

*Report on behalf of  
Fraser Health Research Administration and Development*

# Identification of the Preferred Fraser Health Research Agenda

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#### Acknowledgement

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In 2008, Fraser Health received extension funding from the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Services Research (MSFHR) for the Health Authority Capacity Building grant. Part of this funding was awarded to facilitate the identification of a preferred research agenda for Fraser Health (FH). Concurrently, Dr. Nigel Murray, FH Chief Executive Officer, requested that Research Administration and Development develop its strategic plan. The strategic planning process that was undertaken coincided with the identification of research and academic development as a strategic imperative for Fraser Health with the goal of becoming an academic healthcare organization.

The identification of the preferred FH research agenda was integrated into the Strategic Planning process beginning in November 2008, with a presentation of final results and recommendations to the project's Strategic Advisory Committee on February 27, 2009.

Fraser Health (FH) Research Administration and Development (RAD) undertook a consultative approach to guide the identification of a 'research agenda' for the organization. The research agenda aims to encompass a broad continuum of activity and methods including externally funded and peer reviewed research through to program or site specific evaluations of processes or outcomes carried out by leaders or teams for their program and service needs.

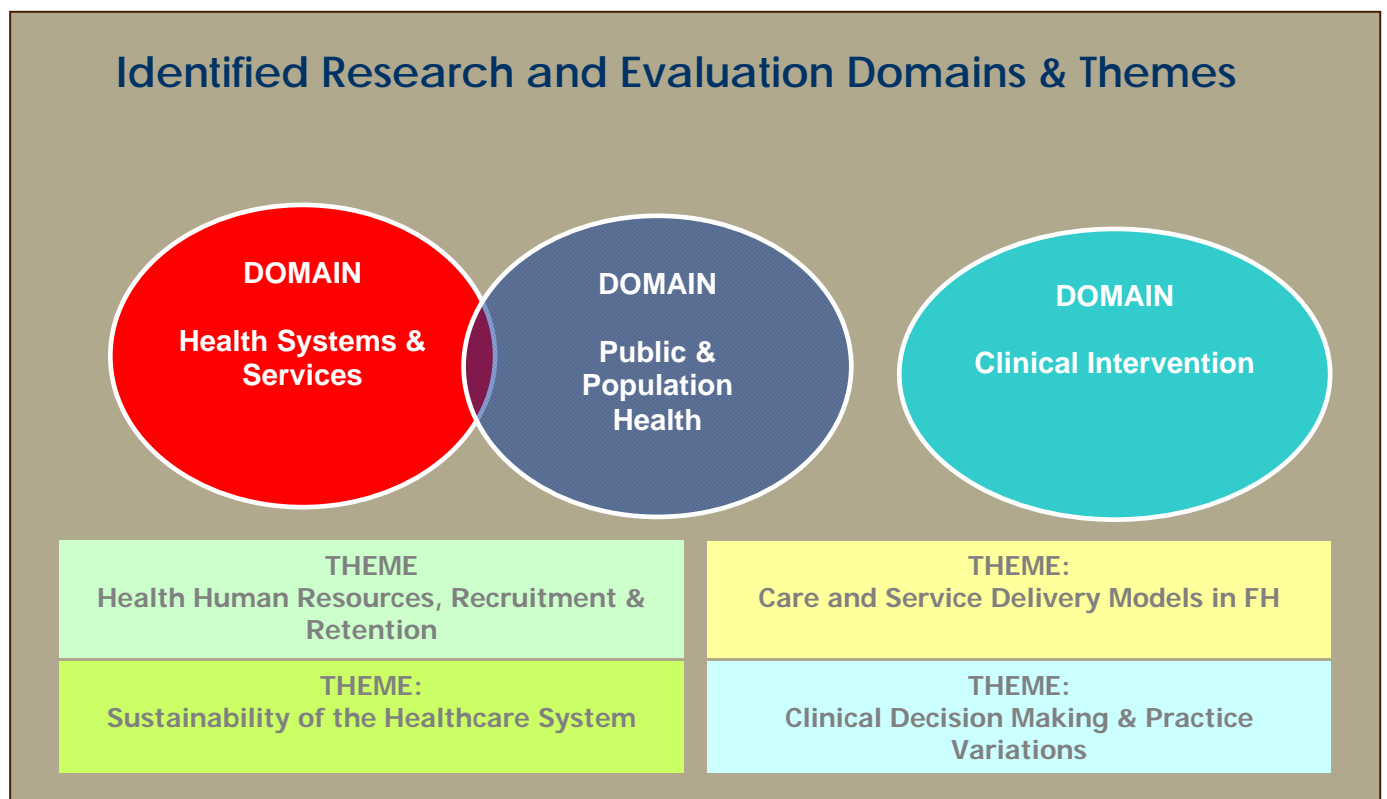
### **Return-On-Investment for Fraser Health in identifying a Research Agenda:**

- provides evidence for sound health care decision and policy-making
- aids in addressing health issues, leading to a healthier, more productive population
- provides a source of expertise and leadership for adapting and applying new approaches and interventions
- helps to address health system issues, improving quality, accessibility and sustainability
- builds strong programs that will attract health researchers, clinicians and students
- provides opportunities for highly skilled jobs in the health sector
- offers the potential for innovative business opportunities and economic growth
- produces health discoveries that lead to better health products and services

*(Adapted from SHRF, Shaping a Provincial Health Research Strategy for Saskatchewan, Advice for the Minister of Health from the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, 2004)*

The Listening Model (Lomas, 2003) methodology was chosen to identify FH research and evaluation priorities. It was developed specifically for the purpose of identifying short and longer term research priorities reflecting the needs and concerns of those involved in Canadian healthcare (i.e. managers, decision-makers, front line staff, and researchers). The process uses a consultative approach to identify issues, short and long term research themes, and research questions.

Based on the Listening Model, specific criteria provided a guideline for panel members, stakeholders and informants to identify the most pressing issues facing Fraser Health over the next 3 to 5 years and subsequent thematic areas of research. Figure 1 illustrates the three Research and Evaluation Domains and the four Themes that were identified as an outcome of this process.



**Figure One. Priority Areas for Fraser Health Research & Evaluation Domains and Themes (Fraser Health, 2009)** NB: research and evaluation domains and themes should be considered as equal in importance

Domain and theme areas are of equal importance, and are expected to guide program and service area teams as they develop, focus and strengthen their programs of research and evaluation and further build and develop their research/evaluation teams and expertise.

Research and Evaluation Themes indicate more specific areas of research or evaluation that can occur within a related domain, such that research questions can be developed specifically related to the thematic areas. Different methodologies can be applied to answer research and evaluation questions within the thematic area, leading to results that can be used for clinical or other decision making reasons.

As part of the consultation process, participants recognized that the following organizational requirements were necessary in order to effect robust research-evaluation and effective knowledge transfer in Fraser Health.

- Leadership to integrate research into practice (support and incentives for staff to conduct research in Fraser Health)
- Leadership to integrate the evidence-base into practice (increased understanding of the evidence-base and its application)
- Organization with a Knowledge Management Strategy
- Recruitment and retention supported by healthy workplace policies and practice
- Requirement for an organizational shift in culture in FH in order to become an academic healthcare organization embracing research, teaching and training.
- Leadership to determine ways to provide sustainable infrastructure and support for research and evaluation.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Preferred FH Research and Evaluation agenda will be communicated with program areas and portfolios in the Fraser Health Authority in order to increase awareness and guide research and evaluation activities. The identified domain and

theme areas will serve as a guideline for development and will act as a tool in order to clarify and operationalize tactical details in planning research and evaluation.

The agenda will require review on an annual basis in order to ensure that Research Administration and Development is on track with the research and evaluation requirements and trends of the Health Authority, its researchers and evaluation teams.