



1999 / 2000 Annual Report

1. Introduction/Directions of the MCEWH

About the MCEWH

MCEWH is one of five national Centres supported by Health Canada's Women's Health Bureau, Health Canada. The Centres have a mandate to conduct research as well as provide analysis, advice and information to government and health organizations with the primary objective of improving the health status of Canadian women. MCEWH is a dynamic interaction of community, academic, clinical and government representatives in the Atlantic Provinces and across Canada.

Partner Organizations

Health Professions, Dalhousie University Dalhousie University currently serves as the administrative host of MCEWH and provides cost sharing towards the salary of the Principal Investigator along with numerous in-kind contributions including: Research, Financial, information technology linkages, Libraries, Human Resources, and Public Relations services.

IWK Grace Health Centre for Children, Women and Families The IWK Grace Health Centre for Children, Women and Families is a regional health centre and currently provides an annual cash commitment of \$30,000 towards the office space, furnishings, and public relations support of MCEWH. The IWK Grace Health Centre provides 2300 sq feet of furnished class 1 office space, along with information technology support. As a regional health centre, the IWK Grace Health Centre and MCEWH share a common women's health constituency and complement each other's programs. Collectively, they provide significant policy leadership and a women's health research presence in the Atlantic region

MCEWH Guiding Principles

A woman-centred approach ...Respects women's perspectives and experiences ... weaves together research, policy and action in a meaningful way ... hears the voices of women not typically heard in health research or health systems ... explores strategies that build upon the needs identified by women and address the factors that influence health ... influences public policy through research and action.

MCEWH Mandates

MCEWH Research Mandate ...The MCEWH promotes social change through policy-based, social determinants research in women's health, with a special priority for those projects that address the themes of ... women's economic and social security over the lifespan... gender equity analysis of programs and policy ... women's health and the environment ... women living in disadvantaged circumstances – including women living in poverty, women living in rural areas, Black and caregiving women. We currently support over 70 women's health research projects in the Atlantic region.

MCEWH Communications and Networking Mandate ... To produce publications for a wide range of audiences ... and to convene events on specific subjects or themes associated with the work of the centre. To build and strengthen local area networks of individuals, institutions and groups concerned with women's health ... to participate in the development of a national network of individuals, institutions and organizations involved with women's health ... to develop capacity and knowledge in particular subjects through information-sharing and joint projects involving experts from various locales across the country ... to ensure a diversity of knowledge and experience are brought to bear on subjects pursued in the centre.

MCEWH Themes

Applicants to all MCEWH funding programs in the 1998/99 funding call were asked to address the themes women's economic and social security over the lifespan and gender equity analysis of programs and policy, and the links between socioeconomic determinants of health. Priority groups for research included Black, rural and

caregiving women. Of particular note this year, was the launch of four funding mechanisms that ensured the full spectrum of research traditions. These funding programs include a Graduate Student Thesis Award Program, a Community Research Award Program, a Project Fund, Project Development Fund, and a Synthesis Fund.

A Letter from the Director

Over the past year, the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, in addition to doubling its space and increasing our staff to 12 full and part-time members, our program of research and databases have grown considerably to meet ongoing demands for policy-based information analysis and synthesis on women's health and poverty. MCEWH has further defined its vision of improving women's health and promoting social change through research on women's health, with the primary objective of building programs of research that are targeted, applied and policy relevant.

By supporting policy oriented research projects, the MCEWH has promoted participatory action research methods where possible that were rooted in the context of women's lives. MCEWH project teams have been linked to the community and researchers have been encouraged to strive for excellence in research, information, communication, networking and policy advice in the context of respecting the unique knowledge about women from community groups, researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

All MCEWH funded projects used and built upon the national Women's Health Framework. A part of this framework included MCEWH's previous programs of research including: 1) women's perceptions of the determinants of health; and 2) determinants, diversity and marginalization. This framework defines health as more than an absence of disease, and more than health care. It encompasses physical, mental, and emotional well-being where women's health is determined by social, economic, and environmental conditions as well as biology, individual health practices, and access to health services. Therefore, an understanding of women's health has included an analysis of key determinants such as ethno-cultural identity, women's work (paid/unpaid), income, education, gender roles, social environments, living conditions, and access to health services.

MCEWH Funding Programs

Project Fund The purpose of the MCEWH Project Fund is to generate strategic new knowledge that fosters policies and programs relevant to the realities of Canadian women's lives. This program is intended for teams of researchers from several sectors working together including women from grassroots organizations working on community research projects, policy researchers and analysts, university based researchers, clinicians and health professionals. Three awards of up to \$30,000 have been made this year.

Community Research Award Program MCEWH has designed and introduced a community research award program. Because of the demand for community research support and capacity building, this program recognizes that community based researchers have a wealth of experience and practical understanding of what is needed to improve women's health. A facilitative awards process was designed to ensure that good ideas are not lost due to researchers' lack of resources for proposal development. Six grants of \$5000 have been provided for community agencies and organizations.

Synthesis Papers Fund The Centre of Excellence for Women's Health Program (CEWHP) and each of its Centres has a unique mandate to influence policy development processes that influence women's health. Several centres have adopted a Small Projects Fund to commission responsive studies and reports. MCEWH has a unique opportunity to respond to and influence urgent priorities, unexpected and short term, in women's health locally, regionally, and nationally. Pieces of work conducted to influence priority health issues and initiatives include grant proposals and applications, abstract submissions, government consultation documents, support for policy discussion papers, and commissioned pieces of work which will help the Centre to shape and build policy and programs. Seven synthesis papers have been funded this year.

Student Thesis Fund MCEWH recognizes that it is particularly important to recruit, retain and foster our next generation of independent researchers in women's health. One way of accomplishing this is to mentor graduate students and provide financial support for the conduct of thesis projects in women's health. MCEWH has provided five graduate students with awards of \$1500 to assist them with their thesis work.

Project Development Fund The purpose of this fund is to develop a deliberate strategy or mechanism to initiate pipeline project development activities. Project Development seed funding is critical to fostering a rich and diverse research base. The Centre of Excellence for Women's Health Program requires opportunities for divergent thinking, rigorous testing of tools and concepts, and preliminary conceptual development. This program will develop a deliberate strategy to develop the potential of MCEWH by supporting seed projects, pilot projects, literature reviews, methodological tool development, new project concepts, and experimental methodologies. On an ongoing basis, the MCEWH Executive Director and staff will consider project development activities by assessing their contribution to the Centre's program of research, the use of new or novel methodologies, and the potential for providing strategic future directions. The Project Development Fund also provides the Centre an opportunity to take risks and to support non-traditional knowledge generation methodologies and approaches. Nine project development initiatives have been funded this year.

2. MCEWH Activity Highlights

Critical Analysis and Debate

As we approach the new millennium, there is a tremendous need and demand for informed policy and program decision making with respect to women's health needs and service utilization. The research, networking, communications, database and policy uptake initiatives of the MCEWH provide compelling evidence that there is a need and role for an ongoing policy based research presence in Atlantic Canada. As the Centre ends its second year, the formative and developmental steps for research analysis, critical thinking, and application are beginning to take shape.

To date the MCEWH has supported over fifty small projects and research synthesis activities. The demand has far exceeded the supply of research funds on a ratio of 5: 1 for the call for proposals alone. To enhance the efficacy, reach and saturation of the policy messages, the MCEWH has begun to develop a variety of platforms to support critical analysis and debate.

The Centre now has a developmental portfolio of 50 or so projects and efforts are underway to ensure that cross sectoral themes and synthesis takes place e.g. gender equity analysis, home care synthesis. The creation of the Centre's Policy Discussion Series provides an example of the Centre's commitment to fostering national dialogue and exchange on issues of critical importance to the health of Canadian women.

Policy audiences, if not part of existing research teams, are identified and invited to assist with the research review, dissemination, and policy uptake processes. The Centre, for example, is undertaking to enhance research capacity building and "literacy" across four research traditions: the academy, community, clinical and public policy domains. Research teams are beginning to come together to share perspectives, critical insight and analysis through mechanisms such as the Brown Bag luncheon series, and presentations at workshops, conferences, and symposia. The MCEWH researchers are active participants in knowledge dissemination and research fora both regionally and nationally. Competent authorities and external reviewers are also invited to assist with the critical review and analysis of the Centre's policy documents.

The external environment and the Centre's capacity for critical analysis and debate within the Centre will continue to grow and expand. The recent focus on women's health issues, within partner institutions and the government is a welcome sign. The Centre is achieving raised awareness among decision-making organizations on the importance of women's health research and is building a solid network of researchers. Collectively this new capacity in women's health will be applied to greater analysis and policy fora/debate functions.

Dissemination of Information

The MCEWH has in place a dissemination process for both general and targeted release of research findings, which addresses 1. Several target audiences (including the local and national policy, academic, clinical and community partners of the MCEWH, the media, the general public and politicians) 2. Several forms of dissemination (various print options including full reports and bilingual, plain language fact sheets) and 3. Several means of dissemination (in person presentations, special events such as roundtables/workshops, lunch n learns, e-electronic & fax distribution, website postings, displays). Two final reports submitted to the MCEWH began the process of dissemination in the 1998-99 year.

Synthesis of Information

MCEWH facilitates the synthesis and research information through commissioning synthesis papers and via a working subcommittee. Through the Synthesis Papers Fund, MCEWH commissions policy discussion papers. Over the past year, these include:

- * Home Care and Policy: Bringing Gender into Focus
- * A Response to Health Protection Branch Discussion Papers

In addition to the Synthesis Paper Fund, a MCEWH Research and Policy Uptake Subcommittee has been formed and has met twice. It's purpose is to develop a strategic framework for research synthesis and methods of dissemination for bridging research findings through dialogue with public policy audiences in order to infuse gender equity perspectives into public policies. The role of the committee includes developing a strategy to facilitate uptake with strategic audiences from the policy sector including analysts and managers as well as with women's groups. Membership will reflect policy and regional constituencies. Ideally, "bridge people", "research translators" or people who have experience across the constituencies will be invited by the Chair. Representatives from National organizations and funding agencies will also be considered. The Research Uptake committee will examine research results and foster communication and dialogue with MCEWH key constituencies including: 1) identified strategic policy makers, analysts and managers; 2) other researchers; 3) key women's groups and the public. The committee will develop research uptake goals and objectives and methods of dissemination for the intended audiences. The Research Uptake committee will develop a mechanism to generate questions from the sectors, conduct a pilot policy consultation with strategic policy audiences including researchers working on strategic policy questions. As well, the Uptake committee will conduct an informal needs assessment survey with key policy stakeholders to identify what are the policy sectors needs for information and research and will collect samples of similar survey instruments, ie Frankish survey, use of economic evaluation studies, etc. The Uptake Committee will undertake tasks such as:

- 1) Group MCEWH projects thematically according to final report release schedule;
- 2) Identify who needs to receive the information and correspond with them prior to findings are released;
- 3) Circulate research reports to audiences to ascertain relevance in other sectors
- 4) Facilitate the uptake of research;
- 5) Identify roles for groups to undertake uptake;
- 6) Develop and monitor indicators (process & summative) of the research uptake process;
- 7) Document examples of where MCEWH has had an impact
- 8) Illustrate, collect and synthesize case studies of the impact of research uptakes processes;
- 9) Conduct roundtable discussions to pilot uptake framework.

One of the first activities of the Uptake Subcommittee was a policy roundtable dialogue at the MCEWH Made to Measure Symposium in October 1999.

MCEWH Databases These databases now hold summary and tracking information about all MCEWH funded research projects (70 projects) and also track information on over 1000 organizations in the Atlantic Provinces linked to women's health.

MCEWH Listservers At least 4 listserves have been established by the MCEWH over the past year to monitor general women's health research issues and address specific topics such as the role of women in public policy formulation, gender equity, the social and economic inclusion of women, children and families.

MCEWH Website Voted best women's health website by the Canadian Medical Association last year, the MCEWH website has been significantly expanded and acts as a resource on the MCEWH and women's health issues. Visit: www.medicine.dal.ca/mcewh

Publications

- * *Moving Towards Women's Health: A Series of Policy Based Research Findings/ Promouvant la santé des femmes: une série de résultats de recherche du Centre Maritime*

No 1., November 1998: The Caregivers Research Project

No 2., April 1998: Developing Understanding from Young Women's Experiences in Obtaining Sexual Health Services and Education in a Nova Scotia Community

- * *Gender and Health Policy Discussion Papers / Série de documents de discussion sur les politiques de santé et les différences entre les sexes.*

No 1., March 1998: Home Care and Policy: Bringing Gender Into Focus / L'élaboration de politiques en matière de soins à domicile

No 2., October 1998: A Response to Health Protection Branch Discussion Papers from the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health / Réaction du Centre d'excellence pour la santé des femmes des Maritimes aux documents de travail de la Direction générale de la protection de la santé

- * *Health Promotion Atlantic Newsletter:* * November 1998, * July 1998, * March 1999

- * *MCEWH's Future Directions (1998-2002)*

- * *Gender Equity Lens Resource Document* (June 1998 draft version available on the web): <http://www.medicine.dal.ca/mcewh/Research/gender-resources.htm>

Published Articles

- * *Does the health agenda change when women are involved?* Health Policy Forum, Spring 1999, Vol. 2, No.1 - Sandra Bentley and Julie Devon Dodd interviewed
- * *Spare 28 hours a week? Caregiving still in women's job description.* Canadian Women's Health Network, Summer 1998, Vol. 1, No. 3 - Lesley Poirier

Proposals

- * *Priorities in Rural Health: A synthesis.* Submitted to Research and Knowledge Development Division of Health Canada. Carol Amaratunga, co-investigator
- * *Engendering National Homecare Assessment Processes.* Submitted to Health Transition Fund
- * *Understanding & Promoting the Transfer and Uptake of Gender Analysis in Health Policy.* Submitted to NHRDP.

- * *Assessing the Impact of Gender Analysis Tools & Training Materials: An (Inter) National Symposium on Lessons Learned Since Beijing.* Submitted to SSHRC, IDRC & Status of Women Canada
- * *Looking Forward or Turning Back: The Social and Economic Inclusion of Women, Children and Families in Atlantic Canada.* Submitted to Health Canada Atlantic.
- * *Women's Health Connections.* Submitted to Health Infostructure Support Program, Health Canada.

External Contracts

The Social and Economic Inclusion of Women Children and Families (Funded by Health Canada Atlantic) The Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health is facilitating a special project to foster links, networks and partnerships across the four Atlantic provinces and across research community sectors, including the public sector, community and business representatives, and NGOs. Nicknamed "the Inclusion Project", the goal is to develop a model to fight poverty and economic inequality in Atlantic Canada.

Community Ethics Review (Funded by Health Canada Atlantic) Community Ethics- Health Canada Atlantic provided funding to host a think tank with community based researchers from the Atlantic Region to explore the ethics review processes used by community-based researchers. The goal of the project was to develop a mechanism for ethics review of community based research where existing ethics review processes are either not available or not considered appropriate. This project was conducted in partnership by the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, with the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) and the Health Law Institute, Dalhousie University.

Gender Equity Lens (Funded by Women's Health Bureau, Health Canada) Gender Equity Lens Project- Bridge Funding Contract- The purpose of this contract was to provide bridge funding to continue MCEWH's gender equity lens initiatives beyond information gathering and synthesis work completed in its first phase.

Made to Measure Symposium (Funded by Women's Health Bureau, SSHRC, HRDC, Heritage Canada, and Status of Women Canada) The purpose of the symposium is to promote women's full participation in Canadian society through enhancing the skills and knowledge required for the mainstreaming of gender equity-based policies, programs and tools. The event is open to diverse groups working in public policy and programming, and includes community based-organizations, women's groups, service providers, community and academic researchers, community and civil leaders and other public policy-makers

Moi, je m'affirme (Funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation) This project, to be conducted by the Association des Acadiennes de la Nouvelle Ecosse, will develop a guide for women to deliver workshops in their communities to help improve the lives of women.

3. Communications and Networking

Mentoring and facilitating

Working with graduate students in nursing, women's studies, health services administration and advised them about faculty, community organizations, policy stakeholders within the metro universities, the region, across the CEWHP and across the country; worked with high school students on a NS Links Grant, and a volunteer new Canadian from MISA (Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association)

Letters of Support

- * The influence of gender and culture as key determinants of health on the Canadian population: Cross sectional and longitudinal analysis of NPHS data – Dr. Swarna Weersinghe
- * Health Research Foundation Act - Letter to Dr. Jim Smith, Nova Scotia Minister of Health
- * NHRDP Application, Women and Heart Health- Dr. Susan Kirkland

MCEWH Program Presentations

- * Faculty of Health Professions, Dalhousie University
- * IWK Grace Health Centre Annual General Meeting, Fall 1998.
- * The Federation of Medical Women of Canada, Fall 1998.
- * In Celebration of Caregiving: Support for Caregivers Reception, Halifax NS.
- * Public Policy Strategy Forum, Standing Up and Speaking Out Follow-up Committee, May 1998
- * 1999 Graduate Class of Health Administration, Dalhousie University
- * Health Canada Atlantic- MCEWH Strategic Directions and Programs of Research- Fall 1998
- * Presentation to Master's of Nursing Graduate Seminar- Fall 1998
- * Presentation to Graduate Thesis Seminar- Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University Spring 1999
- * Community Ethics Workshop March 1999.
- * Gender and Culture- Key Determinants of Health- Panel Presentation (Lesley Poirier, Erin Skinner, Rose Fraser, Swarna Weersinghe) National Heart Health Meetings, November 1998, Westin NS.
- * Presentations to the Zonta Club Halifax, Zonta Club PEI (Spring 1999) Zonta International (Eastern USA and Atlantic Canada Annual Retreat) Summer 1998.

MCEWH Funded Graduate Students

- * Cultural Diversity and Women's Perception of Menopause, presentation by Charlotte Loppie at Dalhousie University Women's Studies Seminar
- * Gender Equity Lens Presentations by Christine Saulnier:
 - * "Strategies for Engendering Health Policy: Empowering Women in an era of Reform?" Presented at Made to Measure: Designing Research, Policy and Action Approaches to Eliminate Gender Inequity-A National Symposium, Halifax, Nova Scotia, October 1999.
 - * "Empowering women? En-Gendering Health Policy and Research." Presented at the Annual Meetings of the Canadian Women's Studies Association, Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities. Sherbrooke, Quebec, June 1999.
 - * "Engendering Health Policy: Translating Lessons Learned from Canada." Presented at the Women's Worlds 99: the 7th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women. University of Tromso, Norway, June 1999.
 - * "Conferring Expert Authority in the Health Policy Arena: the gendered subtext." Presented at the 11th Annual Interdisciplinary Feminist Graduate Colloquium. York University, Toronto, Ontario, March 1999.
- * Agnieszka Kosny MA (WOST) Memorial University of Newfoundland. Title: Examining the Doctor-Patient Relationship: Knowledge, Vulnerability and Power in Women's Health Care Narratives. Presentations include: A community workshop, presentations to MUN Women's Studies, MUN/Dal Workshop in Communications, Family Practice Residents; School of Graduate Studies Research Fair, Conferences, Interviews and Report Distribution, Presentation in Scotland. Media articles. 1) "Women Grade Doctors" The

Telegram. May 22, 1999, 2) "Inappropriate relationships". Gazette. MUN Publication. June 3, 1999. Page 22.

- * Marcia Trail. Early Maternity Discharge and Low-Income Women: A Grounded Theory Study MN Student, UNB. A 26 page paper and slides were used as a poster presentation displayed at the Annual Research Day, Mac Laggan Hall, Faculty of Nursing, University of New Brunswick.

Conferences and Workshops

- * Evidence-Based Leadership, Sponsored by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation and the Nova Scotia Department of Health, Dartmouth, NS, April 11-13, 1999
- * Menopause and Beyond: Into the New Millennium, Halifax, NS, May 21-22, 1998
- * Roundtable presentation at the Canadian Association of Gerontology Meetings. Co-Presentation MCEWH and Jocelyne Bernier, CESAF Gender and Home Care Paper.
- * Workshop session sponsored by Atlantic Centres for the Study of Human Health, entitled, "The Economic Evaluation of Health and Social Care" Charlottetown, PEI.
- * Health Canada Atlantic policy meetings, Health Canada, August 1998
- * Nurturing Ourselves: Women's Struggles Women's Strengths, Fredericton, New Brunswick, March 26 & 27 1999. MCEWH sponsored nutrition break and presented an information table.
- * Co presentation with the Public Health Association of Nova Scotia-Genuine Progress Indicators, Ron Colman
- * Briefing Meeting, Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, with Linda Murphy, April 25, 1999.
- * Our Economic Inequalities, Our Communities, and Our Health: What Can we do? MCEWH sponsored workshop, May 15, 1999.
- * Minister's Task Force on Regionalized Health Care: Federal Health Protection Legislation

Lunch 'N Learn Sessions

- * Intellectual Property Law, presentation by David Copp – September 15, 1998
- * Networking Session on Black Women's Health – September 14, 1998
- * Reflections on Gender Equity Analysis, presentation by Christine Saulnier – September 15, 1998
- * National Action Committee on the Status of Women, presentation by Carolann Wright-Parks, Regional Representative – October 8, 1998
- * Women's Health and the Environment: The Health Law Institute Seminar Series in conjunction with MCEWH, presentation by Elizabeth May, Executive Director of the Sierra Club of Canada – October 14, 1998
- * Caregivers' Support Needs: Insights From the Experience of Women Providing Care In Rural Nova Scotia – November 26, 1998
- * A policy-based research initiative from the Centre. More than 2.8 million Canadians over the age of 15, two thirds of which are women, provide non-professional care to someone with health limitations. Caregiving is a major source of stress. Yet relatively little is known about the supports caregivers use to cope on a daily basis. Community researchers Gail Bruhm and Joan Campbell as they shared the stories of women caregivers in four rural NS communities.
- * Never Too Late: Adult Learners Talk About Going Back to School: A video presentation by the Women Down Prospect – February 1, 1999
- * The Women Down Prospect is a group of women from Lower Prospect, Nova Scotia who have been working together since 1990 to build a better community. Members of the group were joined for a showing of their most recent work, a video entitled "Never Too Late: Adult Learners Talk About Going Back to School".
- * Making Connections ...Exploring Black Women's Health Research Priorities – February 16, 1999
- * In recognition of African Heritage month, MCEWH a second Lunch N Learn on the topic of Black women's health research. The event featured completed research for discussion and explore its impact, as well as featured developing research work.

Book Launch

MCEWH, in collaboration with Frog Hollow Books and Neptune Theatre presented a book launch for *The Politics of Women's Health: Exploring Agency and Autonomy*. The book is a series of essays produced by The Feminist Health Care Ethics Research Network, an interdisciplinary group of scholars and practitioners including physicians, lawyers, philosophers and social scientists. The essays address the practical issues of women's empowerment in the health care system and the deep assumptions and values that underlie that system. They are also informed by some of the authors' own experiences with women's health issues. – September 23, 1998

Elizabeth May Chair in Women's Health and the Environment

- * Press Conference for the Elizabeth May Chair in Women's Health and the Environment – October 13, 1998 On October 13, 1998, Dalhousie University announced the creation of the Elizabeth May Chair in Women's Health and the Environment, a result of two anonymous donations to the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health totaling \$1.6 million for women's health research. It was also announced that Elizabeth May, Executive Director of the Sierra Club of Canada, will be the first chairholder. The Chair's role will be collaborative in nature and as such will work closely with other Faculties at Dalhousie, with community and government agencies. It will also strengthen existing relationships between the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health and the community, will help foster new partnerships, and will allow the Maritime Centre to continue its active pursuits in women's health and the environment.
- * Celebrating Women's Health: An Evening With Elizabeth May – October 14, 1998 The Rebecca Cohn Theatre. Celebrating Women's Health: An Evening with Elizabeth May was an opportunity for the MCEWH to bring together those with an interest in women's health and the environment, raise public awareness about the issues and celebrate our achievements!
- * International Women's Day – March 8, 1999 In celebration of International Women's Day, the public joined Canadian activist for women's health and the environment Elizabeth May for a special video festival sponsored by MCEWH and the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group of Dalhousie University. – March 8, 1999

4. Collaborations, partnerships

Partnerships and collaborations have a variety of interpretations and definitions. The type of partnerships and collaboration depends upon the nature of the work or activity that various parties are involved. Some partnerships are formalized while some are not. Some partnerships exist because of a social or contract agreement where funding is provided by MCEWH. While the provision of funds in a contract agreement is to produce a specific deliverable or piece of work, working alliances and good will between parties often results. MCEWH is engaged in a wide range of partnerships and collaborations. What these partnerships have in common is an interest in furthering MCEWH's mission - to promote social change through research on women's health through policy based research, capacity building and human resources development.

Partnership Highlights – Atlantic Region

1. **Inclusion Project:** MCEWH is coordinating a project funded by Health Canada Atlantic with community and policy representatives from each of the provinces in the Atlantic Region to facilitate the development and adoption of social and economic inclusion of women and children within the development of public policy at the federal, provincial and community levels. Partnerships and collaborations are developing across

health, social and community services departments in the Atlantic Region with community leaders from the four provinces and with Health Canada Atlantic.

2. *Statistics Canada (Atlantic)*: MCEWH is engaged in two pieces of contract work with Statistics Canada (Atlantic). These projects are identifying an inventory of health information from Statistic's Canada's holdings. These projects are building links between MCEWH research program areas with existing data holdings as well as networking and building alliances within Statistics Canada. Joanne Hughes, Regional Director Statistics Canada is a past member of MCEWH advisory committee. A joint presentation of this project was made at MCEWH's Made to Measure Symposium. MCEWH is also engaged at providing advice to Statistics Canada about the content needs for data workshops in the Atlantic Region. As well, MCEWH will host a lunch and learn about the benefits and challenges for working with quantitative health information.
3. *NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women (NSACSW)*: MCEWH is working on a survey research proposal development initiative with the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. This initiative is a partnership initiative with the Women's Health Program IWK Grace Health Centre, NS Centre on Aging and Statistics Canada (Atlantic). The focus of the project is to generate a funding proposal on what are the causal elements of un/paid work that contributing to women's as compared to men's well being. NSACSW participated as a partner in the Made to Measure presentation, Women's Work and Well-Being- A Partnership Initiative. This initiative is building links between MCEWH and the NSACSW who have a common interest in the well being of Nova Scotian women. Both organizations have a strong interest in gender based analysis with policy workers. NSACSW reports to NS Minister for Community Services and provide MCEWH with an indirect linkage to influencing policy and programming in this portfolio.
4. *Women's Health Program, IWK Grace Health Centre*: MCEWH has established a formal partnership arrangement with the IWK Grace Health Centre. Judith Hockney, the Director of Women's Health Programming is a member of the MCEWH Steering Committee. MCEWH has collaborated with the IWK Grace on several projects including a Women's Health Connections project with the NS Women's Centres Connect. This proposal submission developed and strengthened a partnership between MCEWH and Nova Scotia women's centers, as well as a clinical health center that delivers women's and children's health programming for the Atlantic Region. MCEWH continues to look for opportunities to strengthen this partnership. In the future, performance indicators will be developed for MCEWHs contribution to the IWK Grace's partnership and development and research programs.
5. *CESAF*: MCEWH has collaborated on several initiatives with the Centre d'Excellence pour la Sante des Femmes- Consortium Universite de Montreal. MCEWH was a co-investigator on a successful proposal for the Shastri Institute. Mcewh has also been co-presenters with CESAF on a roundtable discussion entitled, "Gender and Home Care" at the Canadian Association of Gerontology Conference in Halifax, October 1998.
6. *Community Health Promotion Network Atlantic (CHPNA)* MCEWH works in partnership with the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre (AHPRC) and CHPNA in the production of a newsletter.
7. *New Brunswick Women's Health Collective*: MCEWH was a partner in several proposal submissions to Status of Women Canada for projects on gender-based analysis in New Brunswick.
8. *Atlantic Centre for the Study of Human Health (ACSHH)*: MCEWH collaborated with the Atlantic Centre for the Study of Human Health in the submission of a funding proposal to the International Development Research Centre. While the proposal was not successful, the proposal development process provided an opportunity for MCEWH to build an alliance with consultants at ACSHH.
9. *Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW)*: In partnership with CRIAOW and the Health Law Institute, Dalhousie University, and sponsored by Health Canada (Atlantic)

MCEWH hosted a community based research ethics workshop. MCEWH is also a CRIAW member and serves a member of the NS CRIAW Coordinating Committee.

10. *CEWH National Coordinating Committee on Social Reform* MCEWH is working with the other Centres of Excellence and has participated in the project on social reform. The purpose of this project is to engage policy and researchers in a dialogue to remedy the harmful effects of the privatization of health care services on women as providers and patients. This project has served as an opportunity for the MCEWH staff and policy representatives to apply the MCEWH programs of research to specific health policy questions. It has also provided the first opportunity for the program staff to become familiar with other Centres of Excellence for Women's health programs and staff.
11. *Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre (AHPRC)*: MCEWH has collaborated with AHPRC in the preparation, production and design of a user friendly research proposal development guide entitled, "Creating Proposal Guidelines". As well, the AHPRC Director (Rene Lyons) is a member of MCEWH Research Uptake Subcommittee.
12. *Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF)*: MCEWH engages in on-going networking with CHSRF research programs manager (Linda Murphy). We co-hosted a site visit to Dalhousie University and the IWK Grace as well as coordinated key stakeholders meetings between Linda Murphy and the Faculties of Health Services Administration, School of Nursing at Dalhousie University.
13. *Women's Centres CONNECT! NS*: MCEWH works directly with CONNECT! in several initiatives including the development of the Made to Measure Symposium planning, and several women's organizations coalitions in Nova Scotia.
14. *Feminists for Equitable and Just Public Policy (FEMJPP)*: MCEWH serves as an external representative on this provincial wide coalition of women's groups. MCEWH has also been co-sponsors and made in-kind contributions on several funding proposals to Status of Women Canada (NS and Ottawa).
15. *Women in Public Policy (WIPP)*: MCEWH works with this coalition of women's organizations from Nova Scotia that is overseen by a National Advisory Committee. MCEWH has provided proposal support and in-kind contributions.
16. *Women's Policy Office (WPO) St. John's Newfoundland*: MCEWH actively networks with women's policy offices in the Atlantic Region by providing and exchanging resources and information frequently. Dorothy Robbins from this bureau also serves on MCEWH Steering Committee.
17. *Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Health Network (WHNNL)*: MCEWH has provided small project funding to WHNNL and involved the network in the community research ethics projects. The network coordinator was also a recipient of a graduate student thesis award. MCEWH sponsored a nutrition break at their annual forum.
18. *PEI Well Women's Clinics*: MCEWH has funded a synthesis paper to support the further development of well women's clinics in PEI. This activity has provided MCEWH with a linkage between the women's organizations in PEI and regional health authorities on the island.
19. *Interministerial Women's Secretariat, PEI*: MCEWH provides and exchanges information to this provincial women's policy advisory body. The Director, Sandy Bentley also serves as Co-Chair, Steering Committee.

20. *Heart Health Nova Scotia*: MCEWH networks regularly with the Director and staff of this NHRDP funded national heart health initiative. MCEWH organized a key panel in their national conference entitled, "Culture and Gender: Key Determinants of Health."
21. *Multicultural Health Council, Nova Scotia*: MCEWH has provided small research funds to this provincial policy advisory body and participates in presentations and forums. In the next year, MCEWH will facilitate the development of a policy recommendations position paper.
22. *Nova Scotia Gynecological Cancer Screening Project*: MCEWH has participated and sponsored this Population Health Fund project that aims to increase the rate of cervical cancer screening in a very low screen population at risk in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.
23. *Nova Scotia Centre on Aging*: MCEWH networks with this organization and the Centre Director, is a member of the Research Uptake subcommittee and the MCEWH Advisory Committee.

Partnership Highlights – National

The MCEWH is actively collaborating in the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health Program on the following nationally initiatives:

1. Design grant for the Canadian Institutes for Health Research
2. National Social Reform Project and Privatization
3. Canadian Women's Health Database (MINISIS)
4. Development of a national Symposium on Gender Equity "Made to Measure", scheduled for Oct 1999.

5. Partner Feedback

Much of the Centre's feedback comes in the form of e-mail or verbal feedback.

MCEWH is currently funding a project entitled, Guiding Principles Consultation (Susan Kirkland, Project Leader). The purpose of establishing Guiding Principles is to provide a framework of understanding for future cooperation between different groups interested in women's health. This communication and networking activity has been designed to begin a process of developing rapport between community and academic partners who share common interests in women's health, and to foster a climate in which a policy relevant agenda in women's health research can be undertaken.

The MCEWH website was voted best women's health website by the Canadian Medical Association.

6. Future Directions/Upcoming Activities

The Coming Year: Strategic Directions, Priority Issues

In 1999/00, MCEWH will continue to support women's health policy research that encompasses a broad continuum of knowledge development leading to social action. This includes research that has meaningful involvement for women using a variety of research methods including participatory action research including kitchen table talks; focus groups, qualitative research, survey or quantitative research including secondary analysis and synthesis of existing data sets.

MCEWH will continue to support a variety of research funding mechanisms, each of which is designed to address the needs of diverse research communities or cultures (e.g., Project Fund, Synthesis Fund, Community Research Award and Project Development). While the Centre has responsibility to ensure that the work meets

the highest standards, researchers themselves are ultimately accountable to meet the standards and expectations of their respective research constituencies (e.g., universities, community organizations, clinical centres, regional health boards, provincial or federal governments).

1998/1999 Projects

- * Guiding Principles Community Consultation
- * Collaborating on Research for Women's Health
- * The Black Women's Health Project
- * N.B. Women's Health Initiative Project
- * The Health and Economic Implications for Women of a Federal Home Care Program
- * Women's Voices: Women's Perceptions of the Determinants of Health and Well Being
- * Assessing the Impact of Social Reform on Women's Health
- * A Gender Equity Lens for the Policy Evaluation Process
- * Women's Definitions and Priorities of Health: Project A
- * Women's Definitions and Priorities of Health: Project B
- * Call Centre Tele-operators: Health Determinants and Quality of Worklife
- * The Caregivers Research Project
- * A Qualitative Study of Rural Women and a Breast Cancer Self-help Group via an Audio Teleconferencing network
- * Affirming Immigrant Women's Health: Building Inclusive Health Policy
- * Developing Understanding from Young Women's Experiences in Obtaining Sexual Health Services and Related Education in a N.S. Community
- * Social and Economic Stress and Women's Health in Fishing Communities
- * The Stories of Women with Depression
- * An In-depth Look at Different Women's Perceptions of Doctor-patient Interactions
- * Early Maternity Discharge and Low Income Women: A Grounded Theory Study
- * Women Who Choose Midwifery Care in N.S.: A Retrospective Survey and Selected In-depth Interviews

1999/2000 Projects

- * Off Reserve Aboriginal Women's Health Assessment
- * The Black Women's Health Program
- * Hearing The Voices of Diverse Women Equitable Access To Health Care, Promotion And Prevention By Immigrant Women In NS
- * Participatory Action Research With Community Groups On Environmental Health
- * Trying To Work It Out: Women Examine The Effects Of Workplace Environment
- * Gender Perspectives On The Determinants of Health: Policy and Programming Implications
- * Gender Equity Lens
- * Black Women's Health Research: Policy Implications
- * Gender Equity Analysis Methodologies
- * Gender Equity Policy Case Studies
- * Women's Health Connections
- * Gender Equity Lens Stage II Proposal: Mainstreaming Gender
- * Social & Economic Inclusion of Women, Children, Families
- * A Women's Survival Guide To The Poor Economy
- * A Gender Equity Lens For The Health Policy Domain- A Canadian Gender Curriculum Educational Strategy
- * An Exploration Of The Stress Experience Of Mi'maq Female Youth In NS
- * Towards Non-Hetero-Sexist Policy And Regulation In Health And Income Security agencies
- * Access To The Environment: Exploring Links Between The Perception Of Access To Ethnomedicine And The Well Being of the Mikmaq Community of Indian Brook, Shubenacadie
- * Pattern Identification And Expansion Of Consciousness During The Transition Of Low-Risk Pregnancy
- * In An Authoritative Voice: Women And The politics of Health Policy In New Brunswick
- * The Relationship Between Prescription Drug Utilization And Employment For Single Mothers On Social Assistance
- * Breaking With Tradition: The Socioeconomics Of Osteoporosis
- * Including Black Women In Health And Social Policy And Development: Winning Over

- Addictions: Empowering Black Mothers With Addictions To Overcome Triple Jeopardy
- * For Love Or Money - Women's Health Survey Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- * Response To Health Protection Branch Discussion Papers
- * PEI Well Women's Clinics: A Case Study of Gender Specific Clinics to Increasing Screening Rates
- * Social Reform Scan: Women's Perspectives in the Atlantic Region
- * Creating Association Guidelines For MCEWH
- * Gender Planning And Gender Mainstreaming

Conferences

MCEWH is currently involved in the planning of a number of conferences related to the work of the Centre, including ... Made to Measure: Designing Research, Policy and Action Approaches to Eliminating Gender Inequity (Fall 1999). ... Nurturing Ourselves Nova Scotia (Spring 2000) ... The Social and Economic Inclusion of Women, Children and Families (Spring 2000).

7. MCEWH Profiles

MCEWH Staff

Carol Amaratunga, PhD Executive Director
 Lesley Poirier, Research Coordinator
 Pamela Roy, Communications Officer
 Mary Ann Martell, Administrative Assistant
 Catherine Meade, Made to Measure Symposium Coordinator
 Nadia Stuewer, Made to Measure Symposium Assistant Coordinator
 Francine Vezina, Made to Measure Conference Assistant
 Christine Saulnier, Gender Equity Lens Coordinator
 Neera Datta, MCEWH Research Assistant/ Social and Economic Inclusion Support
 Lynda Snyder, Social and Economic Inclusion Coordinator
 Erin Skinner & Terezia Wolinska (Graduate Students)
 Narina Mosesova (Metro Immigrant Settlement Association Placement)

MCEWH Steering Committee (98/99)

Barbara Cottrell, CRIAW
 Julie Devon Dodd, PEI Women's Network
 Katherine Kelly
 Carolann Wright-Parks, North End Community Health Centre
 Dorothy Robbins, NF Women's Policy Office
 Sandra Bentley, Interministerial Women's Secretariat, Province of PEI
 Jocelyn Downie, Health Law Institute, Dalhousie University
 Judith Hockney, IWK Grace Health Centre
 Susan Kirkland, PhD, Graduate Programs Community Health and Epidemiology
 Mary Simpson, Community Health Promotion Network Atlantic
 Erica van Roosmalen, PhD, Department of Sociology, Dalhousie University

Other MCEWH Committees

MCEWH Advisory Committee
 MCEWH Planning and Evaluation Committee
 MCEWH Communications Committee
 MCEWH Policy Uptake Committee
 MCEWH Sustainability Committee
 MCEWH Project Review Committee
 MCEWH Nomination Committee