

# Research Update

Stay informed with news from Heart & Stroke

## NATIONAL

### Official award notifications 2017/18

Official award notifications for all 2017/18 H&S research funding competitions (Grants-In-Aid, Senior Personnel Awards, and Emerging Research Leaders Initiative awards) have been sent to all successful applicants. The Grant Management Guidelines can be found on our [website](#). Congratulations to all successful grant and award recipients!

### Research strategy update

An update on the research strategy was shared last month: it included the announcement of our new mission critical areas (MCAs), as well as a call for nominations for the two inaugural MCA councils: heart failure and stroke. In case you missed it, the update can be found on our [website](#). Thank you to those that submitted nominations by the April 18<sup>th</sup> deadline – we appreciate you taking the time to assist us in developing these council memberships!

We look forward to sharing more news surrounding this exciting initiative with you in June, please stay tuned!

### Canadian Stroke Congress: registration opens the week of May 8, 2017!

The [Canadian Stroke Congress](#) is a uniquely Canadian forum in which participants reflecting “bench-to-bedside-to-community” perspectives of stroke can exchange ideas, collaborate, and learn about innovation in stroke prevention, treatment, and recovery.

The Canadian Stroke Congress normally attracts more than 800 delegates from across Canada and around the world. Delegates include leading neurologists, neurointerventionalists, internists, general practitioners, nurses, rehabilitation specialists, basic scientists, knowledge-translation experts, and policy makers in the field of stroke.

This year we’re excited to be returning to the city that hosted the largest ever Canadian Stroke Congress: Calgary, AB.

We look forward to welcoming Canada’s best and brightest minds in stroke research, prevention, care, and recovery at the eighth Canadian Stroke Congress!

Registration opens the week of May 8, 2017; take advantage of [early-bird registration](#) until July 7, 2017!

### **Current Funding Opportunity**

#### **Chair: Hypertension Prevention and Control (2017)**

This is a new funding opportunity being offered by the CIHR Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health (ICRH) in partnership with Heart & Stroke and Hypertension Canada. Please visit [ResearchNet](#) to learn more!

#### **A visionary leader!**

We are thrilled to congratulate Dr. Antoine Hakim, founding CEO and scientific director of the Heart & Stroke Canadian Partnership for Stroke Recovery, and CEO of the Canadian Stroke Network, on being honoured with the prestigious 2017 Canada Gairdner Wightman Award – for his outstanding research into stroke and championing stroke prevention and treatment in Canada and beyond. The Gairdner Awards celebrate the world's best and brightest biomedical researchers. Click [here](#) to read more!

#### **Spotlight on Heart & Stroke scientists**

##### **Preventing stroke using mobile, patient-centred technology to detect heart rhythm abnormalities: Dr. Jeff Healey**

A common heart rhythm disturbance, called atrial fibrillation, is one of the leading causes of stroke in older individuals. However; thanks in large part to research conducted by Canadian scientists, we have blood thinning medications that can safely prevent two-thirds of strokes in patients with atrial fibrillation. Although patients with atrial fibrillation often experience symptoms such as a rapid pulse or skipped heart beats, a recent Canadian study suggests that the majority of older individuals with atrial fibrillation are not aware that they have the condition. As a result, an important number of patients have their atrial fibrillation detected only after a potentially preventable stroke has occurred.

The past 5 years have seen the development and refinement of several handheld technologies which can be effectively used by members of the general, non-medical population to diagnose atrial fibrillation. The Canadian Stroke Prevention Intervention Network ([www.cspin.ca](http://www.cspin.ca)), in collaboration with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and industry partners had conducted a series of pilot studies to evaluate these technologies in a variety of community-based settings. In the first of these studies, trained community volunteers screened 1100 individuals over the age of 65 for atrial fibrillation in a community pharmacy, with a single recording made by a handheld device. The study led by Dr. Roopinder Sandhu (University of Alberta) identified previously unrecognized atrial fibrillation in 2.5% of individuals; and in nearly 8% of individuals over the age of 85 years.

In a second study, Dr. Russell Quinn (University of Calgary) compared three screening technologies in patients presenting to family practice clinics in Alberta and Ontario. A new diagnosis of atrial fibrillation was found in a smaller proportion of patients (0.6%); however, detection of the problem led to use of blood thinning medications in over 83% of individuals. Two additional studies are ongoing in Ontario; one using a wearable patch technology (attach photo) and one using a device linked to a smart phone to continuously monitor patients for several weeks. Patients' impression of these non-invasive technologies has been positive, and non-medical individuals have found the technologies easy to use.

Based on the ease of use of these technologies, their accuracy for identifying atrial fibrillation and the large numbers of individuals identified during the pilot studies, CSPIN is planning a much larger study to determine if the development of community-based atrial fibrillation screening programs can reduce the number of Canadians who suffer stroke. If this study achieves its goal, atrial fibrillation screening could become another evidence-based way for older individuals to improve their chances of healthy aging.

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## NOVA SCOTIA



### 2017/18 Nova Scotia *BrightRed* Student Research Awards Program

The goal of the *BrightRed* Student Research Awards Program is to recognize excellent emerging cardiovascular and cerebrovascular researchers in Nova Scotia at differing stages of career

development. It provides financial support to students and trainees enrolled in research-based Masters, Doctoral, Postdoctoral, or Doctor of Medicine training programs at academic institutions in Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia Heart & Stroke staff, working alongside the Research Advisory Committee, are pleased to share the call for applications for the 2017/18 Nova Scotia *BrightRed* Student Research Awards. Applications are available [here](#) with a submission deadline of **Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017 by 4:00 p.m. (AST)**. Follow Heart & Stroke's social channels for updates on the Nova Scotia *BrightRed* Student Research Awardee selection process!

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## MANITOBA

### Weird and wonderful matters of the heart:

#### From snake venom to hemp seeds, Manitoba is a hotbed for cardiac research

This past Heart Month, Heart & Stroke researchers in Manitoba were highlighted in an interesting article, published in the Winnipeg Free Press. Click [here](#) to read more!

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## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### First Nations Health Authority Chair in Heart Health and Wellness at St. Paul's Hospital

Heart & Stroke has committed \$500,000 to support the First Nations Health Authority Chair in Heart Health and Wellness at St. Paul's Hospital.

Indigenous people in Canada are up to two times more likely to develop heart disease than the general population. Although 80 percent of premature heart disease and stroke is preventable, there are many barriers to the elements of prevention, such as access to healthy food.

The First Nations Health Authority Chair in Heart Health and Wellness, co-developed by St. Paul's Hospital, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and Simon Fraser University (SFU), is a global first. With a holistic focus on First Nations heart health to drive research, the goal is to improve First Nations health outcomes.

Dr. Jeff Reading, a leading international expert in Indigenous health, has been named the inaugural First Nations Health Authority Chair in Heart Health and Wellness at St. Paul's. His responsibilities will include leading research to develop health promotion strategies that incorporate First Nations history, culture and spirit and producing health knowledge for policies and programs.

"Heart & Stroke's support will help improve the health of our communities," says Dr. Reading. "We are developing an I-HEART (Indigenous Health Education Access Research Training) Centre, to challenge the status quo and support improved cardiovascular health by concentrating on the role of social and economic influences that shape health risks and disease progression and by promoting achieving optimal health through early intervention and through all developmental stages of life's progression, including the well-being of Elders."