

THETA Quarterly News Bulletin

June 2008

First Annual Retreat

THETA held its first annual retreat on May 23-25, 2008 in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The retreat was attended by over 40 professionals who represented a broad range of organisations including: universities; research institutes; provincial organisations and hospitals; various academic departments; THETA staff; students; and government.

The retreat included:

- A social event, which included a winery tour and dinner at Jackson-Triggs Winery.
- Seventeen presenters who provided their perspectives on service, education and research in the areas of health economics and technology assessment.
- A "speed dating" session, where retreat participants were paired for seven-minute segments to discuss what each person does, why they are part of the collaborative, and how they would like to contribute to THETA.
- Poster presentations.
- A strategic planning session, which included small group discussions and a plenary to explore governance and brand identity, service, education and research.

Below are the highlights of the deliverables for THETA in 2008-09, which were discussed during Sunday's strategic planning session:

Governance & Brand Identity

1. Establish a fully-functioning Strategic Directions Committee.
2. Redesign THETA's communications vehicles, including its brochure, which only identifies 'health technology' assessment and excludes 'economics'. THETA's brand identity then needs to be clearly communicated.
3. Define THETA's partnerships and relationships with others including, but not limited to, the Medical Advisory Secretariat, La Ka Shing Knowledge Institute, Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, hospitals (e.g. The Hospital for Sick Children, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, University Health Network), TASK, HOPE, PEACH, Vice-Presidents of Research in the academic hospitals, TAHSN, the School of Public Policy, the Joint Centre for Bioethics, and the University of Toronto's Citizen Council.

Service

4. Develop time management guidelines and procedures to support service research.
5. Develop project management guidelines and procedures to support service research.
6. Define the roles and responsibilities for conducting and managing service research projects.

Education

7. Develop an identity and brand for health economics and technology assessment education.
8. Communicate the identity and brand on websites, and ensure that courses are open and readily identifiable and available (HPME and THETA).
9. Hire an education coordinator for health economics and technology assessment.
10. Set up an education practicum.

Research

11. Develop communications vehicles to help build a research community (e.g., newsletter, blogs).
12. Develop a research committee to evaluate proposals for research support. For a more detailed description of retreat proceedings, please e-mail Desiree Chanderbhan (info@theta.utoronto.ca)

On behalf of THETA, we would like to thank everyone for taking the time to attend and helping to make this a very successful weekend. It looked like everyone had a great time and we look forward to seeing you once again at next year's retreat!

Project Updates

Ontario Pressure Ulcer Model (OPUM):

A draft report on the cost-effectiveness of prevention strategies for pressure ulcers (PUs) in long-term care (LTC) facilities in Ontario was submitted to the Medical Advisory Secretariat (MAS) in June. Currently, we are working on the cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) of treatment options for PU in LTC. OPUM is also being adapted for CEA of PU prevention and treatment strategies in acute care and community care settings - draft analysis plans are being constructed. Other spin-off work includes: i. A THETA collaboration with MAS for a field evaluation/RCT of cost-effectiveness of repositioning for LTC residents at risk for PU; ii. Manuscripts; and iii. A funding application in the spring of 2009 for the evaluation of a tele-health multidisciplinary PU care team.

Six abstracts (natural history, utility, cost, CEA, budget impact, systematic review of existing CEA studies) were submitted for presentation at The 30th Annual Meeting of the Society for Medical Decision Making, which is taking place in Philadelphia, October 19-22.

Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) RCT:

The DBS protocol has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at UHN. The Case Report Forms have been finalized and are presently being digitized by Progressare Inc., (www.progressare.com). Our target date for patient enrolment is August 1st.

Systematic Review of the Cost Effectiveness of Biologics for Rheumatoid Arthritis:

In close collaboration with Dr. Bombardier and staff from the MAS at the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, THETA contributed to a report that has been presented to the Committee to Evaluate Drugs. A draft report should be completed at the beginning of July.

Canadian Cardiovascular Model:

A summary of the nine principles of cardiovascular policy models was presented in our first cardiovascular modeling meeting on June 12th. The consensus was on two possible policy candidates: The Population Health Model (POHEM) in Canada and the Impact Model (Capewell et al. 2006). THETA has invited Mr. Bill Flanagan (Statistics Canada) to present the POHEM on June 25th at 1:00 PM, Leslie Dan Pharmacy Building, room 686.

Communications

Our website is up! Please visit theta.utoronto.ca. The website will not just be a communications tool, but a clearing house for tools developed at THETA. Plans include tools for managing workflow for systematic reviews and economic models. Future editions of our news bulletin will be posted on our site. THETA is attempting to provide links for individuals interested in HTA education. Courses in HTA are offered through a number of departments and faculties at the University of Toronto. For details, please refer to THETA's website, <http://theta.utoronto.ca/Courses>.

Announcements

Wendong Chen was the recipient of a Podium Award at the ISPOR 13th Annual International Meeting in Toronto. His presentation, "A COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS OF HEPATITIS C SCREENING AMONG IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA", was selected as Best Student Podium Presentation. Congratulations Wendong!

New THETA Staff

Welcome to our newest staff members Marcio Machado (Research Associate, Pharmacy post-doc) and Farah Farahati (Health Economist).