

- **No.77**
- **A New Infrastructure Model to Build Capacity in Socio-Health Research: Opportunities for Inclusive Cross-Disciplinary and Cross-Sector Community and Stakeholder Partnerships**

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- **Abstract:**

- Having research networking space, services and supports for cross-disciplinary and cross-sector community and academic health and social/health determinant research teams is critical for meaningful and useful research to be developed, funded, implemented, and appropriately translated and disseminated for utilization with targeted knowledge users or decision makers. Having opportunities for diverse socio-health research teams to come together and be engaged meaningfully to ‘incubate’ relevant research questions based on community/stakeholder identified health and social issues and policy questions, can have better results for funding and impacting health and social practices and outcomes. At the University of Alberta, a new Edmonton Clinic Health Academy (ECHA) housing eight health sciences Faculties and open to 10 other non-health Faculties, will have about 2500 square meters of space and Research Brokers to access for socio-health research engagement. It is called the ‘Research Discovery Mall’ with services, resources and capacity building for diverse research teams including students. Within ECHA is the Interdisciplinary Health Research Academy (IHRA), an unique facilitation unit with oversight of the governance, administration, operations and supports for the ‘Discovery Mall’ and services. Through this academy, the community stakeholders (community non-profit organizations, government, industry, health organizations, patient/consumer groups, funders and others) and academics have access to the brokering supports they need to become successful diverse socio-health research teams. They can engage with each other or with other researchers and groups from other institutions to foster research questions and develop purposeful proposals for planning and grants. IHRA has a dynamic strategic plan developed by a Steering Committee (balance of community stakeholders and academics) with an invested interest in being part of and aligning interdisciplinary and cross-sector socio-health research interests. Research partnerships will be matched based on needs for research priorities that fit with IHRA’s mandate to “advance, facilitate and support cross-faculty and multi-stakeholder interdisciplinary ... research to better understand and resolve health issues and challenges facing individuals, communities, ... governments”. To provide a bridge for diverse stakeholders to connect and interact on common research interests is what IHRA’s infrastructure does; to bridge different perspectives on socio-health issues and research areas and have diverse research teams collaborate to investigate answers to those complex issues or problems is what IHRA facilitates and supports. The goal is to be inclusive in engaging stakeholders with the right

research teams to do the right kinds of socio-health research for the right reasons and outcomes.