Life-Long Learning and the PEI Health Research Institute. Close to two-hundred participants from across the region, from elsewhere in Canada and the United States, came together for three days to consider the relationship between health promotion, crime prevention, and social development. Preliminary results from our evaluation framework indicate that participants were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the Institute

We are now actively engaged with our invaluable consultant, Patsy Beatty-Huggan of the Quaich, Inc., on plans for the second summer institute, to be held in PEI in August 2005.

Lunch 'n Learns

Navigating the Cancer Care System: African Nova Scotians' Experience
Donna Smith, Cancer Care Nova Scotia, and Winnie Benton, Social Worker

Teenage Pregnancy in Nova Scotia: An Examination of Contextual Factors
Donald Langille, MD, Community Health and Epidemiology, Dalhousie University

Work, Stigma, Resistance: Sex Trade Workers Talk Back
Leslie Jeffrey and Gayle MacDonald

Mother-Daughter Relationships within the Care Process of Alzheimer Disease
Catherine Ward-Griffin, RN, PhD

Health Issues of Marginalized Women with Depression
Jean Hughes, RN, PhD

Why Women Smoke: Getting to the Heart of the Matter
Betty Bryenton, RN

The Buddy Study: HIV prevention among heterosexually active males in NS
Jacqueline Gahagan, PhD, Laurene Rehman, PhD, Susan MacWilliam