



## **Canadian Association for HIV Research (CAHR)**

### **Annual General Meeting**

**April 28, 2022, 18:00 Eastern Time**

## **MINUTES**

Participating

Dr. Keith Fowke, CAHR President

Dr. Alexandra King, CAHR Treasurer

Andrew Matejcic, CAHR Executive Director

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Andrew Matejcic called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm and offered words of welcome to those participating virtually. There were 66 voting members participating in the meeting.

### **2. Approval of the Agenda**

Andrew Matejcic asked if there were any objections to the 2022 AGM Agenda. There were no objections and the Agenda was approved by Dr. Kelly O'Brien and Dr. Carol Strike.

### **3. Approval of Minutes of AGM 2021**

Andrew Matejcic inquired if there were any objections to the 2021 AGM Minutes. There were no objections and the Minutes were approved by Dr. Kelly O'Brien and Dr. Carol Strike.

### **4. Year in Review**

Andrew Matejcic provided background on the organization, its mandate and vision. The current composition of the Board of Directors was presented, and it was noted that a new ex-officio role for a Trainee Representative was created in 2021. This role is currently held by Riley Tough (University of Manitoba). CAHR Staff, Andrew Matejcic and Erin Love, support the work of the organization.

It was noted that CAHR 2022 was the third consecutive virtual conference as a result of the ongoing pandemic. Acknowledgement was made to the CAHR 2022 Co-chairs (Dr. Eric Arts and Dr. Carmen Logie) as well as the Scientific Committee for their efforts this year.

It was noted that the CAHR-CANFAR Excellence in Research Awards are bestowed annually to mid-career researchers who have achieved a track record of excellence and demonstrated a commitment to improving the lives of those living with HIV with or at risk. 2022 Winners were:

- Basic Sciences: Dr. Mohammad Ali Jenabian (Université du Québec à Montréal)
- Clinical Sciences: Dr. Cecilia Costiniuk (McGill University)
- Epidemiology-Public Health: Dr. Angela Kaida (Simon Fraser University)
- Social Sciences: Dr. Adrian Guta (University of Windsor)
- Community-Based Research: The Thrive PRA Team (Sharyle Lyndon, Antonio Marante, Patience Magagula, Claudette Cardinal)

Also of note, CAHR 2022 Community Scholarships were provided to over 60 winners.

Future CAHR Conferences will be held at:

- Quebec City, QC (2023)
- London, ON (2024)
- Halifax, NS (2025)

On the training front, the CAHR workshop series has been in existence for 14 years. Beyond annual Conference, this is CAHR's primary activity. Since 2012: nearly 70 workshops, over 2,000 registrants, held in 8 provinces. Ongoing evaluations demonstrate that workshops: have an over 98% positive rating; foster knowledge transfer; and build skills. In 2021-22, the following events were held:

New Researcher Workshop (April 26, 2022)

- 14<sup>th</sup> annual CAHR New Investigator Workshop brought together aspiring HIV researchers – ranging from Master's students to New Faculty — from all research disciplines
- Co-chaired by Dr. Surita Parashar (BCCFE) and Riley Tough (University of Manitoba)

Advanced Knowledge Mobilization for Peer Researchers (March 12-13, 2022)

- Aim of workshop was to build capacity among Peer Researchers working on HIV/HCV/STBBIs and sexuality-related studies in the areas of knowledge mobilization
- Researchers in Canadian studies joined facilitators, Dr. Lori Chambers, Rick Waines, Ben Klassen, Diana Campbell, and Dr. Francisco Ibáñez-Carrasco, for the two-day event

World Indigenous peoples' Conference on Viral Hepatitis (November 23, 2021)

- 2021 mini conference featured Indigenous speakers addressing how to refocus on hepatitis testing, treatment and care and what lessons can be learned from COVID-19
- CAHR workshop series supported the event, as led by Dr. Alexandra King

Also to support the HIV research community, CAHR (in partnership with ViiV) supports two funding programs.

- The Mark Wainberg Fund awards assist Canadian basic science researchers – working in the realm of HIV virology – to present their work at accredited meetings in Canada and internationally. All levels of post-graduate trainees, new faculty, senior scientists are eligible; and

- CAHR offers travel award program which allows HIV Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) to attend international HIV conferences. 30 scholarships now funded annually for events such as CROI and IAS.

The new CAHR Strategic Plan was completed in late 2020. After extensive consultations, CAHR completed its new Strategic Plan in Fall 2020. The plan sets out a direction for ongoing (post COVID) re-investment in its membership.

As part of its anti-racism and anti-oppression position statement (July 2020), CAHR committed to:

- On-going anti-oppression training for both CAHR Board and staff members
- Undertake an audit of CAHR bylaws, policies, conferences, workshops and other activities
- CAHR hired Dr. Akwatu Khenti in Fall 2020 to lead these activities

**In 2020, CAHR also developed and adopted:**

- CAHR Board Code of Conduct to ensure that all members of the CAHR Board of Directors and CAHR working groups and/or committees adhere to common standards of personal conduct; and the
- CAHR Conference Code of Conduct to ensure the Conference is a place that is welcoming and respectful for all participants, regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, national origin, ethnicity, or religion.

**In 2021:**

- The CAHR Board participated in Dr. Khenti’s training session entitled “Understanding and advancing our leadership responsibilities for diversity, equity and inclusion”
- Dr. Khenti also undertook:
  - A review/diversity audit of CAHR’s files, plans and website
  - Key stakeholder interviews which included CAHR Board members and external stakeholders
- Dr. Khenti’s final report is being used by CAHR as a guide moving forward

As of Spring 2022, the CAHR Board and staff are undertaking training through “Indigenous Community Research Partnerships”, as led by Elder Sharon and Dr. Janet Jull.

## 5. Treasurer Update

On behalf of Dr. Alexandra King, Andrew Matejcic presented the 2022 CAHR Treasurer’s Report. Andrew informed members that CAHR completed a full audit as required by the rules that govern charitable organizations.

Members were informed that Financial Statements for the period of November 1, 2020 to October 31, 2021 available for review by CAHR members.

Members were reminded of the historical goals of the Board:

- Amass a nest egg to weather financial ups and downs (Auditor continues to recommend maintaining a minimum of two years' operating costs in reserve = \$1.4M)
- Dispense profits to further HIV research (studentships, workshops, Conference academic and community scholarships, research awards, etc.)
- Review and adjust plans regularly

As at October 31, 2020:

- Assets: \$2,404,904
- Liabilities: \$148,653
- Balance: \$2,255,441
- By comparison, CAHR Balance at October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 was **\$2,130,026**
- Represents an increase from last year: **\$125,415**

Given the reality of COVID-19 and its impact, CAHR forecasted at AGM 2021 that it would incur a deficit this fiscal year. Conference 2021 revenue was down and investments yielded minimal return due to market volatility. In response, CAHR undertook measures to minimize its loss:

- Series of sponsored COVID-19 webinars were held to generate funds
- Government of Canada pandemic response programs were utilized
- Moratorium placed on all new spending
- All workshops and Board activities were held virtually
- The end result (a \$50K loss) was far better than predicted

## 6. Questions

President Dr. Keith Fowke, Treasurer Dr. Alexandra King, and E.D. Andrew Matejic opened the floor to questions. One question referred to "Note 11. Loss due to Misappropriation" in the financial statements. Dr. Keith Fowke provided an overview of the matter and further explained that CAHR had -- in consultation with CAHR's auditors, legal representation, and a third party virtual financial comptroller -- taken a number of steps to address the issue and put in place new financial measures and strengthened oversight. Further, the employee in question is no longer with the organization.

## 7. Adjournment

Andrew Matejic called to adjourn the meeting. This was approved by Dr. Kelly O'Brien and seconded by Dr. Curtis Cooper. The AGM was adjourned at 18:29.