Letter of Intent

Re: Trilateral cooperation to improve Indigenous peoples’ health

Background
As national health research funding agencies, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) of Australia, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) of Canada and the Health Research Council (HRC) of New Zealand recognise the contribution research can make to reducing the health disparities between our Indigenous peoples and general populations. Over the last decade, we have worked collaboratively to support high quality, innovative research teams to improve Indigenous health through initiatives developed under the previous Tripartite Agreement signed in 2002. These teams have aimed to address historical trauma, and to reduce the significant impact of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes on morbidity and mortality in Indigenous populations. They have examined health research questions of critical interest and importance, enabled information sharing and created productive, long-lasting international partnerships.

Commitment
With this letter, NHMRC, CIHR and HRC confirm and strengthen our commitment to each other and to progress the trilateral agreement, developing a coordinated approach to sharing innovative best practices, information and expertise. We acknowledge the good work achieved to date and will continue to build on the goodwill generated between our three agencies.

We will enable links between the parties, researchers and trainees to conduct translational and implementable Indigenous health research. Cooperation between governments, institutions, researchers and Indigenous peoples will be underscored, facilitating a better understanding of factors that both determine and ultimately improve the health of our Indigenous populations. This will further contribute to the global pool of knowledge in the area.

We commit to harness opportunities to coordinate and leverage our respective funding opportunities, through, for example:

- offering a funding supplement to encourage national teams to create international linkages in the partner(s) country(ies);
- supporting jointly capacity building specifically for Indigenous post-doctoral scholars and fellows;
- fostering appropriate linkages with mentors with the goal of developing a cadre of highly qualified Indigenous researchers;
- sharing knowledge on implementation research targeting Indigenous health; and
- strengthening funding synergies in Indigenous health through our current international partnerships (such as the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases).

Next Steps
This letter is valid for a period of five years from the date of signature. To bring further scope and detail to the proposed partnership we agree to develop by December 2012, a program of initiatives. We will ensure that initiatives developed through this partnership will build on and not duplicate current activities, be flexible to address each country’s needs and priorities, and will have measurable outcomes. At a later stage, other countries may be invited to join this partnership.

Signed 11 June 2012
If this letter is terminated for any reason written notice will be sent by the partner country six month in advance.

Professor Warwick Anderson  Dr. Alain Beaudet  Dr. Robin Olds
Chief Executive Officer  President  Chief Executive Officer
National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia  Canadian Institutes of Health Research  Health Research Council of New Zealand

Signed 11 June 2012