

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### ***ALBERTA HERITAGE FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH S.E.A.R.C.H. PROGRAM STEERING COMMITTEE***

#### **Background**

The SEARCH Program is a made-in-Alberta program that provides one mechanism to help all health regions support decisions about health care planning and priorities with sound, locally relevant evidence. It is built on a team of provincial organizations – AHFMR, health authorities, universities, and government. SEARCH provides an opportunity to develop local expertise for collaborative applied health research and evidence-based decision-making.

Since its establishment in 1996, SEARCH has engaged more than 75 health practitioners around Alberta in the “how-to’s” of conducting relevant research, accessing and assessing high quality information, and applying it in decision-making. SEARCH helps build community-based expertise and provincial research teams that can ask and answer questions relevant to the health issues critical in each community.

SEARCH develops and supports PEOPLE firmly rooted in both the practice environment and the research culture, and builds bridges between decision-makers and researchers. It helps link local research activity to business priorities, and creates an exchange between the needs of the service delivery system and academic research agendas.

SEARCH enhances the ability of health authorities to make high quality decisions, based on quality evidence.

SEARCH trains and supports people

- to acquire, aggregate, interpret and apply health information
- for individual, regional and provincial health decisions and programs
- to facilitate more effective management of the health system.

#### **SEARCH Steering Committee**

The SEARCH program, while administered by the AHFMR, is expected by the Foundation to function in close collaboration with all stakeholders, partners and contributors. The system-wide goals of the program cannot be achieved by unilateral action on the part of any single organization.

#### ***Purpose***

This Committee is to provide advice, direction and assistance in the design, development, implementation, communication and evaluation of the Program for Swift Efficient Application of Research in Community Health.

**Terms of Reference  
SEARCH Program Steering  
Committee 2000-2005**



The terms of reference of the Committee will be reviewed and revised annually.

***Functions***

1. To articulate and endorse program vision, goals and strategies
2. To provide feedback, direction, and acceptance of program plans and activities that include
  - Recruitment and selection of SEARCH participants
  - Establishment of faculty teams for program delivery
  - Curriculum design and delivery mechanisms
  - Evaluation and assessment of program success
  - Integration and linkage with other relevant Foundation and system activities
  - Support of the ongoing community of expertise and collaboration among SEARCHers
3. To advise on strategic and business planning for a sustainable SEARCH program, including governance models and processes for the program
4. To participate in communications and relationships with stakeholders through promotion of and advocacy for SEARCH, and identification of concerns and areas for attention by the program
5. To inform the SEARCH program with respect to issues and developments provincially and nationally that will impact on success
6. To advise on any other matters which may be referred to the Committee by stakeholders or the Foundation.

***Reporting relationships***

This committee advises the Foundation, through advice to the President and CEO and senior staff. The committee communicates with stakeholders through:

- Minutes and representations as necessary to the Health Research Advisory Committee and the Health Advisory Committee of AHFMR
- Minutes to the Department heads of faculties involved in SEARCH
- Communication as advised by the Committee to the constituencies of interest

***Appointments***

Members are appointed by the President and Chief Executive Officer of AHFMR with input from the current members and senior staff, and on the advice of the Council of CEOs, the Council of Chairs, the Department Heads of contributing faculties, and SEARCH alumni. Members will be appointed on the basis of their individual background, skills, and interest, and will not be expected to represent the views of their organization.

**Terms of Reference  
SEARCH Program Steering  
Committee 2000-2005**



***Membership***

Will consist of 8-10 experienced individuals from Alberta who will include:

- A health authority Chief Executive Officer
- A health authority board member
- A health authority senior manager
- Participants from the SEARCH program
- A faculty member from the University of Calgary
- A faculty member from the University of Alberta
- A representative from Alberta Health and Wellness

An effort will be made to ensure balance in terms of geographic distribution and expertise, in particular information management and educational expertise. Committee members will be encouraged to identify one alternative from their constituency who can be appropriately briefed and replace them when absent.

***Terms***

Three year initial appointment, in line with the planning and delivery of SEARCH training sessions, with possibility of renewal, and at least two members continuing from the previous term.

***Chair***

Director, Applied Health Research Programs

***Sub Committees***

To meet the ongoing needs and timelines of the program while ensuring appropriate consultation and communication with stakeholders, working groups and task groups will be established as needed to advise the program on specific matters and between meetings.

Working groups will be sub-committees with responsibility for advising on specific areas of program development throughout the term of the committee. These areas may include: Curriculum, Recruitment and selection; Strategic planning; Ongoing SEARCH support and network.

Task groups will be ad-hoc groups with focussed short-term objectives to address specific topic areas, such as a mission statement etc.

Sub-committees will meet by teleconference as needed. Sub-committees will be chaired by one member of the Steering Committee and will include additional people as necessary from outside the Steering committee.

**Terms of Reference  
SEARCH Program Steering  
Committee 2000-2005**



***Meetings***

Will be held six (6) times annually in the planning phase of a training session, four times annually at other times.

***Administrative support***

All administrative and logistical support will be provided by AHFMR staff of the SEARCH program, with back-up from faculty-based SEARCH support staff. Honoraria and expenses will be paid in accordance with AHFMR policies.