

# GREETINGS FROM CIHR AND NAHO



## ALAN BERNSTEIN, PRESIDENT CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research comprises 13 institutes, all dealing with some aspect of human health and disease. The Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health (IAPH), one of the 13, is in many ways a microcosm of the other 12 Institutes. Each of their health concerns is reflected, often to a marked degree, in the Aboriginal community. In increasing funding for research on Aboriginal health through the ACADRE programs, we (Dr. Jeff Reading, the Scientific Director of the IAPH) have prioritized training opportunities for health professionals, young Aboriginals and academics in Aboriginal health research. *Pimatziwin* performs a valuable function by providing a forum for health professionals, academics, and community members to learn from each other. I hope *Pimatziwin* will provide clear responses to the serious health challenges facing the Aboriginal community. CIHR is delighted to see this initiative take form and I personally wish you all good luck in this important endeavour.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF OF NAHO

We would like to congratulate Dr. Malcolm King and his team on their inaugural edition of *Pimatziwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health*. Aboriginal people are in the midst of a veritable storm of interest in research regarding Aboriginal people, our perceptions of our personal health status, and an interest in understanding the causes of the current unsatisfactory health circumstances. NAHO welcomes this new voice in Aboriginal Health research; we all benefit from diversity in approach and the possibility of finding common understandings.



# FROM THE GENERAL EDITOR

Welcome to *Pimatziwin* — an adventure in communication. One of our major goals is to circulate information about health research: methods, results, and applications. Another is to ensure that research is effectively circulated at the community level, increasing research partnerships with communities, providing examples of best research practices, and improving the application of health research results to community programming and local health policies.

Aboriginal health issues are most evident in the community, giving the term “community” its widest interpretation. Health starts at home; communities develop and deliver services and programs in support of healthy choices for families and individuals. *Pimatziwin* provides a forum for to communities, health professionals and academic researchers to work together to develop research and training programs. From these initiatives will come the research foundation for health policy change and development at local, provincial and federal levels, as we document community research activities, models and outcomes, and circulate them globally.

There is no area of life which does not touch the issue of health: infrastructure, living conditions, history, geography, diet, spiritual beliefs and practices, social conditions, and heredity all play a part in individual and community health. These are universal and we all benefit by sharing our knowledge and our questions as widely as possible.

Within these pages are articles, editorials, commentaries and profiles of people and projects. In each case, we have asked ourselves just one question before committing the article to the peer review process: is this information that will benefit Aboriginal communities? Timeliness, always an issue in the world of academic publishing, relates entirely to the needs of communities in *Pimatziwin*.

We welcome articles from all disciplines and perspectives where they touch on the issue of health. Articles that share research and community experiences are particularly valuable; they are the stories that teach us new ways of knowing our world. Articles received are sent to a minimum of two anonymous reviewers, one of whom is more focused in the community than either the health professions or the world of academia. In keeping with the oral tradition in the Aboriginal community, many of our reviews are con-

ducted by interview, transcribed, and checked with the reviewer before sending them on to the author. This approach is available at the reviewer's request. We have included some of these reviews after the articles where the comments seemed valuable to more than the author. In subsequent issues, we will include a section for Letters to the Editor as another venue for fostering the dialogue among communities, researchers, and health professionals.

The community of contributors for this inaugural issue includes members of indigenous communities, government officials, community health workers, graduate students and academics, school children and photographers. From Labrador to the prairies, Nunavut to Australia, we are exploring ways to think and talk about community research — from the moment of asking the question to the moment of reporting the results for the benefit of everyone.

— Nancy Gibson, General Editor