

SEARCH IV Interim Evaluation
The Saskatchewan Experience
January 2005

The information in this summary comes from four previous evaluations conducted of the SEARCH program in Alberta, all material housed in the SEARCH files at HQC, and interviews with Saskatchewan participants and faculty, managers from the participating Health Regions, faculty sponsors, the director of SEARCH, and the CEO of AHFMR. The evaluation plan followed the SEARCH blueprint (2001) by using suggested interview questions and framework.

Evidence that the SEARCH Program in Alberta is Successful

- Several evaluations conducted of the program in Alberta show that a majority of participants have benefited from:
 1. Access to the SEARCH network.
 2. Improved job satisfaction, leadership skills, and ability to influence decision-making.
 3. Increased respect and recognition from employers and colleagues.
 4. Increased value to the organization.
- Previous evaluations also show that sponsoring organizations have benefited:
 1. Participants report important information sharing with their organizations.
 2. Findings from individual and group projects have contributed to decision-making in participating organizations.
 3. SEARCH participation has facilitated evidence-based decision-making in participating organizations.
- The program continues to get strong support from AHFMR.

Evidence that Saskatchewan's Participation in SEARCH is Successful

For Participants (SEARCHers and Faculty):

- Increase in skills such as conducting, interpreting and using research. Also (for some) an increase in public speaking, confidence, proposal writing skills, and Internet use.
- The ability to tap into the broad SEARCH network established in Alberta, as well as the ability to make linkages with others in this province based on their SEARCH participation.
- Access to high quality information technology used in the SEARCH program.
- The experience was so positive that participants and faculty would want to be involved in any future Saskatchewan endeavour with SEARCH to some degree.

For the Immediate Work Environment (SEARCHers and Faculty):

- An increase in confidence in interpreting and using research evidence.
- Knowledge transfer through informal communication as well as formal presentations.

- Colleagues seeking out participants and faculty to access knowledge, technology, and/or the SEARCH network.
- Formation of collaborations and new research potential.

For the Health Regions:

- Formal education sessions for staff that received extremely positive feedback. Plan to repeat in the future and expand to a broader audience.
- Regions are using information from participants' group and individual projects, and contact with faculty, to inform decision-making.

In general:

- The Alberta program benefited from having Saskatchewan participate. For example, all participants benefited from interaction and knowledge exchange with others from a different provincial health system.
- There is strong interest in seeing this program continue in Saskatchewan from many different organizations. (University of Saskatchewan, Health Science Deans Committee, College of Nursing, SHRF, FNIHB in Saskatchewan, Regina Qu'Appelle, Saskatoon, Five Hills, and Heartland Health Regions)

Key Elements that need to be in Place in Saskatchewan to Maximize the Success of this Program

- Time commitment is key to make SEARCH participation successful. The sponsoring organization not only needs to protect time for the participant but also needs to understand the value of the participation in the program. It is also a considerable time commitment for faculty but highly valuable.
- Supportive organizational culture, which can be fostered by regular attendance at SEARCH Managers' meetings.
- Clarity of roles for participants, faculty, sponsoring Health Regions, and funding organization. Continuity of all key individuals would be ideal.
- A large network of participants and faculty to maximize capacity building.
- Sophisticated information technology and ongoing assistance to use that information technology.
- Mechanism to gather and respond to participant feedback on a regular basis.
- Participants and faculty that can fully contribute to and benefit from SEARCH.
- SEARCHers who are in a position to influence decision-making within their organizations.
- Diverse group of participants (physicians, nurses, managers etc.) on a level playing field and support available for those who require it.
- Include input from Saskatchewan participants and faculty, who participated in SEARCH IV, in the development and administration of any future collaboration.

Reminder: Program is not finished; these results are all short-term. The final evaluation may reveal additional long-term benefits or challenges.