



National Aboriginal Health Organization



Dialogue on Northern Research Whitehorse, Yukon Territory March 25 to 27, 2004

The three national research granting councils, the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), brought over 100 people with an interest in research conducted in the northern regions of Canada together in Whitehorse, Yukon for a three day workshop entitled *Dialogue on Northern Research*. The objectives of this workshop were to:

1. Facilitate the networking opportunities for stakeholders interested in northern research
2. Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to identify strengths, gaps and barriers to northern research and ideas for addressing those gaps and barriers
3. Identify actions to improve northern research and collaborations between natural sciences, social sciences and health science researchers, research users and research funders

The dialogue is the result of a paper released in 2000 by a joint SSHRC/NSERC task force, called *From Crisis to Opportunity*. This paper, developed after extensive northern consultations, tables a recommended approach to revitalizing research in the North. In 2001, CIHR conducted a series of town hall meetings in the North and, as a result, released a report that outlines health research issues. The Dialogue on Northern Research was an attempt to build on these documents, and provide strategic directions for the agencies to move forward.

The participation of the National Aboriginal Health Organization, specifically the Ajungginig Centre, at this dialogue was key, as one of NAHO's five objects is to facilitate research and research partnerships. This was an excellent venue for stakeholders with an interest in northern research to share their vision and aspirations for the future of research in the North. It also provided excellent networking opportunities for the Ajungginig Centre.

Items on the agenda of the dialogue included presentations by a variety of political and Aboriginal leaders, trends in northern research, what the present state of research in the North is, identification of gaps in northern research, as well as discussion on how to deal with those gaps and the identification of long and short-term priorities.

I would recommend that the Ajungginig Centre continue to participate in any further discussion such as this, as research priorities and agendas have an impact on both policy development for the North, and it is of key importance for NAHO, as a knowledge based organization, to have an understanding of the current state of research in the North.

A report on the dialogue is expected soon.