



## Information Briefing Document

March 2, 2007 *Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative*

**TITLE:** Introduction of the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative (CIHC)

**BACKGROUND:** Interprofessional Education is when health professionals from across all health disciplines (i.e., medicine, nursing, pharmacy, occupational therapy, midwifery, social work, etc.) are brought together to learn, study and practice. Studies show that when health professionals are educated together and have knowledge not only of their own skills, but also the skills of other members of the health care team, and when these teams work together with the patient to decide on a course of treatment, patient outcomes are better, and the overall job satisfaction of health care providers is improved. At a time when the health system is suffering a shortage of providers, interprofessional education and collaborative practice can contribute to improved efficiency, shorter wait times and better access to health professionals.

The CIHC was formed in August 2006, in response to a proposal submitted to Health Canada by Dr. John Gilbert of the UBC College of Health Disciplines. With two years of funding from Health Canada, the Collaborative will bring together Canadians who are committed to advancing the interprofessional education for collaborative patient-centred practice evidence base. From identifying best practices, through knowledge translation and dissemination, the Collaborative will act as a hub of interprofessional information for patients, health professionals, government leaders, professional organizations, students and others.

CIHC is building a network of members and partners across Canada who are committed to further advancing interprofessional education and collaborative practice in the health care system. The CIHC's vision is that a successful health care team is made up of the patient and various health professionals who are knowledgeable about their own skills and the skills of each of their team members. Evidence shows that when all members of the health care team work together with the patient, they can effectively pool their resources and reduce the risk of duplication and misunderstanding so patients can receive the best care possible.

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**DISCUSSION:** There is growing consensus that interprofessional collaborative patient-centered practice - across all health sectors and along the continuum of care - will contribute to the following:

- improved population health / patient care;
- improved access to health care;
- improved recruitment and retention of health care providers;
- improved patient safety and communication among health care providers;
- more efficient and effective employment of health human resources; and
- improved satisfaction among patients and health care providers.

In order to realize the benefits of interprofessional collaborative patient-centred practice, continued collaboration and support between the CIHC and all levels of government in Canada is required. Developing these linkages could be key to strengthening and sustaining our public health care system. By spreading, strengthening and accepting the interprofessional message, health leaders will potentially reduce wait times, improve accessibility to health care providers, bolster public health practices, promote healthy workplaces and strengthen health human resource planning.

Because relationships between government and members of the CIHC vary across the country, the CIHC is actively working to establish stronger linkages within all levels of government. There are a myriad of ways to involve the CIHC in the strategic planning of government, and to involve government in the development and promotion of the interprofessional message in Canada. Our goal is to open and continue a discussion that enables the CIHC and CIHC members to act as a resource for government. Identifying the key contacts to engage in further discussion is an important first step for the CIHC.

**CONCLUSION:** With numerous interprofessional projects ongoing or planned across Canada, the CIHC will be a valuable source of information for all levels of government, regulatory bodies, professional or labour organizations, health care workers and members of the public. As such, by the end of the two- year cycle, the CIHC is implementing strategies to evolve the Collaborative into a permanent Canada-wide interprofessional association. Developing stronger linkages with government, and engaging all levels of government in ongoing discussion and participation, is key to ensuring the CIHC is sustainable and productive, well into the future.

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