

NEW

February 17, 2010

Director

The Exchange Team wants your input!

Do you use DEBI, JAC, ALI or MIKE on The Exchange? Please complete the team's two-minute online [survey](#) and tell them which tools and features are useful in your job and any additions or improvements you'd like. Never use The Exchange? You can still help. They'd like to hear what they can do to encourage you to use these time-saving tools.

Showcase links health research and quality of care for Ontarians



Andre Van Vugt photos

The 2009 Health Research Showcase featured a panel discussion on improving evidence-informed decision making within organizations. Moderated by Jonathan Lomas (at the podium), founder of the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, the panel featured, from left to right: Sharon Straus, scientist, Keenan Research Centre, Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute, St. Michael's Hospital; Gwen Dubois-Wing, chief executive officer, North West Local Health Integration Network; Adalsteinn Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health System Strategy; Vivek Goel, president and chief executive officer, Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion; and Tom Closson, president and chief executive officer, Ontario Hospital Association.

Linking health research and quality health care for Ontarians was the theme of the 2009 Health Research Showcase, a one-day conference held at Queen's Park last fall. The event brought together more than 200 people, including representatives from the ministry, the Local Health Integration Networks, and hospitals; a wide range of leaders from the health care and health research sectors; and more than 70 researchers who have received ministry funding for their research projects.

The conference encouraged collaboration and systems thinking, giving both researchers and the broader health care sector the opportunity to network, exchange knowledge and explore the most current and leading-edge health research.

"Our goal for the day was to bridge the gaps among research, practice and policy, and to link the producers and users of research. This encourages the use of research to both continually improve the quality of care and to obtain improved health outcomes," said Vasanthi Srinivasan, director of the Health System Planning and Research Branch, Health System Strategy, which organized the event.

A focal point of the day was three sessions of 2-Minute Pitch presentations by researchers, on themes currently at the forefront of health care research in Ontario: Caring with Open Arms — Access and Equity, Caring with All Our Might — Capacity and Efficiency, and The Frontiers of Care — Productivity and Innovation. Throughout the day, attendees had the chance to meet the researchers and view posters which provide detailed summaries of their projects.

"These interactions sparked lots of conversations between researchers and policy makers where that vital knowledge transfer between the two can take

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Vasanthi Srinivasan, director of the Health System Planning and Research Branch, Health System Strategy, delivers her opening remarks at the 2009 Health Research Showcase.

Conference garners kudos from participants

“Wonderful opportunity to bring policy decision makers and researchers together.”

“Super panel and keynote speaker. This is really an essential commitment to pursue.”

“Thank you. Very good format, content, connections.”

“Hope this is an annual event.”

“Great format — great to have a non-research keynote”



Dr. Christopher Parshuram, a staff physician with the Critical Care Program at the Hospital for Sick Children, and an associate professor in the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine, discusses his project, Implementing the Bedside Pediatric Early Warning System, with Jennifer Stinson, from the Hospital for Sick Children.

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place,” said Srinivasan. “Establishing this relationship encourages the use of evidence-based research in the development of innovative policies and practices.”

Former Deputy Minister Ron Sapsford said the day provided attendees with insight into some of the research challenges involved in providing cost-effective, quality health care.



Moir Stewart, from the Thames Valley Family Practice Research Unit, gives her 2-Minute Pitch on her research project, The quest for knowledge about the primary health care system.



Robert Petrella, who is funded through the Drug Innovation Fund, at his poster for his team's research project, Diabetes and Technology for Increased Activity (DaTA): Self-monitoring solutions for health promotion. Petrella shares his work with Clara Fitzgerald, from the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging, University of Western Ontario.

“By necessity, research must be the basis for value creation if we are to successfully tackle issues ranging from accessibility and avoidable deaths, to escalating costs and sub-optimal health outcomes,” Sapsford said.

“As a steward charged with making decisions that affect the performance of the health care system, I challenge you to produce the evidence that will lead to innovations and improve the way we deliver services to the people of Ontario.”

Research plays a vital role in the broader effort to reshape Ontario's health care system into a stewardship model, Sapsford said. “That is, to work cooperatively within a culture of stewardship, to take the evidence researchers produce and develop best practices, policies and legislation.”

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The 2009 Health Research Showcase brought together researchers, policy makers and leaders from the health care sector to exchange knowledge about the latest research studies, and to discuss how these can be translated into evidence-based policies, practices and innovations.

Conference focuses on three themes at the forefront of Ontario's health care research



Geoff Fernie, vice-president of research at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, moderated the day's first 2-Minute Pitch session on the research theme The Frontiers of Care — Productivity and Innovation.

Research Evidence Tool now mandatory in policy and strategy development

The Health System Planning and Research Branch's Research Evidence Tool (RET) helps ministry teams developing strategy and policy documents make full use of ministry resources. The RET provides contact information, links and details on how to acquire research evidence from a variety of internal and external resources, and also provides a checklist to ensure that the best available evidence has informed strategy and policy development.

As of Jan. 15, 2010, the RET is now mandatory for all policy and strategy documents intended for Ministry Management Committee (MMC) and/or Cabinet. Access [RET](#) on INFOweb, under Policy Tools. ■

Read the 2009 Health Research Showcase [program book](#) for the day's agenda and descriptions, posters and abstracts of all research projects featured at the conference.

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John Hirdes and Andrew Costa, both researchers from the University of Waterloo and members of the Ontario Home Care Research Network, attended the Showcase to present their study on understanding the transition needs of alternate level of care patients waiting for long-term care.

"As researchers, we often have our own judgments about where our work fits in the policy arena. Events like this give us a wider viewpoint of how our work might support policy development in the system as a whole," Costa said. "You then take that policy insight you gain and use it to frame your research questions, and ultimately your future research projects."

In his closing remarks to attendees, Adalsteinn Brown, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health System Strategy, noted that it is common in our society to hear about the role and value of research for driving innovation in business or industry.

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Caring with All Our Might — Capacity and Efficiency: Maximizing the capacity of the health care system by ensuring that existing resources are distributed in the most productive fashion. Areas of focus include health human resource personnel and workforce, organizational structures, models of care delivery, and capacity utilization.

Caring with Open Arms — Access and Equity: Striving toward a health system that is equally accessible to all Ontarians. Areas of focus include underserved groups and the impacts of equity and inequity on the entire system

The Frontiers of Care — Productivity and Innovation: Conceiving bold new solutions for health problems that challenge the current system. Areas of focus include management innovation and strategic health technology and assessment. ■



Left, Rick Glazier, a senior scientist with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, and a core scientist with the Centre for Research on Inner City Health at Toronto's St. Michael's Hospital, and Dr. Vivek Goel, president and CEO of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion.



Andrew Costa, a researcher from the Department of Health Studies and Gerontology at the University of Waterloo, discusses a point with Hasmik Beglaryan, research manager at The Change Foundation. Costa and fellow researcher John Hirdes conducted a project on understanding the transition needs of alternate level of care patients waiting for long-term care.



Expanded

DEBI

puts a range of useful business resources at your fingertips

Olivia Mercy, an administrative assistant for the Assistive Devices Program, Direct Services, was delighted to find that a helpful primer on producing correspondence was accessible right from her desktop, through the online tool DEBI (Decision Enabling Business Intelligence). Like a virtual toolbox, DEBI is filled with an array of planning and decision-making tools, business applications and forms that are useful to all ministry staff. DEBI is one of four comprehensive tools, including JAC, MIKE and ALI, which are part of the ministry’s popular web portal, [The Exchange](#).

While DEBI has been in place for two years, it has recently undergone a makeover — expanding from five to 40 business applications, and reorganized to be more user friendly, by grouping links to resources into the following categories:

- [Clinical Tools](#)
- [Financial Tools](#)
- [Health Human Resources](#)
- [Strategic Tools](#)
- [Business Administrative Resources \(BAR\)](#)

See page 5 for a description of the valuable tools in each section.

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The BAR suite of tools reflect the needs of administrative staff because the section was developed with their input and collaboration.

Read the 2009 Health Research Showcase [program book](#) for the day’s agenda and descriptions, posters and abstracts of all research projects featured at the conference.



Bruce Minore, from the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research, talks about his research on stroke education for First Nations in northwestern Ontario, with the ministry’s Nancy Garvey, senior program consultant, Provincial Programs Branch, Negotiations and Accountability Management.

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Research plays the same vital role in fostering innovation in health care, Brown said, yet this is not as widely known or promoted to the general public.

“We have not made that jump in the same way in health services. This is a huge area where we could be showing and reinforcing the value proposition of research in health care and the vital role it plays in driving

innovation and improvement in health care,” Brown said.

“I think we can even argue that as we start to better understand that value proposition of research in improving health care, we will see a better integration between researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and providers, and ultimately the public.” ■

Attendees vote for top poster in each research category

While all of the posters displayed at Showcase received positive feedback on their excellent quality, there can only be one winner for each of the three conference research themes.

Conference organizers extend their congratulations to:

Theme	Winner	Project
The Frontiers of Care — Productivity and Innovation	Bruce Minore, Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research	“As the rivers flow” — Stroke education for First Nations in Northwestern Ontario
Caring with Open Arms — Access and Equity	Anna Travers, Rainbow Health Ontario	Promoting health access and equity for Ontario’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual communities
Caring with All Our Might — Capacity and Efficiency	John Hirdes, Ontario Home Care Research Network	Understanding the needs and transitions of Ontario’s acute alternate level of care (ALC) patients waiting for long-term care

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The BAR is now open!

Mercy was recently exploring the revamped DEBI, when a number of administrative tools in the recently added BAR section caught her eye. “The Correspondence Guideline is very useful,” Mercy said. “It includes information on communication style, how to properly format specific kinds of documents and the correct way to refer to citations.”

Mercy also noted that the online step-by-step primer on the ministry’s electronic approvals process — known as the Yellow Brick Road — and the boardroom booking tool are BAR resources she and her colleagues make good use of in their daily work. “Without the BAR, I’d have to seek out these resources in several different places,” said Mercy.

The BAR suite of tools reflect the needs of administrative staff because the section was developed with their input and collaboration. The Knowledge Management Branch (KMB), Health System Information Management and Investment, developed BAR in collaboration with the Managers of Administration Council (MAC), a team that focuses on ensuring administrative staff have the necessary skills and resources to effectively fulfill their roles.

Administration managers Brian Evoy and Janet Martell, both from Corporate Services, played a liaison role with KMB, and met with ministry managers, directors, executive assistants, and administrative assistants to determine their business needs. MAC then developed and tested tools to be included in BAR, gathering feedback from administrative staff along the way. “Working with Kim Gallant (information management search consultant with the KMB) and her team to organize the section has been a great experience,” said Martell. “They’ve been receptive to our ideas and have guided us through the development of this very practical resource.”

Martell said she has seen immediate benefits to having so many resources in one convenient location.

“Administrative assistants need to get up to speed very quickly when they move from one office to another. Knowing exactly where to find essential tools is invaluable,” Martell said.

Yvonne Johannes, administrative assistant, Exceptional Access Program Branch, Ontario Public Drug Programs Division agrees. “BAR is like a one-stop shopping centre. It’s an excellent time saver tool for documents that I use everyday,” Johannes said. ■

Help us improve The Exchange!

Please take two minutes to complete our online [survey](#)

Do you use DEBI, JAC, ALI or MIKE on The Exchange? We need your feedback to make these tools more productive for you. How often do you use The Exchange? Which tools and features are useful in your job? Are there new resources that you would like added?

Never use The Exchange? You can still help. By using The Exchange, you can improve your decision-making process, do literature searches, collaborate with colleagues, and more. These tools are available in one convenient location on INFOweb, and we’d like to know what we can do to encourage you to use them.

Thanks for your input!
The Exchange Team

DEBI cuts search time for online tools you use daily

1

Clinical Tools assist in health system planning and decision making. This includes information/data resources, data warehouses and registries related to observing and diagnosing symptoms of disease. For example, the Health Care Improvement Practices Registry contains improvement practices that impact hospitals, Community Care Access Centres, and long-term care homes. While the LHIN Health Atlas provides access to maps depicting local level health care providers and health-related information and metrics.

2

Financial Tools support health system planning and decision-making by providing the ministry and its partners access to information on financial management and expenditure control. For example, the Community Health Centre Financial Reporting System allows Community Health Centres to submit budgets online.

3

Health Human Resources area provides information for future health human resources planning and decision-making. For example, the Health Information and Resource Directory is an online directory of information resources, data warehouses and other tools managed by the ministry and its affiliated agencies.

4

Strategic Tools contain applications used to measure and guide strategic health system performance improvement initiatives and to compare results across the health system for benchmarking best practices. For example, the Ontario Health System Scorecard contains 30 performance indicators that measure the performance of the health system against 14 strategic objectives or dimensions of performance.

5

Business Administrative Resources (BAR) contains tools that support day-to-day government and ministry business administration operations. Links include procurements policies/directives, visual identity standards, INFO-GO, contract management documents and human resources guidelines/directives/documents. ■

Want to see something new added to DEBI?

Staff are encouraged to share any applications that they would like to see added to DEBI, through The Exchange’s online [survey](#) or by contacting the Exchange Solution Desk at exchange@ontario.ca.