

CPHR Internship Awarded May 2007

Saskatoon in motion: The impact of a community-based health promotion strategy on health services utilization seven years later

Strategic Training Fellow: **Kori Fisher**
PhD Candidate
College of Kinesiology, University of Saskatchewan

Community-based Organization: ***in motion***
Saskatoon Health Region

Internship Summary:

In light of research highlighting the significant burden of life-style related chronic disease, addressing physical inactivity among Canadians has become a public health priority in Canada. In 1999, the Saskatoon Health Region and its partners launched *in motion*, a far-reaching community-based active living strategy mandated to encourage regular participation in physical activity among all citizens. The *in motion* strategy was implemented with the expectation that the mobilization of large segments of the population to become physically active enough to achieve health benefits would bring about substantial savings for the health care system. Now entering its eighth year, *in motion* recognizes the need for information on health services utilization (i.e. physician and hospital services and prescription drug utilization) and outcomes of physical activity participation and welcomes research in this area.

In order to develop effective chronic disease prevention and management programs, it is important to understand how physical activity may moderate future health services utilization among individuals with pre-existing conditions such as hypertension, obesity and diabetes (Andreyeva & Sturm, 2006). Many of the conditions associated with inactivity, including those already mentioned, do not show signs of clinical manifestation until later in life. Similarly, health services utilization is generally greater among older adults than their younger counterparts. For these reasons, we (myself, along with *in motion*) are very interested in examining the relationship between physical activity participation and health services utilization in this population. Using data from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) and Saskatchewan Health, the proposed study will examine health service utilization among adults aged 50 years and older in Saskatoon for the past seven years and determine if the implementation of the *in motion* strategy has resulted in changes in health service utilization among this population during this time.

This project is the result of a direct collaboration between myself and *in motion* and our expectations are that this study will provide information regarding the short term impacts of the *in motion* strategy on the health care system. Understanding the economic impact of population-based physical activity interventions such as *in motion* could provide the basis for policy development and resultant increases in investment in similar chronic disease prevention strategies.