

First-in-Canada Virtual Health Library Established

For Immediate Release

Halifax (June 28, 2010) - The Canadian Health Libraries Association is pleased to announce, in conjunction with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the development of the groundbreaking Canadian Virtual Health Library (CVHL). The CVHL, which is funded by CIHR through its Knowledge Synthesis and Exchange Branch for \$800,000 over three years, will provide all Canadian health professionals - administrators, policy and program planners, researchers and public health workers as well as clinicians, such as doctors and nurses - easy access to current, authoritative information and expert support from the network of libraries contributing to CVHL.

"Although there are excellent health library services in many parts of Canada, limitations in scope, jurisdiction and funding have made it extremely difficult to link and leverage resources to effectively address the gaps in access to information that many practitioners face," said Patrick Ellis, head of the W.K. Kellogg Library at Dalhousie University and the project's Principal Investigator. "The CVHL provides a groundbreaking opportunity to build on the strong foundations already in place in order to extend access to high-quality information resources and services to all Canadian health practitioners, whether working in a remote northern nursing station or in a large urban hospital."

The CVHL will build a pan-Canadian virtual client-centric network to link local, regional and provincial health library services and maximize resources through coordinated resource sharing and licensing. A bilingual web portal will provide an easy entry point to these resources and to library expertise. The result will be a tailored, rapid response to health professionals' requirements for evidence-based information to support patient care decisions, health promotion and public health programming.

"Supporting excellence in knowledge translation and synthesis is a cornerstone priority for CIHR," said Dr. Ian Graham, Vice President, Knowledge Translation at CIHR. "Because healthcare decisions need to be based on the latest and most authoritative information, the Canadian Virtual Health Library will dramatically increase the amount of information accessible to those in the medical community."

The CVHL will be rolled out over a three year period beginning in 2010 and is already being warmly received by individuals in the health research and medical service community.

"The Canadian Virtual Health Library will provide Canada's nurses with unprecedented access to library support. This will assist nurses in evidence-based decision making, regardless of their geographical location," said Kaaren Neufeld, President of the Canadian Nurses Association. "The coordinated access to information resources and services that will be made possible through the CVHL will also promote utilization of best practices and support nurses in fulfilling their mandate to enhance patient outcomes and provide safe, competent, ethical nursing care."

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