

# Symposium Executive Summary

## Health Clinician-Scientists in Academic Health Science Centres: Protecting An Endangered Species

February 10, 2011

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# Acknowledgements and Symposium Organizers

- The national symposium ***Health Clinician-Scientists in Academic Health Science Centres: Protecting an Endangered Species*** was organized by The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and Canadian and Child and Youth Health Coalition (CCYHC) with meeting grant support (MHD106026) from The Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR).
- Planning committee members included:
  - Bonnie Stevens
  - Gwen Burrows
  - Stephanie Atkinson
  - Norman Rosenblum
  - Donald Mabbott
  - Karen Gordon
  - Shirine Riahi

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# Background

- Date and location – Friday, November 27, 2010 in Toronto.
- Symposium goal – address the challenge of creating sustainable and stable career paths for health clinician-scientists in academic health science centres by:
  - Sharing experiences and lessons learned
  - Strategizing on ways to demonstrate role value, establish sustainable funding models, and integrate research into health care delivery models
  - Building partnerships to establish a national agenda

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# Background Continued

- Fifty-five participants including leadership from government, universities, philanthropy, granting agencies, and adult and pediatric academic health science centres across the country attended the day-long event.
- A national dialogue was initiated at the symposium that addressed the challenge of creating sustainable and stable career paths for “non-physician” health clinician-scientists.

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# Speakers

Topic	Speaker(s)
Keynote Address: CIHR vision for supporting clinical research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Michael Kramer, Scientific Director for the CIHR Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health (IHDCYH)</li></ul>
Panel #1: The experience of health clinician-scientists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Lynn Breau (Psychologist, Halifax)</li><li>• Dr. Liisa Holsti (Occupational Therapist, Vancouver)</li><li>• Dr. Deborah O'Connor (Registered Dietician, Toronto)</li><li>• Dr. Robert Schroth (Dentist, Winnipeg)</li></ul>
Panel #2: Funding models for health clinician-scientists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Dorothy Pringle (the history of funding models for Canadian nurse scientists)</li><li>• Linda Piazza (Heart and Stroke Foundation support)</li><li>• Dr. Stephanie Atkinson (Canadian Child Health Clinician-Scientists Program training opportunities)</li><li>• Dr. Mary Ferguson-Paré (University Health Network models for nurse clinician-scientists)</li><li>• Dr. Martin Ferguson-Pell (the U.K. model for clinical research, and the University of Alberta model for rehabilitation clinician-scientists)</li><li>• Dr. Judith Ritchie (models for nurse scientists at McGill University Health Centre in Montreal)</li></ul>

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# Key Concept #1

Health clinician-scientists:

- (a) strategically design and evaluate practical, clinically-based treatments for the most pressing patient health issues,**
- (b) enhance the translation of basic scientific discoveries to the bedside,**
- (c) have credibility as research and clinical experts in their field, and can thereby influence policy and clinical decision-makers, and**
- (d) enable better patient access to cutting edge treatments.**

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## Key Concept #2

New **models for continuous funding** of health clinician-scientist roles are required, including **better partnerships** and **greater alignment of role definitions** between academic health science centres, government, universities, and professional regulatory bodies.

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## Key Concept #3

**Job descriptions** for health clinician-scientists should clearly articulate the allocation of time for clinical practice, research, and teaching duties and form the basis for **unified performance evaluations** and **tenure considerations** in situations involving multiple reporting structures.

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## Key Concept #4

**Leadership** must support the health clinician-scientist role and the incorporation of clinical research values into the **organizational culture**.

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## Key Concept #5

Efforts should be made to **quantify the impact** of health clinician-scientists and **set benchmarks**, as a means to:

- (a) **demonstrate to leadership and stakeholders the value of the role through data and standards, and**
- (b) **determine the ideal or critical mass of health clinician-scientists.**

## Key Concept #6

Formal opportunities for health clinician-scientist **training**, as well as institutional efforts to integrate new health clinician-scientists into **teams** or introduce them to internal clinical and research **collaborators**, are important to address the issues of **workplace isolation** and the need for **role models** and **mentorship**.

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# Planning Committee Next Steps

- In the **short-term**, a full event report will be distributed to symposium participants and other identified stakeholders.
- In the **long-term**, symposium organizers plan to develop and publish a position paper/commentary after undertaking further “consensus” work with the symposium participants.

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