

Canadian Child & Youth Health Coalition (CCYHC) Fact Sheet

Established in 2004, the Canadian Child & Youth Health Coalition (CCYHC) is a collaboration of ten major national organizational and program members ***working together with a common vision to advance the cause of child and youth health and health care in Canada.*** The current membership of CCYHC includes the:

- Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres (CAPHC); *
- Canadian Child Health Clinician Scientist Program (CCHCSP); *
- Canadian Family Advisory Network (CFAN);
- Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS)
- Council of Canadian Child Health Research (CCCHR); *
- Maternal, Infant, Child, & Youth Research Network (MICYRN);
- National Infant, Child, & Youth Mental Health Consortium (The Consortium);
- Paediatric Chairs of Canada (PCC); and, *
- Pediatric Surgical Chiefs of Canada (PSCC); *
- Safe Kids Canada (SKC)

* Denotes a CCYHC Founding Member

While each organization/program holds distinct mandates, the Coalition members share many common goals and objectives. The Coalition firmly believes that the synergistic strength gained through formal collaboration on jointly established strategic priorities provides a strong vehicle for achieving more in identified areas of concern than individual member organizations can accomplish independently.

The collective mandate of the CCYHC is to advance the health and health care of Canada's children and youth by providing a powerful framework for the stimulation of new knowledge development, the promotion of knowledge uptake/application to practice and policy, the support of training and education initiatives, and the strengthening of national advocacy. By engaging a broad range of constituents and stakeholders across the continuum of child and youth health, CCYHC has amassed unprecedented capacity and expertise to formulate, facilitate, implement and evaluate national initiatives and programs to address the pressing issues confronting the health of our youngest citizens.

In order to realize each of its primary objectives, the Coalition has identified and implemented several key initiatives and programs over the last four years including the *National Child and Youth Health Indicators Development Program* including the *National Pediatric Surgical Wait Time Strategy*, the *Maternal, Infant, Child and Youth Research Network (MICYRN)*, and the first phase of a *Child & Youth Health Human Resources Strategy*.

Each of these initiatives is informed by the specific expertise and capacities of each of the Coalition members across the spectrum of new knowledge development from research, dissemination, translation, and application to policy and practice. Moreover, these initiatives provide significant support and leadership to education and training strategies towards ensuring a workforce prepared to meet the health needs of children and youth at all levels of promotion, prevention and care.

The Coalition has also worked in an advocacy role to provide support and feedback to numerous child and youth health related initiatives on a national level and has actively sought to expand its

membership to further strengthen its ability to achieve its mandate.

Goals

The Coalition has specifically established the following six overall goals to guide its work and fulfill its mandate:

1. Ensure rapid and efficient development of new knowledge through research in areas of national importance to the health and well-being of children and youth;
2. Facilitate and support the application of evidence-based practice and policy;
3. Stimulate the development and evaluation of models of practice, quality care and safety, supporting efficient, effective, and accessible systems of child and youth health care;
4. Develop and sustain excellence in transdisciplinary child and youth health education, research and training;
5. Advocate on national child and youth health, healthcare and policy issues that will benefit from the collective expertise and influence of the Coalition;
6. Actively seek out new members to strengthen the Coalition's capacity to achieve its goals.

Programs & Initiatives

Building on the combined strengths of its many partnerships, the CCYHC has made significant progress towards achieving many of its objectives within the context of several key initiatives and programs. For example:

- **Child and Youth Health Indicators Development Program.** In order to support empirically based planning, policy, and decision-making, CCYHC identified the implementation of a strategy for the development, validation, and uptake of child and youth health indicators as one of its first priorities. Evidence-based indicators are essential for identifying health priorities, planning services, allocating resources and evaluating the impact of policies and programs. Research is required to develop and validate meaningful health and health care indicators so that decisions and actions are evidence-based and reflect the unique needs of children and youth. In 2006, in collaboration with the CIHR-Institute of Human Development Child and Youth Health (IHDCYH) and 13 other partner organizations, the Coalition launched a Request for Applications (RFA) to validate and/or develop child and youth health indicators. The purpose of this initiative is to support teams of researchers and decision makers to develop and apply indicators of child and youth health and health care. In partnership with Accreditation Canada, the CCYHC is also working to promote the uptake of validated child and youth health indicators by incorporating these into the accreditation process.
- **National Paediatric Surgical Wait Times Strategy.** In 2005, Dr. Brian Postl, Federal Adviser on Wait Times to the Prime Minister, approached the CCYHC to lead an initiative to develop recommendations for a national paediatric surgical wait times strategy. In 2006, the Coalition, in collaboration with the Pediatric Surgical Chiefs of Canada, hosted the National Workshop on Paediatric Surgical Wait Times to develop these recommendations. On January 11th, 2007 Prime Minister Harper announced \$2.6M in support of a National Paediatric Wait Time Guarantee Pilot Project to identify children waiting longer than the

acceptable time for surgery - a very important first step in gaining public attention to the needs of children and youth waiting for surgery. On June 12th, 2008 Minister of Health Tony Clement announced a further investment of up to \$9.8 million in support of the Canadian Paediatric Surgical Wait Time (CPSWT) Project - Stage II which will build on the progress and partnerships established under the NPSWT project completed in June. Building on this targeted framework, the CCYHC will endeavour to apply the surgical wait times strategy to a broader set of wait time issues in other high priority areas where children and youth wait for essential health care services.

- **Maternal, Infant, Child, and Youth Research Network (MICYRN).** In 2006, CCYHC identified a national clinical research network as a top priority and established the Maternal, Infant, Child, and Youth Research Network (MICYRN). MICYRN is a multi-disciplinary initiative to support world-class clinical research nationwide. The vision is that the synergistic strength gained from a formal collaborative network of leading researchers and integrated infrastructure will spur tremendous advances that are unattainable by individual groups. Research partners consist of established and emerging clinical teams, research networks and groups committed to integrating resources to maximize returns. MICYRN's core objectives are to build innovative platforms to address gaps in the clinical research environment. MICYRN has established core programs in research partnerships, training, knowledge translation (KT), research methods, research ethics and regulatory affairs and funding partnerships. This network will also establish integrated access to innovative tools in data management, genomics and biobanking. All core programs will support a diverse range of quality clinical research as part of a coordinated and aggressive research effort to optimize health behaviour, interventions and overall health care from pre-conception to maturity. MICYRN's goal is to build Canada's maternal, infant and child health researchers into one community dedicated to improving the health of Canadian mothers and children.
- **Health Human Resource Strategy.** The development of a Health Human Resource (HHR) Strategy has been identified by the Coalition as another critical priority in the area of child and youth health and one where the combined efforts and expertise of the individual members could have significant influence. The Coalition has established a working group to review the state of health human resources in the child/youth sector by developing a comprehensive overview of current national HHR initiatives and identifying pressing issues and obvious gaps. The purpose of this work will be to identify specific opportunities and challenges which will be best addressed by a strategic Coalition initiative in this area. CCYHC is committed to exploring HHR resource issues across interdisciplinary health professions and to promoting sustained excellence in education and training to ensure a workforce prepared to meet the health needs of children and youth across the spectrum of promotion, prevention and care.

Initiatives in Early Development

- **The Child & Family in the Healthcare System.** As one of its newest initiatives, the Coalition has decided to take a fresh look at the way in which children and their families are included within the modern-day health care system. The Coalition believes that developing a common vision of how this interaction should occur and sharing best practices is an important undertaking, especially given the opportunity to have the Canadian Family Advisory Network (CFAN) centrally engaged in this initiative. The planning for this initiative is in the very early stages but CCYHC is committed to developing and implementing a strategy to address this issue over the next five years. Preliminary discussion at the CFAN workshop on October 19th, 2008 focused on establishing an action plan for obtaining a picture of current practices across institutions and determining how best to structure a team to move this initiative forward.

- **Child Rights Education for Health Professionals (Boulton Initiative).** The Coalition has also recently undertaken to participate in the development of the Boulton Initiative, a new project which seeks to provide a strategy for educating health professionals about the use of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* in practice. This initiative was established to achieve a developmental child rights approach in all child/youth health programs and services, an approach that reflects a holistic and inclusive understanding of health and the realities of associated challenges and opportunities. An organizational and planning meeting for the Boulton Initiative was held March 28-29, 2008 and an Executive Committee was established to provide overall direction to the initiative.

Advocacy Activities

In addition to the identification and development of specific national priorities and strategies, the Coalition has also worked in an advocacy role to provide support and feedback to several child and youth related initiatives on a national level:

- **“Healthy Children and Youth” – Federal Government Consultation.** In June 2007, in response to an invitation from Dr. Khristinn Kellie Leitch, Federal Advisor on Healthy Children and Youth, the CCYHC surveyed its members and submitted a comprehensive report as part of a Federal government consultation to identify the pressing health issues facing children and youth, gaps in programming and services, and solutions which might serve to address these gaps. The recommendations provided by the Coalition were the result of broad national stakeholder consultation and represent viable and impact-oriented solutions to advance the health of Canada’s children and youth.
- **“Racing for Kids’ Health” – Establishing Priorities in Canadian Child & Youth Health Research.** In early 2007, in collaboration with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health (CIHR – IHDCYH) and the SickKids Foundation, the Coalition developed a brochure designed to highlight current priority areas in Canadian child and youth health research. The document provides salient facts related to child and youth health in Canada, lists key gaps in our knowledge that future research should attempt to fill, and suggests how the new knowledge can be applied to improve the health and health care of Canada’s children and youth.
- **Canada’s Child & Youth Health Charter.** As one of many important stakeholders, the Coalition has been working (since April 2007) in consultation with the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Paediatric Society, and The College of Family Physicians of Canada to finalize a Child and Youth Health Charter and to move forward a child-health declaration that defines child and youth health as key national priorities.

The Canadian Child & Youth Health Coalition is a collaborative and consensus-driven organization representing the interests of the entire child and youth health care community. The activities of the Coalition thus far have demonstrated what can be accomplished on a national level by willing and passionate individuals and organizations. The CCYHC will capitalize on this capacity, enthusiasm, and momentum as it continues to develop and expand its membership and scope of activity in the coming years.

For further information about the Canadian Child & Youth Health Coalition (CCYHC), please visit www.ccyhc.org.