



Canadian Association for HIV Research (CAHR)

Annual General Meeting

April 28, 2023, 18:30 Eastern Time

MINUTES

Participating

Dr. Keith Fowke, CAHR President

Dr. Alexandra King, CAHR Treasurer

Dr. Shariq Haider, CAHR Secretary

Andrew Matejcic, CAHR Executive Director

1. Welcome and Introductions

Andrew Matejcic called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm and offered words of welcome to those participating. There were 34 voting members participating in the meeting.

2. Call to Order / Approval of the Agenda

Andrew Matejcic asked if there were any objections to the 2023 AGM Agenda. There were no objections and the meeting was called to order and the agenda was approved by Drs. Keith Fowke and Marissa Becker.

3. Approval of Minutes of AGM 2022

Andrew Matejcic inquired if there were any objections to the 2022 AGM Minutes. There were no objections and the Minutes were approved.

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 as well as the CAHR Staff, Andrew Matejcic and Erin Love, who support the work of the organization. It was noted that the term of current CAHR Board Trainee Representative comes to a close in the coming months and that a call for nominations will be launched in the coming week.

Acknowledgement was made to the following individuals and groups:

- CAHR 2023 Co-chairs Dr. Jérôme Estaquier (Laval) and Dr. Cecilia Costiniuk (McGill)
- CAHR 2023 Scientific Committee for all their efforts

- CAHR 2023 Abstract reviewers for ensuring scientific rigor
- Oral Abstract moderators
- Sea to Sky Meeting Management
- CAHR 2023 sponsors
- All conference participants

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. 2023 Winners were:

- Dr. Zabrina Brumme (Simon Fraser University) Basic Science
- Dr. Bertrand Lebouché (McGill) Clinical Science
- Dr. Nathan Lachowsky (University of Victoria) Epidemiology-Public Health
- Dr. Carmen Logie (University of Toronto) Social Science
- Dr. Marilou Gagnon (University of Victoria) Community-Based Research

Also of note, CAHR 2023 Community Scholarships were provided to over 80 winners as well as nine Community Travel Scholarships. Additionally, eight full academic scholarships were awarded for CAHR 2023.

Future CAHR Conferences will be held at:

- 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 2,300 registrants, held in 8 provinces. Ongoing evaluations demonstrate that workshops: have an over 98% positive rating; foster knowledge transfer; and build skills. In 2022-23, the following events were held:

New Researcher Workshop (April 27, 2023 – Quebec City)

- 15th annual CAHR NRW had over 70+ attendees who heard from mentors on grants-crafting, budgeting, social media, and participated in a mentorship roundtable
- Co-chaired by Kate Salter (Simon Fraser) and Riley Tough (University of Manitoba)

CBR Workshop: Jumpstarting Interventions (February-April 2023)

- Ongoing mentorship with teams (researcher-community) to jumpstart the process of designing, implementing, evaluating or preparing and launching a social behavioural participatory intervention project

Science Café: Positive Asian Diasporic Experiences in North America (March 7, 2023)

- Café led by the Asian Community AIDS Services (Christian Hui, Kenneth Poon)

Women Speak: Community Building For and By Women Living with HIV in Canada (July 31, 2022 – Montreal)

- CAHR supported this national platform to identify and prioritize the needs, interests, and concerns specifically for, defined, and led by women living with HIV
- At the 24th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2022) in Montreal, program leaders officially launched their new coalition which aims to re-imagine, re-envision, and reinvigorate the HIV Women movement and held an engagement session
- As led by Maureen Owino, Robin Montgomery, Muluba Habanyama, Wangari Tharao

World Indigenous peoples' Conference on Viral Hepatitis (June 22-23, 2022)

- 2022 event featured Indigenous speakers addressing how to refocus on hepatitis testing, treatment and care and what lessons can be learned from COVID-19
- As led by Alexandra King

Advancing Research Integrity in HIV Social Science Research (June 6, 13, 20, 2022)

- Online event targeted to early career HIV/HCV researchers who use social science theory and/or methods in their studies
- Over 40 Masters and Doctoral students, Fellows and Residents, and Faculty and Community Based Researchers participated in the meeting which aimed to: promote responsible social science research practices related to the creation and dissemination of knowledge products; and build skills in working with community and writing
- Speakers included Adrian Guta, Randy Jackson, Marilou Gagnon, Alexander McClelland, Leeat Granek, Sarah Flicker, Sarah Switzer

Women Speak: Community Building For/By Women Living with HIV (April 29, 2022)

- CAHR supported CAHR 2022 panel session which brought together Women living with HIV, researchers, and service providers to: examine gaps in Canada's response and structural support for women living with HIV within Canada; identify responses towards reducing HIV infections among women and improving the health/wellbeing of women Living with HIV; and establish a national Steering Committee
- Event coordinated by Maureen Owino

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.

On the Governance front:

Members were reminded that as part of its anti-racism and anti-oppression position statement (2020), CAHR committed to:

1. *On-going anti-oppression training for both CAHR Board and staff members*
2. *Undertake an audit of CAHR bylaws, policies, conferences, workshops and other activities*

Aligned with this commitment:

- CAHR has undertaken an audit of CAHR bylaws, policies, conferences, workshops and other activities
- Hired Dr. Akwatu Khenti in Fall 2020 to lead these activities
- CAHR provided \$10,000 in 2022 to the Ad Hoc Committee on HIV in Black Canadian Communities which supported the development of the “Black HIV Manifesto” and website
- The CAHR Board and staff undertakes on-going anti-oppression training including most recently 2023 training through “Indigenous Community Research Partnerships” as led by Elder Sharon Jinkerson Brass and Dr. Janet Jull

- Developed a CAHR Conference Code of Conduct and a Board of Directors Code of Conduct, with the aim of providing a safe, harassment-free environment for all CAHR members regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, national origin, ethnicity, or religion
- Implemented guidelines that ensure CAHR Conference co-chairs, track chairs and reviewers make explicit efforts when selecting speakers for keynotes, oral presentations and special sessions to ensure:
- equity of opportunity for CAHR members who are: racialized persons / persons of colour, women, Indigenous / Aboriginal People of North America, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ persons, early career and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas; and
- the subject of oral presentations reflect diversity of affected groups and regions of Canada
- Enhanced data collection efforts of CAHR Conference goes to ensure future programming reflects diversity of HIV community

5. Treasurer Update

On behalf of Dr. Alexandra King, Andrew Matejcic presented the 2023 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, 2021 to October 31, 2022 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, 2022:

- Assets: \$2,309,937
- Liabilities: \$183,289
- Balance: \$2,126,648
- By comparison, CAHR Balance at October 31st, 2021 was \$2,255,441
- Represents a loss from last year: \$128,793

Given the reality of COVID-19 and its impact, CAHR forecasted at AGM 2022 that it would have a balanced budget for this fiscal year. The following was noted:

- Financial markets were at a near historical peak on October 31, 2021 (end of last fiscal year) and correction that followed was harsh which caused the overall loss for the fiscal year
- CAHR actually had an operating surplus of nearly \$40K before including investment losses into calculation

A 2023-2024 was presented for consideration which, given the volatility of the financial markets, predicted a balanced budget for the year.

6. Questions

Two questions were put forward from the floor.

Question 1: A member noted that \$800 is a substantial amount of funding for a community member to pay to attend the CAHR Conference.

In response, it was noted that CAHR offers Community Scholarships to ensure complimentary access to all eligible community members to the Conference. Since the program was introduced in 2018, no eligible applicant has ever been denied a Community Scholarship. Andrew committed to connecting with this member to resolve the matter.

Question 2: A member inquired about historical trends on acceptance rates for oral abstracts in various tracks.

In response, it was noted that primarily due to the Key Populations oral abstract sessions, there were higher acceptance rates in 2023 in the social and epi/public health streams. As a follow-up question, the member inquired about the level of CAHR membership increasing/decreasing over the last few years. It was noted that due to virtual conferences necessitated due to COVID-19, such trends were not able to be assessed.

7. Adjournment

Andrew Matejcic called to adjourn the meeting. This was approved by Dr. Carol Strike and Dr. Shariq Haider. The AGM was adjourned at 7:20pm.