

# National Collaborating Centre - Environmental Health: How will it impact the field?

Ray Copes, MD, MSc  
Director, Environmental Health ,BCCDC  
Scientific Director, NCCEH

# NCCEH Development

- What we did
- What we found
- Where we're going
- Your input

# The National Collaborating Centres

- Funded by Public Health Agency of Canada
- Hosted by 6 different organizations
- At 'arm's length'
- Must approach work from NATIONAL not regional or provincial perspective

# The Six NCCs

- Aboriginal Health – Univ of Northern BC
- Environmental Health – BC Centre for Disease Control
- Infectious Disease – International Centre for Infectious Disease
- Tools and Methods – McMaster Univ
- Healthy Public Policy – INSPQ
- Determinants of Health – St Francis Xavier Univ

# NCCs- Common Function

- Knowledge Synthesis, Translation and Exchange (KSTE)
- Identification of Gaps in Knowledge
- Building Networks

# NCCs

- Accountability – contribution agreement between PHAC and host agency
- \$1.5 million /year for 3 years, potentially renewable
- Staff should not exceed 4-5 FTEs
- Must submit work plan for review/ approval by PHAC and advisory committee
- EVALUATION by PHAC and NCCs

# The NCCCEH

# 2005-06 Development Work

- To assess needs, gaps, & opportunities for NCCEH
- To facilitate development of work plan for first 3 years of operation

# SCOPE

## Environmental health

- Initially area covered by services/programs in EH delivered through public health at local & regional level throughout Canada

## Client group

- Practitioners responsible for delivering EH services/programs, & policymakers responsible for setting policy related to delivery

# OBJECTIVES

- Identify EH services & programs delivered through public health
- Identify available EH KSTE products, materials, & activities
- Examine past experience in EH KSTE
- Identify needed EH KSTE products, materials, & activities
- Identify gaps between what is needed & is available
- Identify opportunities for bridging the gaps
- Identify potential priorities for NCCEH

# COMPONENTS

- Environmental scan
  - Interviews with key informants
  - Online survey
  - Literature & website search
- Needs, gaps, & opportunities assessment

# INTERVIEWS

- Semi-structured
- Identified practitioners/policymakers via Chief Medical Health Officers & ADMs
- Identified researchers in informal manner
- Included request for Advisory Board nominations
- Modified questions for survey
- Piloted
- Visited 12 of 13 provinces/territories

# PARTICIPANTS

- 65 practitioners/policymakers from 38 agencies, 22 researchers interviewed
- 30 people responded to online survey
- Discussions with organizations that include practitioners/policymakers & provide training for public health inspectors

# LITERATURE & WEBSITE SEARCH

- Searched peer-review & grey literature for systematic reviews & meta-analyses in EH
- Based appraisal on Cochrane & Campbell Collaboration guidelines
- Conducted limited search for literature on process of KSTE
- Searched for websites providing resources relevant to EH KSTE

# NEEDS, GAPS, OPPORTUNITIES

- Compare existing EH KSTE products, materials, & activities with those identified as needs by practitioners/policymakers
- Identify gaps & potential opportunities to fill them, including priority NCCEH products & activities

# FINDINGS

- Wide variety of EH services/programs delivered which vary between & within provinces/territories; agencies within & outside public health involved
- Staff time allocated to delivery varies between & within provinces/territories
- Additional services/programs for delivery identified

- Inadequate research knowledge base for current services/programs
- Relatively little KSTE activity in EH; lags behind public health

# WHAT'S MISSING

- 1) Little or No Surveillance of Env. Exposures or Risk Factors
- 2) Little evidence cited for existing EH programs, services
- 3) Little evaluation of program/service effectiveness
- 4) Lack of staff with advanced training in Env Health

# Opportunities for NCCEH

- Produce documents, e.g., reviews of evidence, evidence-based practices
- Monitor & exchange information about policy, practice, & research
- Establish secondments & interchanges
- Develop courses & summer institutes
- Match practitioners/policymakers & researchers
- Evaluate work of NCCEH

# NCCEH WORK PLANS

Intended to:

- Reflect priorities of client group
- Build national network of EH practitioners/  
policymakers/researchers
- Improve outcomes
- Encourage creative collaboration

# Work Plan 2006-07

- 1) Administrative
- 2) Start one major review
- 3) Complete several smaller KSTE reviews
- 4) Network development and Communication

# 1) ADMINISTRATIVE

- Office set-up
- Hire staff
- Director (p/t), Manager, Web/network development, KSTE project leaders
- Advisory Board
- Secondments
- Website

# SECONDMENTS

- Aimed at Environmental Health Practitioners, Policy Maker, Researchers
- Spend 6-12 months at NCCEH in Vancouver
- Employer covers salary
- NCCEH provides office, living expenses
- Work on NCCEH projects or identified by seconding agency

## 2) MAJOR PROJECT

- Topics selected based on EH practitioner & policymaker suggestions
- Stream One (major) - drinking water
  - Involve steering committee of content experts & users throughout
  - Complete identification of cases of waterborne illness in Canada along with associated risk factors in water system
  - Will be multi-year project

# POSSIBLE KSTE PRODUCTS

- Risk Factors based on Canadian evidence
- Evidence risk rating tool?
- Better reporting system?
- Identification of effective interventions?
- Allow review of existing programs, policies, legislation with evidence-based risk factors?

## 3) MINOR PROJECTS

- Should meet a need
- Short, topical
- Drafts should be reviewed by users
- Do within NCCEH or contract
- Examples – Hg spills, drug lab clean-up

## 4) NETWORK DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNICATIONS

Website – consultant's report received

- reviewing proposals

Mailing, Contact List development

Post Lit search results

Practitioner / researcher matching

Summer Institutes, Courses

# How will NCCEH impact the Field?

- Client group defined as frontline EH practitioners and policy makers
- Need to work with environmental health researchers, training institutions
- Work with EH organizations CIPHI, Urban EH Network
- *Result- Stronger EH network nationally, bridge academic-practitioner divide*

# How will NCCEH impact the Field?

- Provide evidence reviews of Env Health topics
- Can be performed by NCCEH or others
- Continuing Education – updates, refreshers
- Identify ‘key gaps’, e.g. surveillance, evaluation

# How will NCCEH impact the Field?

- NCCEH is not accountable for direct delivery of EH services
- Not part of F/P/T structure
- Should not tell others '*what to do*'

# YOUR INPUT

- BEST WAY TO COMMUNICATE -- NCCEH to Practitioners, Practitioners to NCCEH?
- P/PM INVOLVEMENT IN REVIEWING?
- SHARING OF P/PM PREPARED REVIEWS, PRACTICES ACTIONS
- EVALUATION of WHAT NCCEH is doing and should be doing?

# Contacts

- [christina.chociolko@bccdc.ca](mailto:christina.chociolko@bccdc.ca)
- [ray.copes@bccdc.ca](mailto:ray.copes@bccdc.ca)