



## PLANNING AND RESEARCH STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 29, 2008

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The Mental Health Commission of Canada is pleased to announce the establishment of its internal research resource team in the Calgary office with the hiring of three Associate Research Officers. Under the direction of Dr. Jayne Barker, this team will liaise with and assist Advisory Committees in obtaining needed research tools and information to implement their projects and in using knowledge translation and exchange principles in ensuring the results influence policy and practice.

### **Sophie Sapergia, BA, MSW**

Sophie comes to the Commission having completed a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology (minor in Political Science) with First Class Honours. She is a recent Master of Social Work graduate with a Concentration in Gerontology from the University of Calgary. Her previous work experience includes both clinical work (with the Community Geriatric Mental Health Service in the Calgary Health Region) and a strong focus on mental health policy-relevant research. She has most recently served as Project Coordinator for Dementia NET, Primary Care Research and Development Group – which involved comparing dementia service use across countries, and supervising data collection for the Alberta cohorts in this longitudinal national study. She has reviewed and reported on assessment tools to assist family physicians with diagnosis as part of the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly, has recently conducted literature reviews of policy tools for the Canada West Foundation, and has international/cross cultural experience on a CIDA funded research project on Healthy Aging in India. Sophie's passion for the field of mental health is also fuelled by her own personal experience as a family-caregiver.



**Brenda Leung, BSc, ND, MSc, PhD (*candidate*)**

Brenda brings a diverse education to her new role with the Commission, beginning with a Bachelor's degree in Biopsychology from UBC, a Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine degree from the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine in Toronto, Clinical Research Professional certification from BCIT, and a Master of Science in Health Research from the University of Calgary. She is currently completing her PhD in Epidemiology, also at the U of C. Brenda's research has also been varied – but a theme of wellness for optimal mental health runs throughout. For example she has coordinated or lead research on Chinese and Caucasian population use of healthcare services; on homelessness and health; on the use of mentoring within networks to increase research capacity and literacy, and most recently she led the development of a proposal for a large team grant on pregnancy outcomes. She has also acted as a consultant on best practices for the Calgary Health Region, Diversity Services. Brenda is currently using her strong analytic and quantitative skills in her doctoral research, in which she is examining maternal nutritional intake and its relationship to mental health outcomes.

**Susan Lynn Hardie, BSc, BEd, MSW, PhD (*candidate*)**

Susan has undergraduate degrees in Human Biology (University of Guelph) and Education (UWO) as well as a graduate degree in Social Work from Wilfrid Laurier University. She is in the final stages of her PhD in Social Work (also at WLU), and holds professional registration as a Teacher and a Social Worker. Susan brings an enormous depth of experience to her position with the Commission, ranging from teaching Biology, Mathematics and Statistics, conducting qualitative interviews with homeless individuals, and serving as a counsellor in areas including family violence, depression, grief and parenting. She has also been a passionate advocate for persons with a lived experience of mental illness and for persons with disabilities. Her research has spanned a range of topics from cross-cultural work on expressed emotion in persons with schizophrenia, psychosocial effects of parents caring for an at risk child, post-traumatic stress disorders, the therapeutic alliance, child welfare and family support, and health promotion among older persons with psychiatric disabilities. Susan has held positions with the National Network for Mental Health, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the University of Toronto and St. Michael's Hospital Inner-City Research Unit. She has held several scholarships and awards and is the author of more than 20 publications.