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Department of
Environment and Geography

Employment/Student Opportunity

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Part-time (12 hours/week), grant-funded, 2-3 year position on the project:

Engaging Manitoba First Nations families affected by asthma in support-education program development

Preference will be given to a highly qualified student with experience/interest in working with First Nations communities in Manitoba who would coordinate this project as part of a thesis-based degree in the Department of Environment and Geography at the University of Manitoba. Preference given to students

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: JEFF MASUDA (204) 960-9729/jeff_masuda@umanitoba.ca

Background

Despite higher rates of asthma/allergies in First Nations youth living in remote communities in Manitoba, accessible interventions that focus on social and environmental conditions and the specific support needs and preferences of affected families are limited and in many cases, non-existent.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this three-year project are to:

1. Determine the social and environmental determinants of health, including support, educational needs and preferences, of First Nations children and teens with

- asthma/allergies and of their parents, particularly, but not necessary limited to, those living on reserve;
2. Work with partner First Nations in Manitoba, develop and test an accessible and appropriate youth asthma network for these youths and parents which seeks to overcome geographic, physical, cultural, and temporal barriers and is based on their identified preferences; and
 3. With First Nations partners, disseminate project results to audiences in positions to improve social and environmental conditions and develop better asthma management infrastructure for First Nations in Manitoba and Canada.

Suggested Research Methods

The research methods indicated below are proposed, however, the way in which the research will be carried out will be based on the direction from community partners and a national advisory committee.

- Community learning will include in-depth assessment by research trainees who will spend several weeks in identified communities to explore the lived experience of asthma among children and their families (both challenges and resilience).
- Asthma Camps (four-day event) facilitated by a certified Aboriginal asthma educator and a community representative (e.g. Elder, community health representative) will create dedicated time to build relationships amongst those affected by asthma, the research team and those who are professionally and/or culturally involved in health roles in/for the community.

Goals of camp

- Create a fun learning and relationship-building opportunity for young people who have asthma.
- Discuss challenges these youth and their families' face that require social support, resources, support-seeking strategies, and preferences and develop an intervention.
- We will ask youth, parents and service providers to provide input regarding the most appropriate options for a multi-week Peer Mentorship Program that will form the basis of an ongoing network. The program will be delivered by trained peers (youth and parents with first-hand experience) and health professionals who have experience working with Manitoba First Nations by engaging with youth who have asthma/allergies and their parents. This process may be delivered by telephone or Internet (e.g. Skype, Facebook) or face-to-face only, depending on preferences and constraints of the participants. Interviews with participants before and after, will serve as data concerning participant satisfaction with the interventions; factors influencing its success; perceived impacts;

suggestions for changes; and contacts with other participants and peer or professional helpers outside the intervention.

- We will hold Talking Circles with community representatives and with program planners, practitioners, service managers, and policy influencers working with First Nations to discuss interpretations of findings; implications for programs, practice and policies; and appropriate audiences and vehicles for dissemination.

Project Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities

The project coordinator will assist the Principal Investigator in overseeing all project activities, including partnership building, community assessment, participant recruitment, intervention design and execution, data collection and analysis, and report writing.

The position start-date is flexible, but would ideally begin in the summer of 2010. Students wishing to apply for the position concurrently with a Master's program in Geography would apply in conjunction with a program application due May 15th (for a September start-date) or by October (for a January start-date).

Pay will be commensurate with qualifications, but likely fall within the range of \$20-25/hour as a research assistantship or student stipend.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: MAY 10, 2010
(or until suitable candidate is found)**

For further information, contact:



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