

[The Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research Collaborative Centre](#) (AHA Centre) is a national, Indigenous-led collaborative research centre housed at CAAN - Communities, Alliances & Networks. The AHA Centre supports HIV and AIDS community-based research conducted in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities across Canada. The work of the Centre is organized around 5 objectives: 1) *Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Doing*; 2) *Communications*; 3) *Knowledge Translation*; 4) *Partnership building and maintenance* and 5) *Capacity Building*. The brunt of the work of the Centre is currently led and carried out by two Community-Based Research Managers (full time) and one Communications Assistant (part time). The work of the Centre is overseen by AHA Centre Co-Directors, Renée Masching (CAAN) and Dr. Charlotte Loppie (University of Victoria); the AHA Centre Governing Council (GC) and our National Aboriginal Research Advisory Committee (NARAC). AHA Centre staff and Co-Directors, along with GC members have contributed to the ideas put forward in this application. Additionally, AHA team members and CAAN staff were invited to attend a ‘Town Hall’ meeting on November 25th 2021 to contribute to this application. Through these discussions and informed by preparation of our 2020-2021 Annual Report, we have taken stock of the existing programs and initiatives that we believe are important to continue into the grant extension year and identified new activities or strategies to pursue to further support Indigenous HIV/STBBI community-based research in Canada.

AHA Centre activities we wish to continue and build upon into 2023

Development of an Indigenous Knowledge Framework: AHA Centre staff have been working with our GC and NARAC to develop an Indigenous Knowledge Framework. This work has taken shape through two different but connected processes: In 2019, work began on the CIHR funded Catalyst grant *Leading the Way: The AHA Centre Explores Indigenous ways of knowing and doing within HIV research* (Sherri Pooyak NPKU), for which a robust scoping review is currently underway. Once completed, we will hold dialogue/learning sessions with AHA Center members, Elders and Knowledge Holders across Canada with the goal of developing an Indigenous Knowledge Sharing Framework that will inform Indigenous HIV research in Canada and internationally. Complimenting this Framework, a document has begun to be more formally articulated, tentatively called *The AHA Centre’s Indigenous Knowledge Sharing Process (The Knowledge Nest)*. Once completed, the AHA Centre’s Knowledge Nest, is meant to be a process that can be used to help researchers better apply Indigenous knowledge sharing processes. We anticipate that *Leading the Way* and our Knowledge Nest will form the basis of future funding applications to support Indigenous STBBI research in Canada. Anticipated deliverables include: academic publications that share Scoping Review results and Indigenous knowledge sharing process and framework; conference presentations (CAHR 2023), workshops and info-sheets, for example.

The Indigenous Journal of HIV Research (JIHR): The JIHR (formerly the Canadian Journal of Community-Based Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Research-CJACBR) is an open-access, peer-reviewed, annual publication that works with researchers on best publishing practices to demonstrate Indigenous leadership, and strengths-based approaches to research. The 2022-2023 funding extension will allow the AHA Centre to see the peer review and publication processes of Volume 13 (December 01, 2022) while also working on a robust succession plan for Volume 14 and beyond. Current ideas include: seeking funding to develop a robust mentorship component for authors, students and peer reviewers; raising the profile of the JIHR by indexing the journal in myriad databases (we are currently in the process of being indexed in EBSCO) and securing funding for a permanent Managing Editor position within CAAN’s Research Unit in order to ensure the longevity of this publication. We will also pilot a rolling submission deadline, increasing the call for papers from one to two calls in 2023 in an effort to increase submissions.

The Community Engagement Fund (CEF): The CEF is designed to assist Indigenous communities and students as well as Indigenous AIDS Service Organizations and/or allies interested in developing Indigenous community-based research proposals that are focused on HIV in Indigenous communities. This program funds two or more projects up to a maximum \$10k each, annually. Applications undergo blinded peer review by members of NARAC and the larger AHA/CAAN community. We will launch a call for proposals during spring 2022 that will support at least two applications to CIHR's Indigenous CBR stream for fall 2022 and then formerly wrap up the program at that time.

Capacity Bridging, Mentorship and Support: The AHA Centre offers myriad opportunities to partner as we work with our community to build and bridge capacity and offer support and mentorship for the Indigenous HIV CBR community, including Indigenous and allied students, academic and community researchers, and most importantly, Indigenous Peoples with living experience of HIV (IPHAs). In 2019, staff worked with then IPHA Liaison, Jasmine Cotnam to design and deliver a [CBR workshop](#) for IPHAs over the course of three evenings. The inclusion of a person with living experience of HIV in the planning of this workshop proved invaluable! Jasmine was able to bring issues and subject matter to our attention that ensured the workshop's success and ensured meaningful engagement for participants. In fact, discussion at the end of the workshop centred around the visioning of an IPHA-led and run research conference. With this in mind, and leading up to the 2022-2023 Extension Year, we will develop a job posting for two IPHAs who have strong CBR skills and knowledge to update and build upon the existing workshop, creating content and related videos around doing research.

Partnership Building: The AHA Centre will continue to partner reciprocally with mentorship programs like the Community Research Partnership in Ethics (CRPE) at the University of Toronto, the [Indigenous Mentorship Centres](#), the [NEIHR Centres](#), organizations like the Dr. Peter Centre, and research Centres like the Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research and REACH Nexxus to create opportunities for working together, sharing our resources and knowledge as we strive to expand on existing research skills and knowledge, end HIV and STBBI stigma, racism and discrimination and increase HIV testing in Indigenous communities across the land. We have also created an 'open door policy' that allows us to offer support to students, researchers, research teams and IPHAs on an as-needed basis. This practice helps us offer support in a rapidly changing research environment and will continue to the end of the Centre's work. The AHA Centre, in collaboration with our partners and IPHAs, aims to begin the design of a cross-cutting suite of resources and educational activities to support our community to do Indigenous CBR in a good way that is informed by the Leading the Way Project and drawing on established programs like [Indspire's Knowledge Nest](#) and the [Indigenous HIV/AIDS Research Training \(IHART\) Program](#).

Communications: AHA Centre communications include transferring AHA Center content over to the [AHA Centre](#) page on the CAAN website, and updating and managing the [AHA Centre's](#) presence on CAAN's website. We produce a [bi-monthly News Blast](#) to update AHA Team members and our research community on AHA Centre activities, new publications, and announcements like workshops, conferences, abstract and grant deadlines and so on. The AHA Centre's social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) is also monitored and kept up to date. This work will continue over the extension year.

Sharing Space Community of Practice: In January 2021, at the height of COVID and Zoom fatigue, researchers began asking questions about how to continue their research and engage research participants and community partners in safe and ethical ways. Staff at the AHA Centre and PAN/REACH Nexxus partnered to host a bi-monthly meeting that would create space for members of our research communities to learn from and support one another with this new reality. We will extend these sessions.

AHA Centre Evaluation: Since its inception in 2012, the AHA Centre has been working with external evaluators, [San Patten and Associates](#) (SPA) who focus on impact and outcomes of the AHA Center, ensuring that we are meeting and exceeding our five objectives. Evaluators attend GC and Operations Team meetings, AHA Centre events (including Wise Practices Gatherings), review AHA Centre deliverables and outputs and hold stakeholder consultations and interviews, for example. We will continue our work with SPA over the course of the extension year in anticipation of the next funding opportunity.

New activities the AHA Centre will pursue during the 2022-2023 Extension Year

Promoting In Depth Resources regarding Indigenous Ethics: As Indigenous research and knowledge sharing grows and evolves over time, CAAN and the AHA Center are increasingly approached by Indigenous and allied researchers with questions like, “how do we enact OCAP Principles in a good way?” The AHA Centre will collaborate with CAAN research staff and the AHA Centre team to develop in-depth informational resources that will contribute to enhance understanding of the nuances of Indigenous research ethics. This will be designed to help guide communities around expectations, questions and rights related to research ethics and ethical issues in HIV and STBBI research with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. This work will begin with a review of the TCPS 2 (with special attention to Chapters 6 and 9); the policies and procedures of established Indigenous Research Ethics Boards as well as the existing literature to form a knowledge-base to build from. Proposed activities include:

- **Engaging with Dr. Julie Bull** for guidance around Indigenous Ethics and the possible development and establishment of an Indigenous STBBI Research Ethics Board at CAAN and how to do Indigenous-centred reviews;
- **Development of resources and materials to mentor how to review a proposal** on topics such as: how to ensure proposals are incorporating GIPA/MIPA in proposed work; how to assess meaningful engagement when working with IPHAs and community; self-reflection activities and workshops: how are allied roles presented in the context of a research team/work with community; and
- **IWKD Speakers Series** will be piloted and then hosted every four months with invited First Nations, Inuit, Métis speakers (including attention to gender and geography) to talk about Indigenous STBBI research ethics of engagement. These sessions will be recorded and shared on the CAAN (YouTube)/AHA Centre webpage.

Indigenous CBR Journal Club: As a way to encourage readership of the JIHR, we will pilot test a quarterly Indigenous CBR Journal Club. Meetings will be held virtually three times a year. Sessions will be hosted by the AHA Centre and open to anyone who wishes to participate. Discussion will be shaped around articles published in the JIHR and facilitated by author teams with attention to capacity bridging, networking, allyship and knowledge sharing.

AHA Centre Communications Assistant: With the opportunity of an extension year, we will modify this position to include ‘research project coordinator’ tasks. The needs of the AHA Centre have evolved since 2017 and while communications tasks remain of the utmost importance, this job description should evolve along with us. Tasks added to the coordinator position would include: monthly board of director reports, scheduling and arranging all meetings (Governing Council, NARAC, operations team, committees, etc.), evaluation data collection, taking charge of the JIHR publishing schedule and ensuring the AHA Centre’s presence on CAAN’s website is complete and up to date

List of hyperlinks:

AHA Centre: <https://www.ahacentre.ca/>

CBR Workshop:
https://www.ahacentre.ca/uploads/9/6/4/2/96422574/peer_workshop_evaluation_report.pdf

Community Engagement Fund: <https://www.ahacentre.ca/community-engagement-fund.html>

Indigenous HIV/AIDS Research Training Program (IHART): <http://iwri.org/research/ihart-2/ihart2-program-overview/>

Indigenous Journal of HIV Research: <https://caan.ca/journal-of-indigenous-hiv-research/>

Indigenous Mentorship Centres: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49453.html>

Indspire's Knowledge Nest: <https://indspire.ca/programs/impact-research/research-knowledge-nest/>

Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research Centres (NEIHRs): <https://research-groups.usask.ca/nehrcoordcentre/>

News Blast: <https://www.ahacentre.ca/newsletters.html>

San Patton and Associates: <https://www.sanpatten.com/>

Sharing Space Community of Practice: <https://pacificaidnetwork.org/sharingspacecommunityofpractice/>