

Highlights from the 2008 Launch

(September 23, 2008) The Canadian Academy of Health Science launched a Major Assessment on: *Health System Transformation to Meet the Burden of Chronic Disease* at their fourth annual meeting.

Approximately 150 individuals Fellows and Sponsors attended a forum to:

1. explore key elements for achieving optimal health outcomes for children, adults and seniors with one or more chronic diseases;
2. identify the major structural barriers to developing effective, affordable and sustainable models of prevention and care; and
3. delineate implementation steps for transitioning to an effective Canadian system with clear roles and responsibilities.

The gathered Fellows and Sponsors broke into working groups to consider the appropriate scope for the Assessment and the kind of expertise required for an ideal Assessment Panel to take on this complex challenge. The audience suggested the assessment:

- Focus on chronicity and systems, rather than any individual diseases
- Connect and synthesize the key elements of successfully implemented initiatives into a sustainable strategy for health system transformation in Canada
- Mobilize transformative action across Canada by:
 - Identifying a few key points of leverage (strategic interventions to move forward, including primary prevention)
 - Thinking outside the box and engaging new partners in addition to traditional health care providers.

Penny Ballem (City Manager for Vancouver; former Deputy Minister of Health BC) and Louise Nasmith (Principal, College of Health Disciplines, UBC) are the Co-Chairs of the CAHS Assessment and facilitated the Forum.

All speakers garnered enthusiastic audience participation. Catherine Zahn (Executive Vice President, Clinical Programs and Practice, University Health Network) provided an outstanding plenary address. Two stimulating panel discussions featured: Louise Nasmith, Penny Ballem, William Reichmann (CEO, Baycrest Hospital), Ben Chan (CEO, Ontario Health Quality Council), Jean L. Rouleau (Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Montreal), the Hon. Michael J.L. Kirby (Chair, Mental Health Commission of Canada), Valerie Tregillus (Executive Director, Medical Services Division, BC Ministry of Health) and Eldon Smith (Professor Emeritus, University of Calgary).

A wrap-up session brought a number of ideas and threads together and provided an excellent launch for this latest Major Assessment.