

A Health Services Research Agenda: Building Capacity  
within the Maternal, Child & Youth Sector

# “Building Capacity in Health Services and Policy Research”

February 18th, 2010

Dr. Colleen M. Flood  
Scientific Director

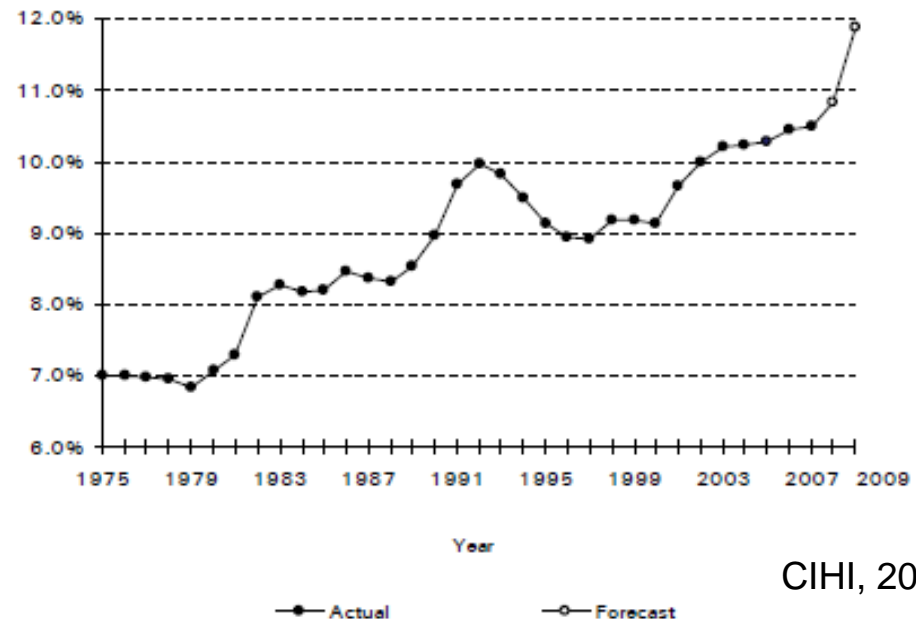
CIHR – Institute of Health Services and Policy Research

# What is Health Services and Policy Research?

- It enables us to ensure high-quality and cost-effective programs, services and products are provided to the people who need them, where and when they need them
- It enables us to understand health system challenges, assess different options, and implement solutions
- It improves the knowledge base and assists policy and practice leaders address major health and health policy challenges.

# Importance of Health Services and Policy Research: Canadian Context

Total Health Expenditure as a % of GDP, Canada, 1975 to 2009



CIHI, 2009

- A robust health services and policy research community is key to a high-performing and sustainable healthcare system

# CIHR Legislation

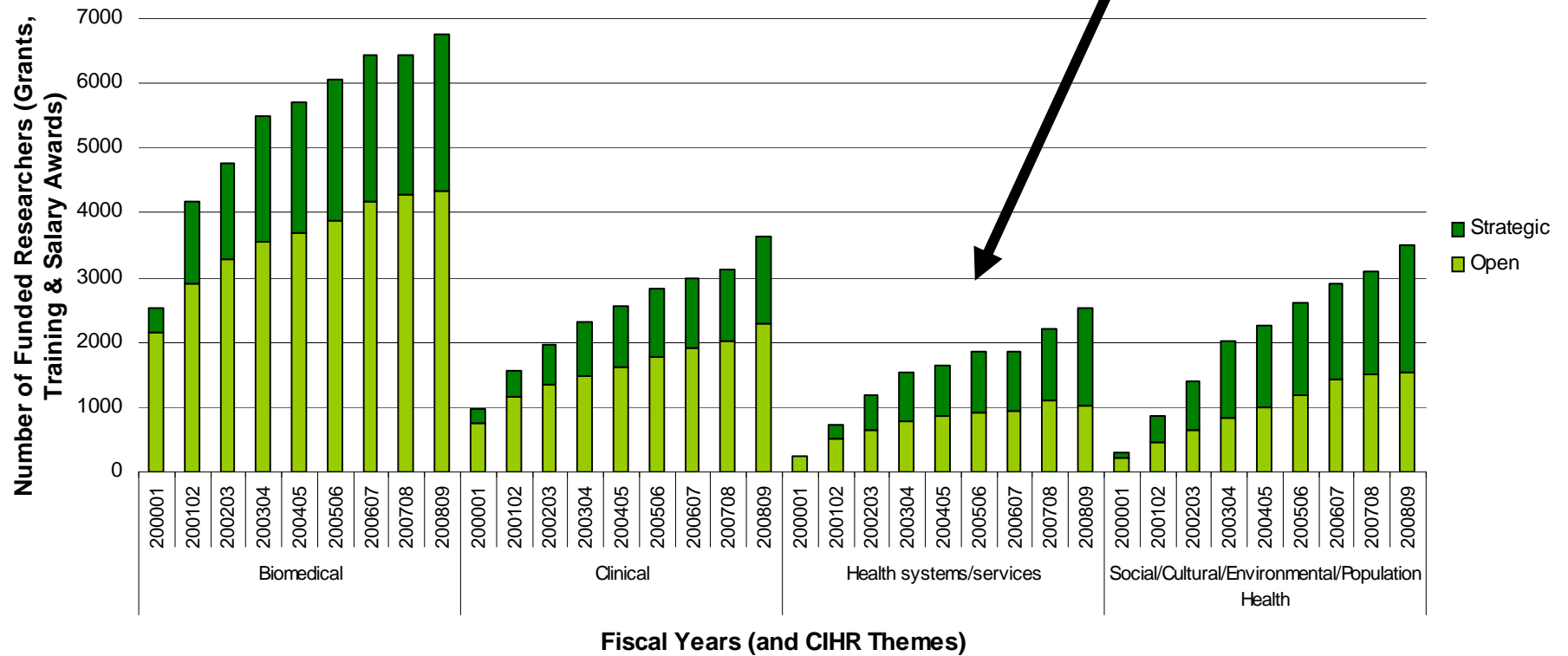
- CIHR's mandate is to "excel, according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence, in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health for Canadians, more effective health services and products and a strengthened Canadian health-care system."
- **A robust HSPR community is essential to enabling CIHR to deliver on its mandate**

# Strategic Direction 2: Address health and health system research priorities



Support a  
high-quality,  
accessible  
and  
sustainable  
health-care  
system

# First we need capacity



# IHSPR's Strategic Plan: Capacity Building Goal

- To support the education, training, mentoring and development of the brightest minds in health services and policy research to meet health system challenges

**IHSPR Strategic Plan 2008-2013**

# IHSPR's Strategic Plan: Capacity Building Objective

- To maintain and build training and mentoring programs and initiatives that are responsive to health services and policy needs and challenges as well as to the current and diverse career paths of health services and policy trainees and researchers

# SIGNIFICANT HURDLES to....



Multi-disciplinary  
Research

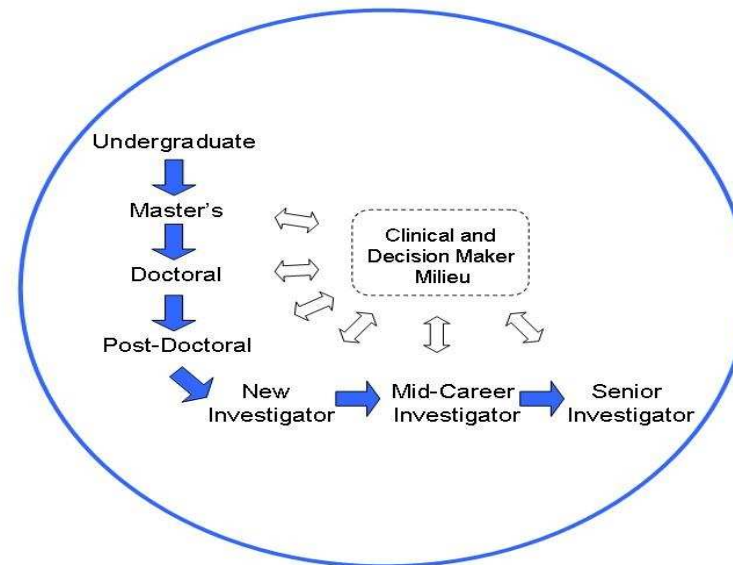
Applied Policy  
Research

# HSPR Capacity Building Challenges and Barriers

- Requires a workforce with a diverse skill set (e.g., quantitative and qualitative research, mixed methods, communication and KT skills, etc.)
- Requires researchers with specific core competencies
- Incorporates a wide-range of disciplines (e.g., economics, political science, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, health services research, etc.)
- Applied research is not recognized and valued in Universities to the same extent as more traditional research
  - E.g., < 20 health economists are based within an Economics Department in Canada – they are a scarce but critical breed!
- Greater clarity is needed around: 1) impact of past investments, 2) gaps and needs 3) how to support people across current and diverse career paths

# What to do: Right Support

- Provide support through different career stages to develop national leadership in health services and policy research
- Provide support that reflects the nature and interdisciplinarity of health services and policy researchers



# What to do: Right Tools

Supporting a high-quality, sustainable and accessible health care system requires that researchers and decision makers work together: **integrated knowledge translation tools are essential**



**EVIDENCE ON TAP**



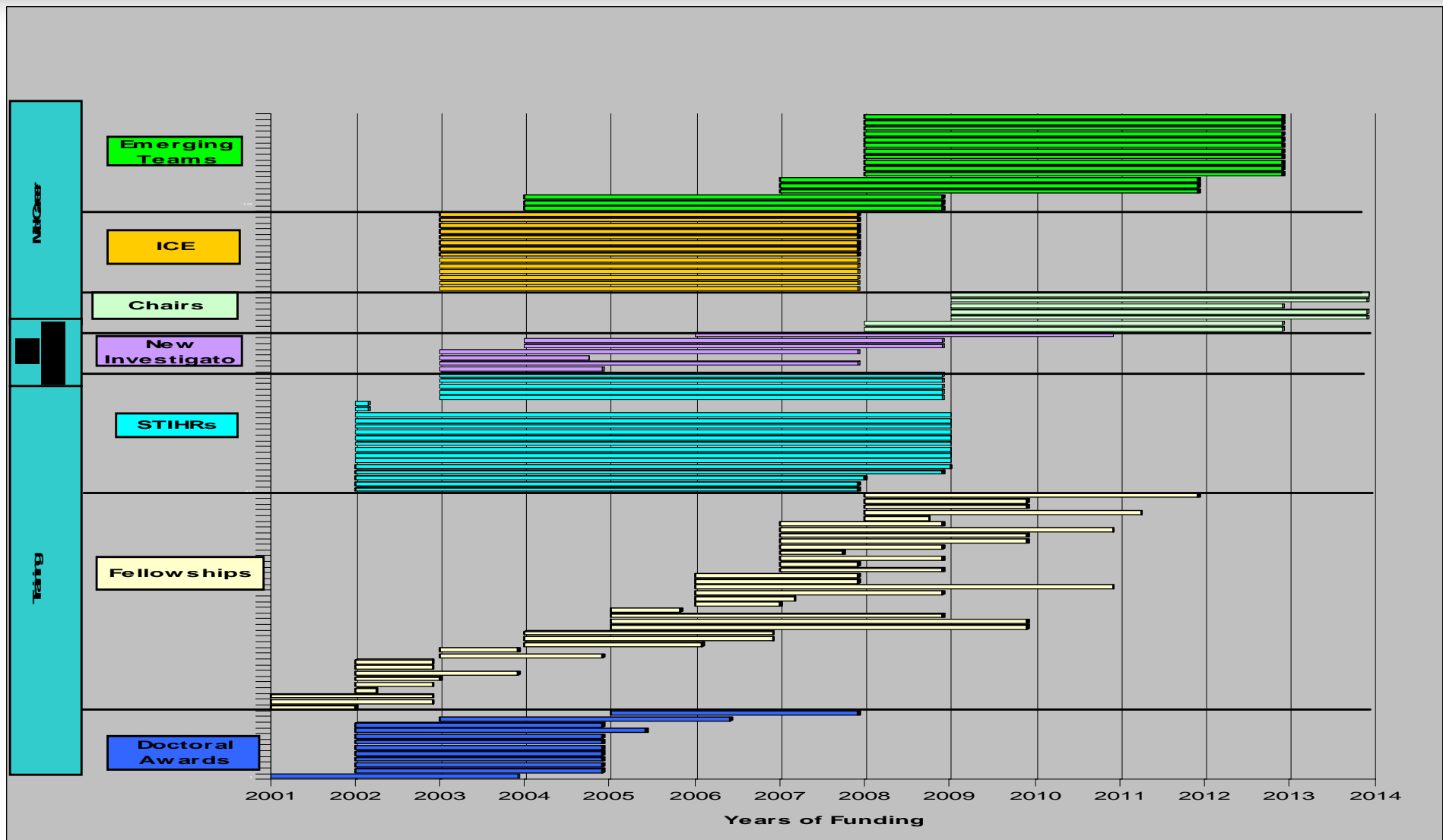
**PARTNERSHIPS**  
for Health System Improvement

# Right Tools: Applied Chairs in HSPR

- Launched in June 2007; Funding started Fall/Winter 2008
- Goal: Support for mid-career faculty to generate applied and policy-relevant HSPR, foster the exchange of this research with decision makers, train and mentor students
- Goal: increase recognition about the value of applied health services and policy research and time spent with decision makers
- Salary contribution, in addition to research/mentoring/KT contribution
- Total of 7 Chairs funded
  - Program highly valued by decision makers: close to 50% of the funds came from partners like the MOHLTC, CPSI, Health Canada, etc.

# Right tools: support across a researcher's career path

(Grants and Awards funded by IHSPR at each research career stage: 2000-2009)



# Looking ahead



- **Collectively, CIHR has built a budding community of excellence** → but health services research capacity development is still needed across all Institutes & themes
- **Momentum at CIHR** – strategic direction 1 and 2
- **Integrated KT tools** – like PHSI and Evidence on Tap – have shown great promise for impact, and relevance across all Institutes
- **Results of the Capacity Building Analysis** – Framework for investment for CIHR and all thirteen institutes