



UNIVERSITY
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MANITOBA'S CHILDREN

Health inequity study aimed to impact the lives of our province's young ones

A new program at the University of Manitoba will receive \$2.0 million in funding over the next five years to tackle health and social inequity in Manitoba's children. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research 's(CIHR) Institutes of Population and Public Health (IPPH), and Human Development, Child and Youth Health (HDCYH) Programmatic Grants in Health and Health Equity funding, is supported in partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, today announced funding to support the research project, "PATHS Equity for Children: A Program of Research into What Works to Reduce the gaps for Manitoba's Children" at a news conference held at the University of Manitoba's Bannatyne Campus.

Dr. Patricia Martens, Professor in the university's Department of Community Health Sciences and Director, Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP), will lead the project that includes a team of 16 researchers at the University of Manitoba as well as throughout Canada and the USA. In addition, partners from nine government ministries, the Healthy Child Manitoba Initiative, all eleven regional health authorities within the province and the United Way are also involved in the research.

"At provincial and national levels, policies and programs are developed to reduce health and social inequity," said Martens. "The new five-year study will determine which Manitoba programs have improved overall outcomes, but more importantly, verify which ones narrowed the gap and those that widened the gap in child health inequity."

Making use of the 100 plus databases housed at MCHP in the Faculty of Medicine, Martens and her team will study the results of multiple programs and policies introduced in the past 10 years, ones that could potentially impact inequities of children and youth in our province. Programs and policies such as new models of primary health care, hospital policies on breastfeeding, programs to support healthy pregnancies and positive parenting, educational interventions

like summer enrichment programs or suicide reduction programs will be examined. As well, the researchers will examine if being involved in more than one of these programs would have a multiplying effect on positive outcomes and reduced gaps.

While the databases remain anonymous, they can be linked to information such as family units and neighbourhoods, geographic-based information on health and social services and outcomes, physician visits and use of hospitals, immunization programs, educational outcomes, early childhood intervention programs, use of child care, use of social assistance programs, and the use of public housing.

The objective of this collaborative project is to work with those at the front line of programs and policies, to help interpret the results within context, and to then translate the research findings into evidence informed policies and programs to reduce the gap in health and wellbeing for Manitoba's children.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the Government of Canada's health research investment agency. CIHR's mission is to create new scientific knowledge and to enable its translation into improved health, more effective health services and products, and a strengthened Canadian health care system. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 14,100 health researchers and trainees across Canada. For more information or a complete list of co-investigators, please visit: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

MCHP is a research unit in the Department of Community Health Sciences in the Faculty of Medicine, at the University of Manitoba. Research scientists and their collaborators at MCHP study health services, population and public health, and the social determinants of health using data from the entire population of Manitoba. Most of the research answers questions of interest to policy makers based on a formal association with Manitoba Health and input from other government departments.

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