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UNIQUE FASD PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL BOARD MEETING

VICTORIA – The Canada Northwest Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Partnership ministers were pleased to announce the inaugural meeting of a research network board newly-created to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

The 15-member Canada Northwest FASD Research Network Board comprises experts from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C., the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut and will oversee the research network's strategic direction. Alberta representative Ms. Lou Winthers was elected by the board to serve as chair.

"FASD is an incredibly complex issue that affects the lives of thousands of families," said Linda Reid, B.C. minister of state for early childhood development. "By sharing our resources and ensuring more dollars are directed west and to the north we can achieve new milestones more quickly. That, in turn, means better lives and better futures for children and youth affected by this disorder and greater inroads into its prevention."

Under the guidance of FASD expert Dr. Sterling Clarren as CEO/scientific director, the research network will advance research projects and build relationships across and within its jurisdictions. The intention is to compile evidence-based information that will guide progressive, inclusive policy, ultimately bettering the lives of individuals and families affected by the disorder.

"Research and the creation of the Canada Northwest Research Network has been a real focus of the partnership," said Heather Forsyth, Alberta's Minister of Children's Services and the next chair of the partnership. "This board is comprised of some of the best and brightest minds in FASD research and planning, and is poised to lead the way."

The Canada Northwest FASD Partnership is an alliance of seven jurisdictions that work towards the development and promotion of an interprovincial/territorial approach to prevention, intervention, care and support of individuals affected by FASD. The partnership has been in place since 1998.

FASD is the result of permanent brain damage and affects approximately nine of every 1,000 children born in Canada each year.

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1 backgrounder attached.

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BACKGROUND

The board of directors for the Canada Northwest Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Research Network convened in Victoria today for their inaugural meeting. The 15-member board consists of leading researchers and experts, including:

Manitoba

- *Dr. Albert Chudley – president of medical staff, genetics and metabolism at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg.*
- *Dr. John O’Neil – professor and director of the Aboriginal Health Centre for Aboriginal Health Research and head of the Dept. of Community Health Sciences in the faculty of medicine at the University of Manitoba.*

Saskatchewan

- Dr. Josephine Nanson – registered doctoral clinical consultant and national expert on FASD.
- Dr. Caroline Tait – Fulbright scholar, past co-ordinator of the National Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research, planning committee member of the Aboriginal Women’s Health and Healing Research Group, and the Indigenous People’s Health Research Centre, First Nations University of Canada.

Alberta

- Dr. Gail Andrew – member of the multi-disciplinary team of the Alberta Medical Association that developed clinical practice guidelines for prevention and diagnosis of FASD.
- Jeannine Carriere – teacher in the faculty of social work at the University of Calgary with more than 20 years’ experience in the field of aboriginal child welfare.
- Ms. Audrey McFarlane – executive director for the nationally recognized Lakeland Centre for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.
- Ms. Lou Winthers – winner of the 2002 Queen’s Golden Jubilee medal and the 2002 Alberta Medical Association Medal of Honour for her contributions to health care in Alberta.

British Columbia

- Dr. Bonnie Leadbeater – former director for addictions research of British Columbia and professor in the department of psychology at UVic, involved in research and community work with at-risk youth, injury prevention and community-university research alliances.
- Ms. Margo Greenwood – assistant professor, faculty of education, University of Northern British Columbia, expert in indigenous early childhood education and site director with the Centre for Excellence for Children and Adolescents with Special Needs, UNBC Task Force on Substance Abuse.
- Mr. Peter Webster – businessman, philanthropist and trustee of the R. Howard Webster foundation, one of Canada’s largest private foundations specializing in supporting children’s needs, education and criminal justice issues.
- Dr. Sharon Wilsnack – Fulbright scholar, member of the Institute of Medicine’s Committee to Study Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and current member of the National Advisory Committee, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Yukon

- Dr. Jeremy Baumbach – registered psychologist published in the area of adapting standard sexual offender treatment for persons with FASD, committed to the right of persons with FASD to obtain the best treatment possible.

Northwest Territories

- Ms. Catherine Praamsma – assistant deputy minister of health and social services, GNWT with more than 30 years experience in northern health administration.

Nunavut

- Ms. Rosie Kagak – member of Health Canada’s National Advisory Committee for FASD, representative for the National Advisory Committee for Healthy Communities, Mothers and Children Research Project and participant in meetings and discussions to facilitate an agenda for FASD Prevention and Intervention in Nunavut.

Scientific Director:

- Dr. Sterling K. Clarren – professor of pediatrics and head, division of hospital medicine at the University of Washington School of Medicine and division of genetics and development at the University of Washington in Seattle and recently appointed to the division of developmental pediatrics and the child development and rehabilitation program at UBC. Dr. Clarren has been involved in FASD diagnosis, evaluation, intervention and research for 30 years, helping set standards for FASD diagnosis in Canada and coining the term ‘fetal alcohol effects’ in an article in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1978.

(picture on following page)

