

# " The Black Women's Health Project "

## A Synthesis of Health Research Relevant to Black Nova Scotians

In January 2001, the Population and Public Health Branch of Health Canada Atlantic awarded a grant to the Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (MCEWH) for a project entitled "A Synthesis of Health Research Relevant to Black Nova Scotians." This project, nicknamed "The Black Women's Health Project," is conducted in partnership with the Black Women's Health Network, and takes the form of a literature review as well as a two-day workshop to take place March 23 & 24, 2001 with researchers in the area of Black health and members of the Black community. The project team includes: Carol Amaratunga, Sue Edmonds, Josephine Enang and Yvonne Atwell.

**" There is a need to improve the health, well-being and social inclusion of Blacks living in Nova Scotia"**



## Background

In an effort to address the numerous and complex concerns of Blacks living in Nova Scotia, more information is needed to support evidence-based decision making; citizen engagement; increased community capacity; early health intervention; partnership building; and better health outcomes among Black Nova Scotians.

The MCEWH recognizes that the perceptions and voices of Black Nova Scotians are required to help government develop policies that ensure social inclusion of the most vulnerable and high risk populations in our society. In this recognition, MCEWH has offered outreach and facilitation services to the Black research community in an effort to foster links, networks, and partnerships across the Atlantic region. This inclusive approach has aimed to inform public policy and raise critical consciousness about the need to move beyond discussions about poverty to focus on the underlying factors which exclude populations such as Black Nova Scotians from mainstream society, civil governance and health service delivery.

**" There is need to place health in a historical and racial context to understand the present situation of Blacks living in Nova Scotia. "**

The inclusive approach of MCEWH has been supported by leaders from the Black Nova Scotian community and is creating a shift in thinking – away from a concentration on child poverty and towards an analysis of the social and economic exclusion of women, children and families. It is hoped that the *Black Women's Health Project* will contribute another important piece of evidence to the social inclusion "puzzle" in Atlantic Canada and that the work will find integration into ongoing research and initiatives.

## The Black Women's Health Project

The vision for this initiative is to enhance the health and well being of Black Nova Scotian women and their families. Specific goals include:

- ✿ To increase awareness about health issues of Blacks living in Nova Scotia through a comprehensive synthesis of research reports, secondary data, and findings from participant involvement;
- ✿ To translate research findings into clear policy language for decision makers and the public at large;
- ✿ To build capacity and networking in the Black community to address the challenges of promoting greater social and economic inclusion of Black women and families using a population health approach;
- ✿ To convene a policy based workshop to share the findings, conclusion and recommendations with policy makers, researchers, and community leaders;
- ✿ To convey the findings of the study a wide audience including municipal, provincial and federal governments district health authorities, community health boards and other community organizations.



## Approach

A participatory approach will heighten awareness of the determinants of health and foster understanding of population health and its relevance to improving the health of Blacks living in Nova Scotia. The approach will also build capacity and facilitate empowerment among participants. A synthesis of information from the project will be used to inform future collaboration between government and the Black community and will provide a knowledge base for future evidence-based, government policy development.

## Project Report

Copies of the project reports will be available after May 31, 2001.

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