



# 10 years of **impact**

O'Brien Institute for Public Health



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

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# What's in a name...

*Gail and David O'Brien — philanthropists, community leaders and naming donors of the Institute*

We made the decision to name the O'Brien Institute for Public Health in 2014, and not a moment has gone by since, that we are not incredibly proud of supporting such a critically-needed research resource.

When we made the decision to name the Institute nearly six years ago, health care in the 21<sup>st</sup> century had become prohibitively costly. The long-term trend had seen provinces spend as much as 45 per cent of their total budget on health care, redirecting funds from other critical services to pay for care delivery.

New ways of delivering care and a focus on prevention had become an imperative. We felt this Institute, through its research, could make important inroads in shaping and designing more efficient and effective approaches to health care delivery, new models of care such as care at home, and develop sophisticated new ways to create knowledge with which to enable the prediction of illness, and the guiding of prevention strategies. In short — “Better health and health care.”

Under the extraordinary leadership of Dr. Bill Ghali and his renowned reputation for creating magic at the Institute, remarkable success and progress has been made over the last 10 years. The groundbreaking research being conducted has led to evidence-based solutions, resulting in changes to government policy and tangible societal impact.

What an enriching and rewarding experience it has been to be part of advancing the Institute's mission. It is also an experience we have shared with the Institute's Strategic Advisory Board, a group of dedicated business, community, and health leaders, whose relentless commitment and contributions to the Institute over the last 10 years has made us truly grateful.

We have been, and continue to be, incredibly excited to be part of this journey.

**Gail and David O'Brien**



## “It has been an honour...”

### *Marking a decade of achievement*

As Scientific Director of the O'Brien Institute for Public Health, it has been an honour to witness the meaningful societal benefit arising from the rigorous research being conducted in Calgary in general, and by our O'Brien Institute for Public Health membership more specifically. Public Health is a very broad field that is variably defined, so we target our efforts toward providing reliable, unbiased research findings to inform our community stakeholders on topics relating to health. This information helps policy makers and practitioners improve our health systems and — more importantly — enhance the overall economic, environmental, and sociopolitical characteristics of our community, which determine our health even more powerfully than do health systems.

The year 2020 marks the Institute's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As we observe this occasion, we are eager to build on a reputation we have nurtured as a trusted knowledge broker, by fostering additional community connections and leveraging sustainable funding with which to complement David and Gail O'Brien's generous naming donation. Indeed, our Institute belongs to all of you, and we are keen to enlist you as strategic partners in our journey. Our commitment is to produce better health and health care for all — in Calgary, Alberta, nationally, and beyond.

I leave the position of Scientific Director in 2020 with some sadness, because serving as Institute director has been a tremendous honour and profound personal journey in which I have had the privilege to meet and learn from so many of you in this community. Going forward, I know that the Institute's future is bright. The O'Brien Institute will continue to thrive, and will go on to reach new and great heights, because the strength of this Institute is all of you — our members and the vibrant and engaged Calgary community. As the University of Calgary's new Vice President (Research), I look forward to seeing the Institute carry on this most exciting of journeys!

**Dr. William Ghali, MD**

*Scientific Director, O'Brien Institute for Public Health*



# The beginning

## *On the Origins of the O'Brien Institute for Public Health* | by Tom Feasby

The Faculty of Medicine (now the Cumming School of Medicine), in partnership with the Calgary Health Region, made a major investment in research in the early 2000s, creating six research institutes, each with a distinct focus — neuroscience, cardiac science, bone and joint, child health, inflammation and cancer. Each, in turn, was named after a major donor. This represented a significantly new and promising approach to research that soon began to bear fruit.

When I became Dean in July 2007, the six research institutes were developing at various rates, some thriving more than others. But it was still early days and the model seemed sound. I was interested in a public health institute, in part because of my background in health services research and in part because I had witnessed firsthand the creation of a Faculty of Public Health at the University of Alberta. I believed the UAlberta model could be strengthened at UCalgary, by synergizing health services and population health research within one entity, rather than separating them within different faculties.

Conversations with Tom Noseworthy, Head of the Department of Community Health Sciences, and Bill Ghali, a leading health services researcher, among others, informed me about the history and challenges to date of “institute seven.” I was encouraged to pursue this project by Tom and Bill and took it to the Provost to get the go ahead.

I commissioned Tom Noseworthy to proceed with the vision of a University-wide institute, spanning departments and faculties and including outside partners such as the Calgary Health Region, the City of Calgary and the provincial government. The institute was to include both traditional public health themes and health services research and would not be a separate faculty but would remain an integral part of the University under the aegis of the Cumming School of Medicine. Tom was very successful in recruiting a wide variety of university faculty and clinicians from most UCalgary faculties and beyond. The Calgary Institute for Population and Public Health was officially formed on July 1, 2010, and received modest annual “start-up” funding from the Faculty of Medicine.



After a very successful planning period and launch by Tom Noseworthy, an external search process resulted in the appointment of Bill Ghali as the institute director. Bill has now led the Institute through a decade of remarkable growth, recruiting and inspiring outstanding young scientists, creating a top external Advisory Board, connecting the Institute to the community and improving its impact. The most important step after the first five years was

the investment by Gail and David O'Brien in funding and naming the institute as the O'Brien Institute for Public Health. Their continued close involvement with and support of the Institute has been instrumental in its success. As the Institute has soared to be the equal or better of the original six, we can say proudly that "institute seven" really was a good idea and has become a great success.



*Tom Feasby was the dean of medicine at the University of Calgary during the genesis of the Institute and was, and has continued to be, one of its most fervent champions. Tom was also the first recipient of the Institute for Public Health Service Award, now the Lynn McIntyre Service Award.*



*Gail and David O'Brien honoured for donating \$12 million to the Cumming School of Medicine in 2014.*



# Staking a claim... leaving a mark

*There is no one way in which the Institute has made its mark*

From informing policy and practice at the highest levels, to tackling the biggest public health challenges facing our community head on, the Institute has employed novel lenses to look at old problems, and formulated brave interventions to modern challenges.

Marking **10 years** of innovation and courageous solutions, the following **10 stories** showcase just some of the ways the Institute has left its mark at the University of Calgary, in Canada and around the world.

*Political rivals Stephen Harper and Jean Chrétien discussed Canada's biggest challenges and opportunities at the inaugural O'Brien Institute for Public Health Signature Event on Oct. 31, 2019.*



# Healthy people, healthy communities

There is in society today a common belief that health is shaped and established simply by the capacity of health care systems, and by what individuals do or don't do for their own wellbeing. Researchers at the O'Brien Institute for Public Health view it differently.

Although lifestyle choices such as diet and exercise play a part, built environments and civic policies — buildings, parks, schools, road systems, and other infrastructure and social systems that define and strengthen communities — play a vital role in determining what keeps people healthy, and what could potentially make them sick.

The O'Brien Institute, through its members and initiatives, has worked to shape health and wellbeing through the spaces where we live, work and play. The following are examples:

- Launched in 2010 by the University's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape and the City of Calgary, the makeCalgary initiative is a collaboration into urban planning, infrastructure and design with a focus on livability. The addition of the O'Brien Institute as a key member in 2013 allowed a deepened consideration of "healthy cities" by the consortium, and important new cross-campus and municipal linkages for Institute members in relevant research areas. Through networking events and public seminars, Institute members in makeCalgary

have been instrumental in supporting collective dialogue on modern urban challenges including resiliency, affordable housing, and active living.

- In 2018, continuing an Institute tradition of wading into difficult conversations, and ahead of a city-wide plebiscite to decide on a potential bid for the 2026 Olympic Winter Games, the O'Brien Institute and its partners mobilized to foster and enable public discourse around a topic that had become detrimentally and politically charged. The result was UCalgary experts in sociology, sport, policy and public health convening a free, public open house jointly hosted by the O'Brien Institute and the School of Public Policy. The event broadened the polarizing conversation around cost to explore the range of crucial public health risks and benefits that come with hosting the Winter Games.
- Public health needs to start upstream, and it begins with informed policy makers and thoughtful policy decisions. The Institute had the opportunity to shape that process at the municipal level in early 2019 when, at the request of the City of Calgary, it was called upon to provide a report of the existing science on community water fluoridation. Calgary removed fluoride from its drinking water in 2011, but the question of whether to reintroduce water fluoridation or to leave it out of the city water supply has remained a contentious issue.

## Healthy neighborhood design

The reported benefits of walking are not new, and improved health is just one of the many gains people experience with walkable cities. However, in a province where suburban sprawl often trumps pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods, the idea of walkability is a pervasive challenge. To combat this, Institute members are moving beyond traditional research and interventions to increase walkability and improve the health of Albertans. Along with strategic partnerships with the City of Calgary, and participation in UCalgary-led international initiatives such as Walk21, O'Brien Institute researchers are ensuring their insight shapes communities both now and in the future, by sharing that knowledge with policy makers, transportation specialists and urban planners.

Partnering with the city, Institute researchers are also having a direct impact on the future of city green spaces through the imagineParks initiative. Part of a 30-year vision for sustainable, efficient and effective open spaces, imagineParks was informed by Institute members and will serve as the foundation for future City of Calgary parks plans.

## One world, one health

Institute researchers recognize that the health of people is connected to the health of animals and the environment.

Dog bites are a leading cause of injury among children, and research shows that fears of being bitten or chased by dogs are health concerns in their own right. People without pets may not walk in a park where there may be dogs and dog walkers may avoid parks for fear their pets will be harassed. Alternatively, the personal and mental health benefits that come with pet ownership are well documented. Through a holistic understanding of challenges and benefits of human interaction with animals, and drawing on the One Health concept — which recognizes intricate connections between the health of humans, animals and ecosystems — Institute researchers have helped to build a framework to guide the development and assessment of government policies around pets. Institute researchers are also taking a One Health approach to monitor pollution, through changes in animal species, and better understand the impact of climate change on things such as Arctic caribou populations and indigenous diet.

*The O'Brien Institute co-led a walking tour on May 7, 2016, that explored the needs and preferences of dogs, dog owners and community members when it comes to shared recreation spaces in Calgary.*



# Defining, measuring and improving the patient experience 02

When it comes to health systems, the O'Brien Institute puts the patient at the forefront of research and innovation by fostering patient networks, creating new ways of understanding the health care experience, and by making patients partners in research, and in their care.

This way of thinking has been exemplified in the work of a number of members who begin their research by asking patients what matters most to them.

To that end, the team at the Methods Hub, a group of researchers within the Institute dedicated to exploring and developing novel methods of research, organized a forum for international leaders in measuring patient-centered care. The aim was to ensure that studies being carried out are respectful and responsive to the needs and values of patients.

The forum sparked a closer look at the implementation of patient-reported outcomes and experience measures (PROMs and PREMs). While there has been increased recognition of the importance of the patient's perspective in supporting a patient-centered approach to providing quality health care in Canada, the availability of standardized patient-reported information has been limited. Institute researchers are placing Alberta at the forefront of PREMs implementation for primary care through direct involvement with the province's Strategic Clinical Networks and e-health initiatives such as personal health portals.

## *Implementing research into care*

It's one thing to research care — but the Institute's work with the Alberta SPOR Support Unit has been dedicated to the uptake of that research, focused on ensuring the right patient receives the right care at the right time. This unit fosters evidence-informed health care by bringing innovative diagnostic and therapeutic approaches to the point of care, to ensure greater quality, accountability, and accessibility of care. In order to achieve that, the Institute has supported researchers involved in patient-centered care by enabling knowledge translation and transfer, and meaningful patient engagement.



## *Patient-led initiatives*

For patients, by patients — that's the idea behind the Patient and Community Engagement Research (PaCER) program, a partnership between the Institute and Alberta Health Services through the Strategic Clinical Networks.

This research program is truly novel and unlike any other in Canada. Since 2012, PaCER has trained patient researchers, individual Albertans living with a variety of health conditions, to conduct qualitative health research, while empowering them to use their collective voice.

Since its beginning, the group has trained more than 70 researchers in Calgary, and has most recently taken its work province-wide, training Indigenous researchers as they strive to close health care gaps in cancer screening and prevention.

As a response to broad citizen concerns over the lack of patient engagement in health care, and to address what they felt was a critical gap in health care delivery, planning and culture, the Institute, along with the Cumming School of Medicine launched IMAGINE Citizens in 2015. The initiative brings together patients, family members, communities, health care professionals, policy makers, and individuals from the public and private sectors in order to empower

citizens, inform health policy and practice in Alberta, and insert the patient voice in the planning, delivery and evaluation of health care in the province.

The Institute has supported IMAGINE Citizens by functioning as the initiative's secretariat and providing logistical, communication and technical support.

## *Gauging the patient experience*

Measuring the patient experience is a key area of interest for many Institute members, and has changed the way health care is delivered in Alberta. For example, researchers are working with patients' families to guide the development of new measures to improve quality of care for trauma patients or the critically ill. Other work has seen the use of a variety of approaches, such as health economics and dynamic simulation modeling, to determine how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of care delivery, as well as optimizing centralized intake in order to improve arthritis care for Albertans.

Another example is the work Institute researchers are doing with Canadians Seeking Solutions and Innovations to Overcome Chronic Kidney Disease, a national partnership involving researchers, patients, policy makers, and other partners across Canada to transform kidney research and care through a program of 18 patient-oriented research projects.

*A panel featuring patients, health care providers and IT specialists at Partners in the Power of Information Sharing, co-hosted by the O'Brien Institute and IMAGINE Citizens on Oct. 3, 2019.*



# Championing health equity for all

By leading research into the root causes of the most pressing societal issues Calgary and Canada are facing today, the O'Brien Institute has made it a focus to expand care and improve the health of society's most vulnerable.

With more than 3,000 people experiencing homelessness in Calgary at any given time, the Institute is helping to build partnerships to create solutions to critical health and poverty issues. Bringing together those who work on the front lines and those who conduct research has enabled members to share knowledge, identify opportunities for cooperation, and design novel approaches and interventions.

## *Affordable housing and adequate income*

Institute members have poured passion and expertise into understanding the risks associated with homelessness and the factors that are the root cause. This is an issue that affects many more than those who at any given moment are without a home in Calgary.

People who spend more than 30 per cent of their income on housing face a housing affordability problem. This affects tens of thousands of people in Calgary, leaving many at risk of homelessness, especially those who spend more than half their income on housing.

As past Associate Scientific Director of the O'Brien Institute and past President of the Canadian Public Health Association, Dr. Lynn McIntyre, MD, from the very beginning encouraged the Institute to tackle homelessness and food insecurity from a policy angle, to better care for the homeless and food insecure. Those two issues have long been cited as crucial detrimental determinants of health, as people experiencing these conditions have far worse health outcomes than those who don't. Providing people with sufficient income would significantly improve the condition of Alberta's most vulnerable.

In this vein, the Institute organized Make it B.I.G., a Basic Income Guarantee public forum and conference in 2019 — convening national experts and community leaders to advocate for the adoption of a guaranteed basic income as a better, faster and more consequential answer to the issues society is dealing with — namely poverty, food insecurity and unaffordable housing.

## *Bridging gaps*

Research has also been conducted on how to bridge service gaps for people experiencing homelessness in Calgary, as those people are more likely to experience barriers to accessing adequate physical and mental health services.

Recommendations based on this research prompted Alberta Health Services (AHS) to fund \$750,000 to the Calgary Recovery Services Task Force to improve health services and bridge gaps for Calgary's homeless. Work by Institute members has also led to recommendations calling for a targeted strategy reflective of gendered experiences for women and children and an increased number of treatment beds and increased mental health support in Calgary shelters.

## *Opioid crisis*

Every day, 11 Canadians die from causes related to opioid use, according to federal government data. Tackling what has been one of the biggest public health emergencies in 21<sup>st</sup> century Canada, the Institute has been involved in a number of initiatives and advocacy campaigns to reduce the number of overdoses in Alberta and to reduce the stigma associated with drug use.

## *Interrupting toxic stress*

Toxic stress — an intense and extended activation of the body's stress management system, which can be spurred by violence abuse and neglect — can impact future generations, and adversely affect mental and physical health.

Interrupting the cycle of toxic stress within families who endured the effects of residential schools was the catalyst behind a gathering of community partners, scholars, Indigenous elders and policy-makers at 'Interrupting Toxic Stress,' an event hosted by CSM, supported by the Institute. The summit

explored ways to disrupt the cyclical nature of toxic stress by building on the resilience and wisdom of Indigenous people, namely with compassion and appropriate social supports.



*People from across Alberta gathered at the Calgary Central Library May 30 and 31, 2019, to hear experts from a range of backgrounds, from health and economics, to those living in poverty, make the case for implementing a basic income program in Alberta.*

The Institute's Research Catalyst Program is designed to help launch promising new research or knowledge translation activities, and it too has been crucial in supporting Indigenous youth in addressing toxic stress through arts, where youth find opportunities for leadership, social connection, and expression. This is emerging as a promising practice for achieving Indigenous health equity.

A vast amount of work the Institute does is rooted in addressing vulnerability at its source, working with the Institute's members and external partners to create change.

## Caring and advocating for the vulnerable and the marginalized 04

**“If we don’t do this, then why are we here? If we don’t work with the most vulnerable, we may as well just pack up and close shop.”**

It was with those words from the O'Brien Institute for Public Health's Scientific Director, Dr. William Ghali, MD, that the Institute answered the call on behalf of our communities' most vulnerable. The result was a commitment to catalyze and support initiatives that enabled research, but that also blurred the lines between academic inquiry, service delivery, policy informing, advocacy and community building. The approach was unique and dynamic, as it reacted to the needs of those who are often forgotten by society and who are at the hands of systems that precariously navigate the murk of political, social and cultural pressures.

The role of the programs and initiatives supported by the Institute in this field has constantly shifted between urgent priorities and has morphed to meet needs. It's a model that has allowed the expertise, passion and networks of Institute members to help those who use drugs, experience homelessness, poverty, or abuse, or are otherwise personally or systemically discriminated against.

Seeded in 2015 and launched through a partnership between CSM and the O'Brien Institute, Street CCRED (Community Capacity in: Research, Education, and

Development) is an initiative like no other. Since its inception within the Institute, it has operated alongside partners, civil society and care delivery agencies in the community. As catalyzer of ideas, community, and solutions, Street CCRED has impacted vulnerable populations directly by supporting, aligning with or creating initiatives such as the Calgary Allied Mobile Palliative Program or the Centre City Paramedics Program, endeavours designed to provide palliative care, health care coordination and transition services, as well as emergency and respite care for the city's homeless. Street CCRED has also been a staunch partner and supporter of the city's mobile safe consumption program and community opioid response training.

As a harm reduction champion in Calgary, the Institute's efforts in the face of the opioid crisis have been wide and persistent. Institute members — partnering with service delivery agencies, government and civil society organizations, such as the Calgary Coalition on Supervised Consumption — lent their knowledge and voice to inform the province's framework for establishing safe consumption sites throughout Alberta.

Tackling the opioid epidemic at the start, Institute members created a partnership between UCalgary, Alberta Health Services, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, the result of



*Dr. Kerry McBrien, MD, (right) worked with the Mosaic Primary Care Network in Calgary to develop a Community Health Navigation program in which 'navigators' assist patients with two or more poorly controlled chronic conditions.*

which was the development of the Wise Prescribing and Deprescribing program. Using local data, best practices, and organizational expertise, the program set out to train family physicians and other providers to safely prescribe opioids, and to reduce the amount of patients taking them.

Novel and impactful Institute initiatives have also focused on everything from Indigenous health to assisting new Canadians. By supporting research and service delivery through embedded organizations such as Refugee Health YYC, and partnering organizations such as the Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic, Institute members and programs have inserted themselves into the centre of challenges of national concern, such as the care, support and integration of thousands

of Yazidi refugees. Work has also been done by Institute groups to understand how to better care for, support or integrate older adults, Indigenous people, or the otherwise marginalized.

What started off as an impassioned plea by the Institute's scientific director has over the years become part of the Institute's DNA. There is expertise, capacity and ability within the Institute to improve the conditions of those who have been marginalized. As such, the Institute and its members have looked upon these issues as challenges that, as researchers, they are professionally bound to understand and that, as citizens, they are morally bound to affect.

# Leveraging big data for better health

In the age of big data, health information is being generated at staggering and ever increasing rates. Data scientists at the O'Brien Institute for Public Health are leading the charge to identify bold new ways to harness these data to improve the public's health and patient experience.

While data collected through routine interactions with the health care system are essential to improving the quality of patient care, non-clinical data are key to improving health at a population level. Leveraging

these data, which include information on things such as housing, income, crime, education, and food insecurity, allows public health professionals to address the underlying social conditions that make people sick in the first place. Linking clinical data with social data is a powerful tool with which to impact population health, and O'Brien Institute researchers are paving the way to do just that.

The Centre for Health Informatics (CHI) is the newest UCalgary research and innovation centre, with its

leadership being comprised of senior O'Brien Institute members. The type and amount of data within reach of the centre is staggering. CHI houses a Statistics Canada Research Data Centre, facilitating access to clinical and population Statistics Canada data, offering powerful insights into the socioeconomic pressures that impact health.

It's one thing to house these data sets, but CHI goes one step further — offering researchers innovative ways to visualize and interact with them through the Bertin Visualization Room. Responsive wall displays, motion tracking and highly interactive software allow researchers to get up close and personal with abstract data, collaboratively analysing information across disciplines.

Institute researchers are also grappling with the most pressing challenges in today's data science landscape, such as the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in health care.

As the use of AI in health continues to expand, ethicists question if it will help eradicate health inequities, or exacerbate them. The Artificial Intelligence for Public Health Summer Institute, a new offering from a pan-Canadian team of data scientists, with Institute members at the helm, will address how AI can be applied to important public health issues while prioritizing health equity.

Collecting, sifting through, and analyzing health data is the work the University of Calgary Biostatistics Centre (UCBC), a multi-faculty initiative housed in the O'Brien Institute. This complex information has the potential to inform health systems on how to improve performance and efficiency, shine a light on which public policies are hindering or improving the health of populations, and better identify what, and where, the next epidemic will be. UCBC also fosters a national 'big data in health' network by hosting periodic, large-scale seminars that draw national and international attendees.

UCBC is pioneering big data in health applications at the masters and doctoral level through a formal collaboration with the University of British Columbia in the form of the Rocky Mountain Data Science Centre (RMDSC), officially designated a Canadian Statistical Sciences Institute Collaborating Centre. Bringing together researchers, clinicians, health scientists and members of various health organizations, RMDSC works to provide educational programs of excellence in biostatistics and to substantially expand collaborations in health research.



*"In health care, we collect so much data, but collection is only one part," says Dr. Hude Quan, PhD, director of the Centre for Health Informatics. "We need to turn this information into usable knowledge, and health informatics makes this possible."*



# Informing provincial e-health strategy, patient experience

In health care, information needs to be accurate, accessible, and timely. The vast amount of work the O'Brien Institute has done in the e-health sector has moved Alberta closer to this vision.

The Institute's e-health work has focused on developing informed digital health policy and practice, the creation of accessible tools and information, and timely delivery where and when those services are needed.

Laid out by Scientific Director Dr. William Ghali, MD, the philosophy which has guided the Institute's foray into this field is grounded on the belief that e-health is not just about computers and software, but about human beings working with, improving on, and benefiting from timely and accurate health information.

## Impact on policy

The Institute has shaped Alberta's e-health landscape through the development of a policy white paper, endorsed by Alberta Health, which lays out the necessary considerations for a successful transition to an e-health system, highlighting the importance of high-quality health information for quality health care, and that patients and their care teams should have access to the best information whenever and wherever it is needed. Although led by the O'Brien Institute, doing this type of work well required partnerships with different ministries in the provincial government, Alberta Health Services (AHS), the Alberta Medical Association, and other associated bodies.

In recent years, a number of key partnerships and collaborations have formed — between the Institute, Alberta Health, and other external partners — that have helped shape Alberta's e-health landscape.

Working with Alberta Health and AHS, the Institute worked to convene strategic discussions between civil society groups, service providers and policy institutions, to create a common vision of e-health services for Alberta. The Institute conducted an international scan to inform the provincial system, which is moving toward a digital integration that promises to put patients at the centre of their care.

## Impact on patients

Work done by Institute members in the digital health landscape has shaped the way patients and providers interact with information and with one another, but it has also impacted the way care is delivered. Working directly with AHS, the Institute informed the development and implementation of the Connect Care program. Allowing for the sharing of high-quality clinical information between all AHS care sites, Connect Care positioned Alberta to eventually become the largest, most powerful digitally-integrated health system in Canada. The Connect Care promise is to allow patients access to their complete AHS health record, allowing them to be better informed and engaged in all health care decisions.

## Impact on practice

As part of an effort to improve the safety of care transitions (the potentially dangerous health care moments such as transitions from hospital to home, or from one care provider to another) the Institute, through its W21C health care innovation program, has led the development and testing of e-health tools that communicate important medical information on medications and clinical conditions.

One such tool, a web-based seamless discharge platform, became part of routine care for all Calgary Zone hospitals as a nationally — and internationally — leading e-health platform for safe transitions.

The Institute has also worked in the domain of health care app development. This includes the development and testing of a powerful smartphone app for chronic disease management in patients with liver disease, and a state-of-the-art app that supports doctors in antibiotic prescribing decisions. The latter has involved global partnerships between the O'Brien Institute's W21C Research and Innovation Centre, and colleagues working in the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.S., and Australia on the societal challenge of antimicrobial resistance.

In step with the digital era that we are in, the Institute aims to continue to work in this space as a national leader in health information sharing.



*Dr. Doreen Rabi, MD, gives an update on the current state of e-health and health information access in Alberta at Partners in the Power of Information Sharing, co-hosted by the O'Brien Institute and IMAGINE Citizens on Oct. 3, 2019.*

# An international edge

From institutional partnerships with leading international research organizations to supporting individual researchers with project-level global collaborations, the O'Brien Institute has worked to promote health and health care equity on a global scale.

## World Health Organization (WHO)

Modern public health challenges lay in unlikely places. Information is ubiquitous, while technology makes it possible to track infinite amounts of data. However, unless universal processes and a common language are devised and implemented at a global scale, efforts to put those data to work monitoring pandemics, epidemics, or seemingly hidden trends in morbidity, will likely fail. This is where the O'Brien Institute, as a leading partner in this global effort, is paving the way.

When a patient goes into a hospital or clinic, whether for a heart attack, stroke, or due to an accident, massive amounts of data are collected and entered into medical reports. These data, which may include the patient's condition, any procedures that were performed or medications that were given, and the diagnosis, are then turned into a set of codes.

Over the past decade, O'Brien Institute researchers worked closely with the WHO to update this coding system, referred to as the International Classification of Disease, or ICD. In 2015, the Institute was designated a WHO Collaborating Centre for Classification, Terminology and Standards, and in 2018 re-designated

for a second term — in large part due to the central role it has played in the development, testing and transition from ICD-10 to ICD-11. ICD acts as the foundation for the identification of health trends and statistics globally. This was its first revision in more than two decades.



*In 2015, and again in 2018, the O'Brien Institute was designated a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Classification, Terminology and Standards.*

Institute research has also been foundational in updating WHO guidelines aimed at stemming growing concerns over antibiotic resistance and the role food producers play in this emergency. The O'Brien team was one of two selected by the WHO through a global competition to inform a global strategy to combat anti-microbial resistance (AMR) in real time.

Thanks to work conducted by Institute researchers from W21C, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and the Cumming School of Medicine, the WHO released new guidelines calling on food animal producers to cease using antibiotics as a means to prevent infection or boost growth.

## East Africa

Health care efficacy and affordability are not just driving concerns in Canada — Institute expertise is also being applied to help some of the most vulnerable in the global south. A partnership initiated by Institute members between UCalgary and Mbarara University of Science and Technology in southwest Uganda is transforming the way maternal and newborn health care is delivered in the region. Various programs have come to fruition as a result of this partnership, including Healthy Child Uganda, post graduate pediatric and emergency medicine sub-speciality training, and a field school that hosts rural community engagement experiences for Calgary and Ugandan undergraduate students. One key success has been training of a network of more than 6,000 volunteer Community Health Workers who are selected by their own villages to support the health of moms and their babies.

## University of Calgary, Qatar

Under the leadership of Institute member Dr. Deborah White, PhD, the University of Calgary in Qatar (UCQ) has positioned itself at the forefront of health promotion and disease prevention in the region,

through its Bachelor of Nursing and Master of Nursing programs accredited by the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing. To date, UCQ has graduated more than 600 nurses in an encompassing program that delves into every aspect of health including primary health care and maternal and child health, medicine, surgery and mental health.

## Global health care innovation

Often times, the O'Brien Institute doesn't have the answers yet. Sometimes no one does, which is why engendering innovation is something the Institute takes seriously and has relied on since its early days.

Providing a platform for entrepreneurs and health care professionals to pioneer innovations in health systems, the Global Healthcare Innovation Academy (GHIA) catalyzes health care innovations that improve patient care and outcomes. A partnership between health and research institutions in Switzerland, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and the O'Brien Institute's W21C program, GHIA innovators compete for prize money to fund innovations with the potential to improve health services safety and quality of care. The 2018 event in Kowloon, Hong Kong, saw the W21C sponsored team take top prize.

# Innovation for better results 08

The O'Brien Institute has put its scientific acumen to work, tangibly shaping care delivery with new and innovative initiatives that optimize the existing health care system to achieve better results for patients.

## *An aging population*

Calgary's Aging Population Report (2019) says the city faces a rising population of seniors, affecting communities, housing, and altering the way services, such as health, recreation, and transit are delivered. As Canada's senior population increases, it thrusts unprecedented burden and cost onto the province's health care system. The O'Brien Institute's W21C Research and Innovation Centre set out to improve patient safety and quality of care in health systems, running a strategic research area focused on aging-in-place, the primary goal of which was to help aging people stay in their homes, and out of hospitals, as long as possible.

W21C also became a national AGE-WELL core facility in Human Factors and Usability Testing. This facility has supported the creation of usable products for older adults and their caregivers by understanding how people interact with the world around them.

Members from the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, along with the Institute's Brenda Strafford Centre on Aging (BSCoA) are also working to create solutions for an aging population, such as designing laneway homes in Calgary, which keep aging adults closer to family, make independent living more

affordable, and provide environmental modification to prevent falls and monitor the inhabitant's health. This project has been presented to, and debated by, the city.

A number of initiatives from BSCoA focus on aging in place and exploring the opportunities for health care in the home, easing some of the financial burden on Alberta's health care system.

Meanwhile, other members have researched how physical activity can help people stay mentally and physically fit as they age. Institute members from the Faculty of Kinesiology have studied the social supports older adults have that keep them physically active. Focusing on people in the community who participate in recreation centres in Calgary, this work sets out to better understand how people can age well while also being socially engaged.

## *A trusted broker of health system negotiations*

Making health systems sustainable has as much to do with advising and shaping policy as it does with identifying medical interventions and novel tools. In 2016, when budget negotiations between the Ontario Medical Association and the Ontario provincial government turned sour, the Institute was contacted to assist contract talks in Alberta to prevent a similar situation from happening in the province.

The Institute was trusted to broker funding talks, and assist with health care workforce planning, which ended

*W21C researchers demo digital technology to monitor stress while delivering patient care within the controlled environment of the W21C Healthcare Human Factors Simulation Laboratory. The Lab is part of the core infrastructure of the W21C Research and Innovation Centre that supports both the Digital Health Innovation Hub and the AGE-WELL Core facility.*



up being successful for both parties, as they were negotiated effectively with no service interruptions.

## *Optimizing value in health care*

Working with provincial stakeholders, a number of Institute researchers collaborated to explore developing a value model for emergency departments, which provide front-line care to patients.

The goal was to identify costs and outcomes, which will aid in developing a framework for examining value-based health care in emergency departments.

System sustainability can be improved through collaboration between researchers and the private sector — this is an ecology that the Institute knows well. By linking industry and researchers, and by providing research services to academics, start-ups, and entrepreneurs, W21C provides the evidence, validation, and testing they need to help them on their commercialization journey.

One such example is the evaluation of Surface Medical's CleanPatch a specialized bandage used to repair hospital beds. The W21C evaluated and provided feedback on the design and development of CleanPatch, which was developed by a Calgary start-up.

A winner of multiple innovation awards, CleanPatch is being used as a cost-effective solution for mattress repair for health systems globally.

In 2019, Western Economic Diversification Canada provided 1.1 million in funding for the W21C Digital Health Innovation Hub. This hub has created opportunities for industry engagement, establishing W21C as a centre for medical product testing, and fostering innovation to help diversify Calgary's economy.

The work done by the Institute, and its centres and partners, has helped position Alberta as an innovation hub with the tools needed to define the future of health care.



# Transforming public health through partnership



The promotion of health — and the knowledge that enables it — is something that cannot be achieved in isolation. Working together, sharing resources, and combining talents are key to innovating and promoting health, and preventing disease and injury in our communities. From grassroots and community organizations, to governments and global leaders, the O'Brien Institute collaborates and forms partnerships to address health issues faced by society today.

Partnerships have enabled the Institute and the university to impact new and vital areas, while also providing researchers a way into communities and audiences to which it previously didn't have access, as was the case with IMAGINE and the Calgary Flames Health Training Camp. IMAGINE Citizens Collaborating for Health is a partnership with patients from across the province, who strive to insert the patient voice into their own treatment but, more importantly, into how care is designed and delivered in Alberta.

As leading health partner in the Calgary Flames Health Training Camp, the Institute and the university became known to the public as sources of trustworthy information about health and wellbeing. This partnership also placed the Institute in a position to assist and support the sports organization as it set out to make Calgary healthier, and secured for its members the capacity to help shape the Flames' endeavours through evidence-informed approaches.

Throughout its first 10 years, many of the O'Brien Institute partnerships and collaborations have been born from urgent needs and growing crises.

At a time when Canada has seen an increase of desperate asylum seekers crossing our southern border in search of a better life, and after the federal government opened its doors to thousands of highly traumatized Syrian refugees, Institute members have mobilized to support a system caught unprepared, and to support people burdened with acute health concerns, as well as chronic mental and emotional trauma. As a result, and through the Refugee Health YYC research group, Institute members set to work to improve care for Canada's most vulnerable newcomers. Working closely with the Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic, the group has studied the health issues, needs and models of care provided to new refugees and provided education and clinical support to Calgary's medical community.

The need to better understand the sustainability challenges facing our health care system in Alberta, and Canada as a whole, while offering the expertise that resides within the Institute to help inform and shape practice and policy related to quality and affordability, has driven strategic partnerships with Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, the Strategic Clinical Networks, and the Campus Alberta network. These partnerships have enabled the Institute to generate and share new and contextual knowledge,

such as working with Alberta Health and professional organizations on a number of occasions in recent years to help shape Alberta's e-health landscape, to address remuneration challenges, and to provide program assessments to AHS.

**“The health of the population is an important measure of — and an important contributor to — the overall well-being of society.”**

— Scientific Director Dr. William Ghali

At the municipal level, the Institute remains a trusted source of knowledge for policy makers. In 2019 the Institute was called on by the City of Calgary to produce a report of the best evidence in the area of community water fluoridation. The Brenda Strafford Centre on Aging supported the City of Calgary's Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy with the implementation and evaluation of various initiatives, including community support, housing and transportation. Meanwhile, the widest spanning partnership the Institute has fostered at the municipal level, both in terms of stakeholders and themes, is makeCalgary, with members working closely with other UCalgary faculties, civil society organizations and several City of Calgary departments to improve the health of Calgarians by making the city liveable, resilient and accessible.

Partnerships are often how the O'Brien Institute stimulates collaboration, funding and knowledge translation around much of the health policy work the Institute and its members undertake.

Ahead of the 2019 provincial election, the Institute partnered with the Alberta Public Health Association (APHA) to host an all-party candidates' forum, tackling

public health issues, including immunization, safe consumption sites, food insecurity, and questioning candidates on their relevant views and party platforms. That same year, the Institute again partnered with the APHA and the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) to draft and distribute a health policy election primer ahead of the 2019 federal election. In 2016, the O'Brien Institute partnered with the Institute of Health Economics to unpack physicians' role as stewards of the health care system, and the costs associated with that role, an opportunity to inform decision-making regarding the fiscal sustainability of the provincial health care system. One final example of how national level partnerships are driving change, while simultaneously providing the Institute with an opportunity to create impact, is its ongoing relationship with Children First Canada. This longitudinal collaboration has resulted in the production of research, policy documents and presentations to the Senate, all dealing with the health and wellbeing of children in Canada.

At a global level, ongoing partnerships with the WHO have had a direct impact on anti-microbial resistance, and morbidity and disease classification, and Institute researchers have worked on various Global Health initiatives, including a number of service design, development and delivery programs through Healthy Child Uganda. A national level partnership with ICES also resulted in the Institute taking on the two-year role of co-secretariat for the International Population Data Linkage Network, which allowed the Institute to contribute to the fast evolving landscape of health data research, while also being able to tap into some of the planet's leading authorities in population-level data.

# Academic diplomacy in the policy space



by Aleem Bharwani

## *The O'Brien Institute and modernizing community engagement*

Over the past 10 years we have witnessed erosion of public trust, decreased social literacy and the historic collapse of traditional news media. The O'Brien Institute has stepped into this gaping void left by a faltering news media and polarized socio-political landscape by re-inventing how universities engage communities, through academic diplomacy. Universities have a unique opportunity to play a diplomatic role in community engagement, as honest broker, as curator of trust. How? By role modelling respectful dialogue in a polarizing world, and by learning from community while educating community about evidence-based health and health care, which in turn influences politics or policy.

The last decade's impact on public discourse has been disturbingly apparent. News media is shifting from being centralized, vetted, and edited to decentralized, and often devoid of any peer review. Younger generations engage digitally, which has been associated with lower levels of social literacy and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, the Edelman Trust Barometer has shown western nations are seeing declining citizen trust; low trust environments have been associated with mental health disorders, high risk behaviour and hostility, which can manifest in extremist or violent associations.

This combination of trends seems to be conducive with hostile populism whose anti-knowledge sentiment threatens evidence-based policymaking, paving the way for unfeeling, unthinking actions fueled by apathy or frenzy.

How is hostility a public health issue? Notwithstanding the physical health consequences of intergroup conflict like terror, war and gang violence, hostility also fractures civil discourse. In doing so, hostility impairs social cohesion; threatens creative license; and dangerously, obstructs academic freedom.

Recognizing these emerging trends, the O'Brien Institute didn't passively accept this fate as a foregone conclusion. Rather, we reacted constructively by embracing pluralism as a foundational principle. To this end, we developed the following models of academic diplomacy which are enabled by government and supported by government, but apart from government. »



## *Public Square*

We applied the concept of the Public Square to Cannabis legalization, using an evidence-based approach to explore fears, ideas, and hopes among private citizens, civil society leaders, and scholars, illustrating both the plurality and nuance of participant perspectives. This helped citizens and organisations understand each other's perspectives even when they didn't agree, as well as to better understand or convert tensions into opportunities.

## *Civil Society Forum*

We developed a Civil Society Forum after consulting government on their most vexing challenges, then vetting that list through civil society and scholars who settled on a final topic. Based on that consensual choice, we convened Alberta's Indigenous civil society to understand and generate community solutions to interrupt intergenerational toxic stress in Indigenous communities.

## *Quiet diplomacy*

We used quiet diplomacy in developing a report to the City of Calgary on the contentious subject of community water fluoridation. We acknowledged trust is often best built quietly, outside public view, and face to face. We met with City councillors, opponents and proponents with the aim of either navigating intergroup conflict or laying foundations for future collaboration.

These models were all built on a cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary, pan-professional foundation. By fostering understanding among groups — such as the general public, civil society, pan-Canadian academic entities, and policy makers in all levels of government — differences do not get erased, but instead create space. At a basic level, this fosters social cohesion, acknowledging that difference is acceptable and nonthreatening. Through this space and understanding arises the potential for new co-creative approaches or solutions: policies; products; programmes; or culture. Who better than an entrepreneurial university to springboard social innovations arising from a common understanding of our most vexing challenges?

Notably, the O'Brien Institute's embrace of pluralism is not purely altruistic, rather a strategic means of influence. Understanding a wide range of stakeholders is the most important value add in a society that talks more than it listens.

*Dr. Aleem Bharwani, MD, was the 2018 recipient of the Lynn McIntyre Award for Outstanding Service. He is the Institute's executive lead for partnerships, is a public policy and public administration graduate from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and is a clinical associate professor in the Department of Medicine.*

*O'Brien Institute members have provided expertise during the lead up to the legalization of cannabis. One such example is hosting a public forum, Cannabis Legalization in Canada: Implications for Public Health in Alberta on May 5, 2017, attended by more than 400 members of the public, government officials, health care practitioners and researchers.*

# Lynn McIntyre Outstanding Service Award

## *The sum of our parts*

The power of the Institute lies in the strength of its members and the community they foster.

But even as part of a dedicated and talented pool of researchers, practitioners and policy makers, in the last 10 years, there have been members who have gone significantly above and beyond in their service to the Institute. They have not only risen to be leaders in their fields, they have also taken ownership and responsibility for the growth and success of the Institute and their community.

From that crop, the Institute identifies each year the one member who has made the time and found the energy to support fellow researchers — and strengthen the Institute network — and bestows upon them the Lynn McIntyre Award for Outstanding Service. Recipients exemplify what that award signifies — prioritizing service to the Institute and

fellow researchers by mentoring less experienced researchers, by conducting internal peer reviews for other Institute members, by providing their opinions and expertise to Institute leadership, or by leading research groups or public engagement initiatives on behalf of the Institute. Throughout, these members have punctuated their service with, among other traits, generosity and inclusivity.

The tenure of Dr. Lynn McIntyre, MD, the Institute's first and founding associate scientific director, was marked by those very same qualities — generosity, inclusivity, insightfulness and dedication to service — that the award that now bears her name aims to recognize. The mark that Lynn, as a researcher, a medical doctor, a leader and as a person, has left on the Institute, extends well beyond Calgary, having also served as president of the Canadian Public Health Association.

## *From quiet evolution to global impact: Reflections on ten years of the O'Brien Institute* | by Richard Musto

It feels funny to me that it has been ten years since the O'Brien Institute for Public Health was established — a sort of “already?/only ten?” thing. The Institute has become a precious resource of boundary stretching and relevant research and, at the same time, a force to be reckoned with as policy makers struggle to reconcile competing voices on how to enable better and more equitable health within our various populations.

I am particularly grateful for two things: that the Institute has respectfully and sincerely built bridges with other educational institutions and public health practitioners; and that its leadership has had the courage to engage both the public and policy makers on a range of important public health issues. Campus Alberta, with its annual gathering of students, researchers and practitioners, has increasingly relied upon steady support from the Institute for its evolution and indeed continuation. It has been, and can be even more, a unifying force within the public health community across the province.

Imbued with different styles, the Institute's two scientific directors have shared unimpeachable personal and professional credibility and have given us visionary and courageous leadership. This has been the most precious gift for me, and I would say, to the people of Alberta. The O'Brien Institute is a vital instrument of social change and for the goal of a healthy population.

*Dr. Richard Musto, MD, was the 2016 recipient of the Lynn McIntyre Award for Outstanding Service. He was previously Calgary Zone Medical Officer of Health for Alberta Health*

*Services, and, as of 2020, the President of the Canadian Public Health Association, and the original co-lead of the Calgary Institute for Population and Public Health, predecessor of the O'Brien Institute.*

## *The power of impact* | by Rebecca Haines-Saah

Research and events contributed by O'Brien Institute for Public Health members have had impact at the highest levels of substance use policy development in Canada. In 2017 we co-hosted Alberta's first provincial public health research and policy forum. Titled Cannabis Legalization in Canada — Implications for Public Health in Alberta, it was a partnership event between the O'Brien Institute and the Canadian College of Health Leaders (Southern Alberta Chapter).

This event was attended by more than 400 people in person and online, and established the O'Brien Institute as a ‘neutral knowledge broker’ and convener of cannabis policy expertise. Videos and slide presentations from this event were requested by a member of the Senate, who served as the sponsor to the Senate for Bill C-45, the Act to legalize cannabis. The materials were included in the education packages distributed to Senators to prepare them for their committee discussions on the legislation.

*Dr. Rebecca Haines-Saah, PhD, was the 2017 recipient of the Lynn McIntyre Award for Outstanding Service. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Health Sciences and has informed local and federal policy makers on cannabis legalization, and harm reduction strategies.*

## *Award recipients*

**Dr. Tom Feasby, MD**  
2015

**Dr. Richard Musto, MD**  
2016

**Dr. Rebecca Haines-Saah, PhD**  
2017

**Dr. Aleem Bharwani, MD**  
2018

**Dr. Kerry McBrien, MD**  
2019

**“Science is our currency and we must be vigilant in guarding that currency.”**

— Dr. Lynn McIntyre, MD



# From quiet evolution to global impact

*10 years of innovation*

The role the O'Brien Institute for Public Health plays today, in terms of catalyzing scientific research and dispersing policy-affecting knowledge, seems representative of an obvious approach with which to improve the wellbeing of populations and the effectiveness of health care practices. But it wasn't always like this.

When the original six institutes that today are the cornerstones of the Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary were established, the logic was solid — by driving research and excelling in their medical fields, everything the original six institutes achieved would lead to improved population health. Health is, indeed, everywhere.

However, it soon became undeniable that a more specialized view was needed. In order to improve the wellbeing of populations, it was argued, one must study and understand populations, study and

understand wellbeing, and all its facets and factors. The need to formulate a deep understanding of these aspects in order to tackle clear and present health challenges has long been apparent. The cost of care is becoming prohibitively unaffordable — some would argue it already is; preventable chronic diseases have become the leading cause of death globally; and, for the first time in generations, Canadian children are expected to have shorter lifespans than their parents.

It was into this space and to tackle these challenges, that the newest of the seven University of Calgary health institutes was born in 2010. Institute Seven — or the Institute for Public Health as it eventually became known — carved out a unique but critical niche. Embracing cross-sectoral cooperation, multidisciplinary collaboration, disruption and societal impact, the researchers, clinicians and policy makers who joined the fledgling organization



Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi at the inaugural O'Brien Institute Signature Event on Oct. 31, 2019.

sought to gain a holistic understanding of all those aspects of a person's life that shape and determine their health. They came from medicine, economics, veterinary medicine, public policy, nursing, math and science, kinesiology, geography, social work, and a host of other faculties and departments, to build a community constituted from every corner of the University, under the guidance of public health champions, and national leaders in the field, such as Drs. Tom Noseworthy, Lynn McIntyre and Tom Feasby.

Soon after, the Institute came under the leadership of its scientific director, Dr. William Ghali, MD, associate scientific director, Dr. Lynn McIntyre, MD, and administrative director, Dr. Jamie Day, PhD. But it was in September 2014, when a naming donation — made to the Institute by Calgary philanthropists Gail and David O'Brien — set the Institute on a path that would eventually see it become an influential health research entity and a nationally-respected public health organization.

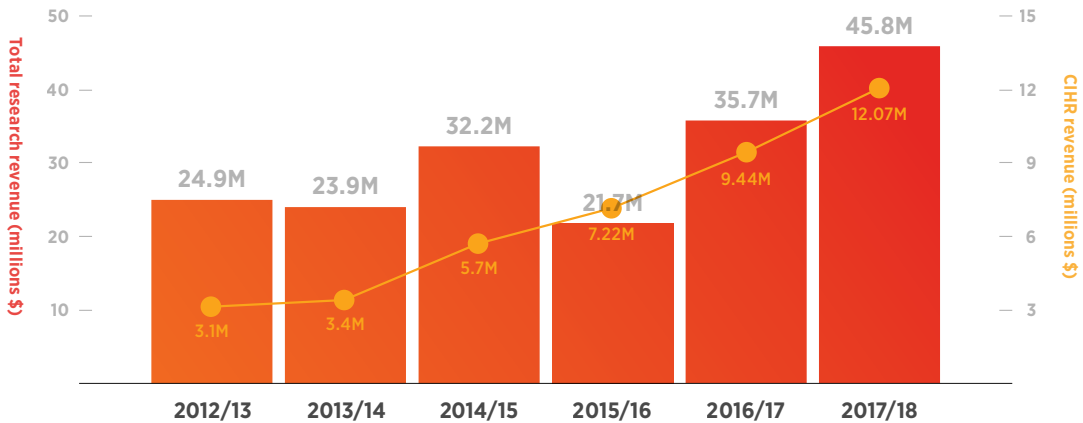
That naming donation enabled the Institute to invest in research support and infrastructure. That gift, and the investment it enabled, allowed the Institute to convene scholars, policy makers and leading researchers from every corner of the world. It meant fostering, and empowering, researchers to embark on academic journeys that took many of them from the classroom and journal pages, to the community, and to halls of power locally and nationally. It allowed them to go out into the community to inform, learn and empower.

Through growth, investment and evolution, the Institute's clear and pointed focus honed in on leading-edge research issues such as improved health systems, health care optimization, social inequities, sports-related concussions and refugee health. It has also honed in on mobilizing its expertise to inform governments on pressing issues such as cannabis legalization, childhood development, and the opioid crisis. Expertise in big data and cutting edge methods also see the Institute informing international organizations on matters such as anti-microbial resistance, disease surveillance and global morbidity tracking.

Today, as it was then, the work of Institute members is not often done over a microscope or under a white coat, but in parks and sport arenas, in doctors' offices and town halls, in homeless shelters and supervised consumption sites. It's work done using 'big data' sets and economic models. It's work that lives in the way modern hospital wards and ambulances are designed and operated, and in the way direction and decisions are discussed at health boards and city councils, and at the WHO and the Senate. These are the places and spaces, and the grey areas in between, where the O'Brien Institute conducts its work, for it is at the intersection of education, income, ethnicity, gender, age, employment, housing, social networks, nutrition, environment, geography, as well as access to, and quality of, health care, where understanding and improvements can be found, as they relate to a population's health and individuals' wellbeing.

## Informing the future of health

The primary output of O'Brien Institute members is new knowledge. The number of research publications, grants, and amount of research revenue secured by Institute members has increased substantially in the past decade. The numbers of Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) open grants grew from 1 in 2010 to 13 in 2018.



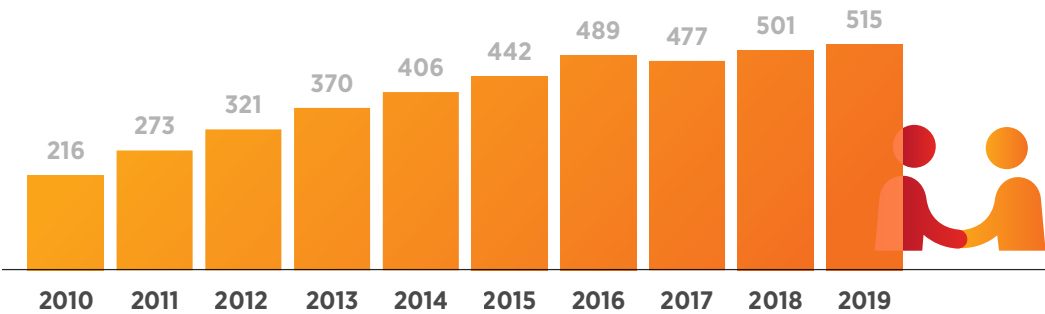
From 5 publications per capita in 2010 to 6.07 in 2018:



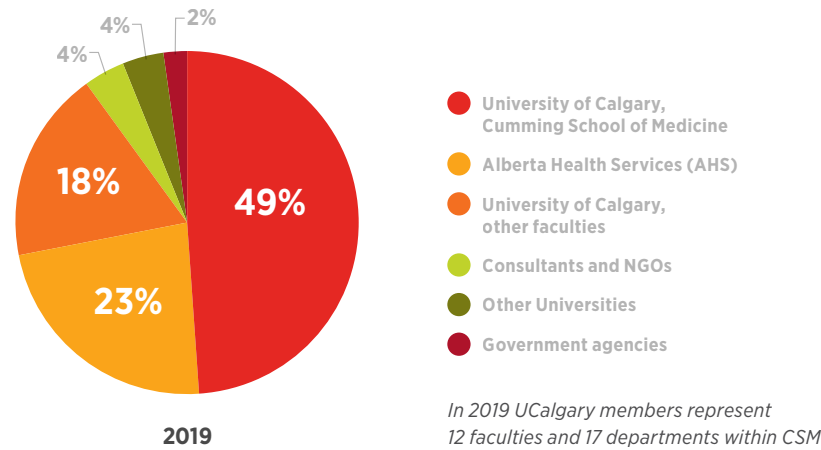
Who we are

The O'Brien Institute for Public Health supports more than 500 interdisciplinary researchers, health professionals and policy makers in a mission “To provide evidence that informs health policy and practice.”

Membership growth:



Membership affiliations:



Core team growth:



A decade of engagement

Through the bold use of multiple, concurrent and coordinated communications initiatives, the O'Brien Institute strives to support members, grow awareness of their expertise, and disseminate knowledge to practitioners, policy makers and citizens.



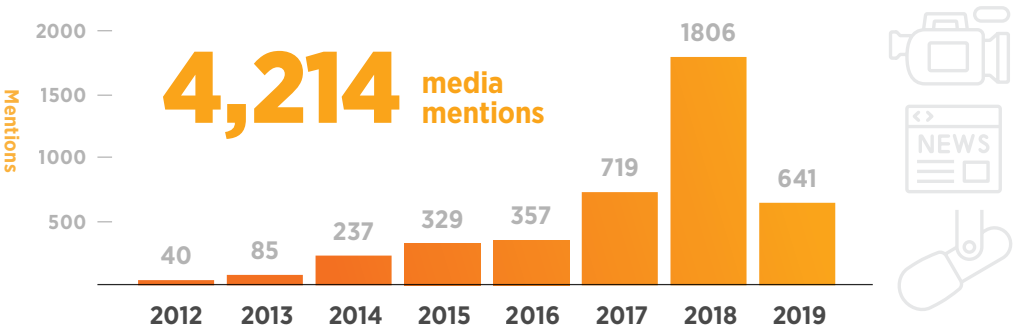
YEAR	EVENTS	ATTENDEES
2009	4	-
2010	7	-
2011	4	-
2012	7	-
2013	14	126
2014	17	-
2015	28	296
2016	25	1,068
2017	22	1,404
2018	48	3,687
2019	40	3,024



# Mobilizing knowledge

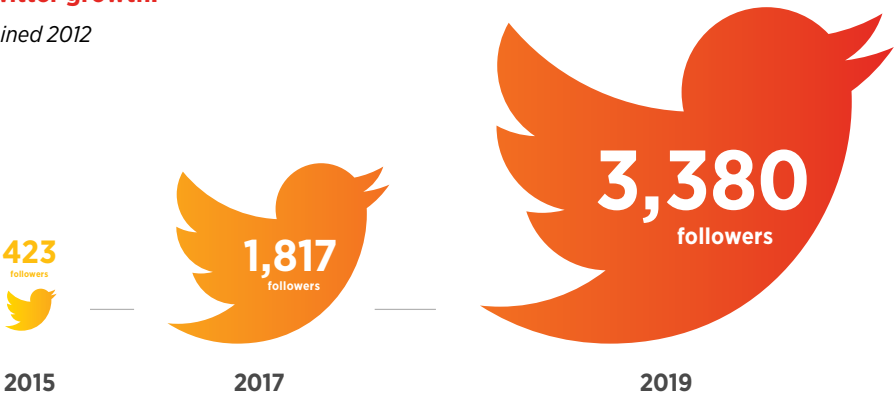
The O'Brien Institute is dedicated to ensuring that the knowledge generated by members is brought into the public sphere. A large proportion of Institute resources are, therefore, dedicated to external communications with research stakeholders: conducting events, employing community and public outreach tools, and deploying social media campaigns to disseminate members' research, knowledge, and expertise.

## News media mentions:



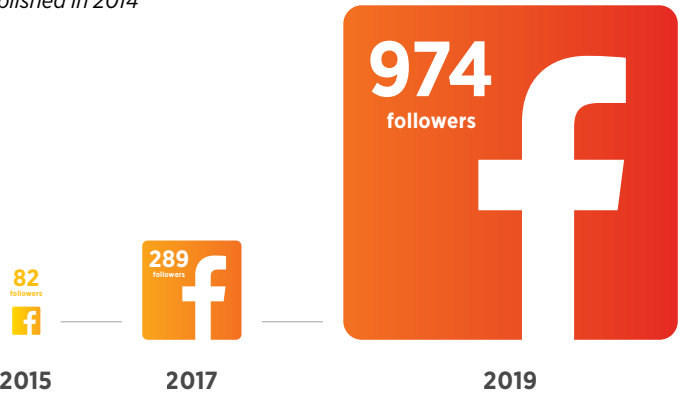
## Twitter growth:

Joined 2012



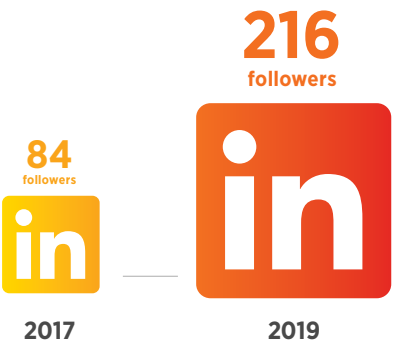
## Facebook growth:

Published in 2014



## LinkedIn growth:

Launched in 2016



## Youtube growth:

Launched in 2014



# Strategic Advisory Board

Chris Seasons — CHAIR	Senior Advisor & Director of ARC Financial Corp.
Dr. Francois Belanger	Vice President, Quality & Chief Medical Officer, Alberta Health Services
Lauchlan Currie	CEO & Director, ARC Financial Corp.
Jack Davis	Chairman of CEO.Mobile Inc
Dr. Tom Feasby	Former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary
Kevin Hall	Managing Partner of AltoPartners / Bluestone Leadership Services and Global Leader of AltoPartners Natural Resources Practice Group.
Gary Jacques	Former partner at Peloton, private foundation manager
Dr. Richard Leigh	Senior Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs, Cumming School of Medicine
Webster (Web) Macdonald	Recently retired partner of Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP
Dr. Jon Meddings	Dean, Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary
Mary Moran	President and CEO of Calgary Economic Development
Gail O'Brien	Naming donor of the O'Brien Institute for Public Health
Dr. Scott Patten	Interim Department Head, Community Health Sciences, Cumming School of Medicine
Dean Screpnek	Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Standards, Quality and Performance Division in the Government of Alberta's Department of Health
John Sproule	Senior Policy Director for the Institute of Health Economics (IHE)
Dr. Kathryn Todd	Vice President, Research, Innovation and Analytics, Alberta Health Services
Dr. Marcello Tonelli	Senior Associate Dean (Health Research) and Associate Vice-President (Health Research), University of Calgary
Shirley Turnbull	The Calgary Immigrant Women's Association
Janelle Wakaruk	Executive Director of Development, Cumming School of Medicine
Dr. Gerald Zamponi	Senior Associate Dean (Research), Cumming School of Medicine

# Past members

2019	Dr. Todd J. Anderson	Senior Associate Dean (Faculty Affairs), Cumming School of Medicine
	Dr. Ron Bridges	Senior Associate Dean, (Clinical Affairs), Cumming School of Medicine
	Peter de Jong	Vice President & Investment Advisor, RBC Dominion Securities Inc.
	Dr. Chris Eagle	Past President and CEO of Alberta Health Services
	Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn	Department Head, Community Health Sciences, Cumming School of Medicine
	Dr. Kabir Jivraj	Managing Director at AgeCare Investments Ltd.
	Jay Mehr	President, Shaw Communications
	Justin Riemer	Senior Provincial Director of Innovation Partnerships at Alberta Health Services
2018	Sohaib Khalid	Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Standards, Quality & Performance, Alberta Health
2017	Robert (Bob) Sartor	President & CEO, Big Rock Brewery
2016	Miin Alikhan	Assistant Deputy Minister Professional Services and Health Benefits, Alberta Health
	Denise Perret	Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Planning & Policy Development Division, Alberta Health
2014	Derek Evans	President & CEO, Pengrowth
	Linda Mattern	Assistant Deputy Minister, Health System Accountability and Performance Division Alberta Health
	Verna Yiu	EVP & CMO, Quality and Medical Affairs, Alberta Health Services
2013	Chip Doig	Head, Department of Community Health Sciences, Cumming School of Medicine
	Barb Giba	Executive Director of Development, Cumming School of Medicine

# Directorship and executives

## Directors

Dr. William Ghali, MD, MPH, FRCPC	Scientific Director
Dr. Christine Friedenreich, PhD, MSc, BSc (Hons)	Associate Scientific Director
Dr. Jamie Day, PhD	Administrative Director

## Past directors

Dr. Melanie Rock, PhD, MSW, BA (Hons)	Associate Scientific Director
Dr. Lynn McIntyre, MD, FRCPC, FCAHS	Inaugural Associate Scientific Director

## Executive Committee members 2020

Fariba Aghajafari <i>Awards and Recognition</i>	Kerry McBrien & Fabiola Aparicio-Ting <i>Seminars and Events</i>
Deborah Marshall <i>Internal Peer Review</i>	Nick Falvo <i>Strategic Communications</i>
Nishan Sharma <i>International</i>	Jennifer Hatfield <i>Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement</i>
Aliya Kassam <i>Mentorship &amp; Professional Development</i>	Kirsten Fiest & Elizabeth Oddone Paolucci <i>Trainees</i>
Aleem Bharwani <i>Policy</i>	Scott Patten <i>Community Health Sciences Department Head</i>
Diane Lorenzetti <i>Research Impact Assessment</i>	Jason Cabaj <i>Medical Officer of Health, Calgary Zone, Alberta Health Services</i>

# Past Executive Committee members

## Operations Planning Committee for Calgary Institute for Population and Public Health, 2009/10

Susan Cork	Sandra Reilly
Alexandra Harrison	Chad Saunders
Jeff LaFrenz	Judy Seidel
Bretta Maloff	Suzanne Tough
Lisa Petermann	

## Executive portfolios

Joe Arvai <i>Strategic Communications</i>	Eddy Lang <i>Strategic Communications</i>
Rosmin Esmail <i>Research Impact Assessment</i>	Gavin McCormack <i>Seminars &amp; Events</i>
Jenny Godley <i>Research Impact Assessment</i>	Peter Sargious <i>Strategic Partnerships</i>
Gil Kaplan <i>Awards and Recognition</i>	

## Executive Committee members


Christopher (Chip) Doig	Tom Stelfox
Brenda Hemmelgarn	Wilfreda E. Thurston
Colleen Maxwell	Jean Wallace
Richard Musto	Tracy Wasylak
Tom Noseworthy	Deborah White
Ardene Robinson Vollman	



# The centres, programs, research groups and units of the Institute

Research groups and programs of the O'Brien Institute for Public Health facilitate research activities by concentrating members’ expertise and interest in the named topics within functional subunits.

Centres and units maximize research potential and innovation by bringing to bear thematic and scientific expertise, leadership and resources. Key to the groups, programs, centres and units is member inclusiveness and networking.

 <b>UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY</b> O’Brien Institute for Public Health
Brenda Strafford Centre on Aging
Geography of Health and GIS Analysis
Group for Research with Indigenous Populations (GRIP)
Global Health
Health Economics
Health Technology Assessment Unit
Health Policy Unit

Patient and Community Engagement Research (PaCER)
Population Health and Prevention Research Group
Street CCRED (Community Capacity in: Research, Education, and Development)
The Methods Hub
The Office of Health and Medical Education Scholarship (OHMES)
University of Calgary Biostatistics Centre
Vulnerable Populations Program
W21C Research and Innovation Centre

# 10



**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
O'Brien Institute for Public Health