

CCSIP Collaborative Event: Developing an International Health Surveillance, Research and Education Network to Accelerate the Detection of Public Health Threats and Address Critical Global Health Issues

The rapid, global spread of diseases like the H1N1 influenza, and previously SARS, highlights how much we live in an inter-connected world and why the global community needs to work together in developing health programs. In 2006 alone, G8 governments, foundations and organizations committed \$17 billion to global health projects and services. Concurrently, there have been substantial advances in information and communication technologies worldwide.

Yet despite these new technology-based resources and interest in global health, few health science innovations are readily implemented in high-burden, low- and middle-income settings. Leveraging support from CCSIP, researchers from McGill University and the University of California San Francisco are addressing this challenge.

Drawing on extensive experience in working with thousands of health care professionals in hundreds of countries, they aim to create an integrated global health surveillance, research and education network. The scientists will host a bilateral workshop that brings together multinational, multidisciplinary teams of researchers, educators and industry experts to identify the steps and technologies necessary to establish this network across Canada, with potential for use around the world.

A key priority: the development and implementation of systems that support health care workers in almost real-time, enabling the early detection of potential public health threats. The workshop will provide an excellent opportunity to develop high-quality educational and training programs for field-based health workers in remote settings, helping to improve the quality of care, job satisfaction and retention of these professionals.

Longer-term, the Canada-California-led network promises to develop novel approaches to address critical global health issues such as pandemics and implement innovative health care programs in low-income regions where they are often needed most.

