



## Presenting: A Women's Health in Atlantic Canada Trilogy

The Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (MCEWH) has compiled a series of three books, entitled **A Women's Health in Atlantic Canada Trilogy**. The trilogy highlights knowledge currently being generated about women's health in Canada through the research and activities of the MCEWH. The trilogy centres on social and economic issues affecting the health and well being of Atlantic Canadian women such as poverty, gender-based research and the development of policies today that will help ensure the best investments for future generations to come.

### Trilogy themes ...

Poverty is relative: limited income excludes people from dignified participation in society; it excludes more women than men; it has negative impacts on health and it is cyclical.

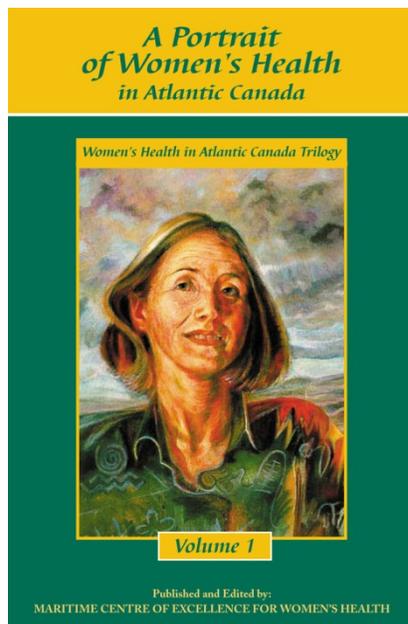
Strategically reinvesting in our health care system, our social safety net, and our caregivers will break the cycle of poverty, lead to better health for everyone, and cost significantly less than current efforts: investment now prevents costly crisis later. Social and economic policy must take gender into account as a determinant of population health: better health for women through applying a gender perspective benefits everyone.

#### **The Women's Health in Atlantic Canada Trilogy ...**

*is a valuable and often fascinating source of information on the work of the MCEWH in general and on some new and innovative ways of conducting research on social, women's health and population-health policy.*

*Especially intriguing and useful for further research both inside and outside of Canada is the emphasis on new research paradigms put to reality and viability tests under the auspices of the MCEWH. These are well done, well-balanced and co-ordinated publications bridging both social-policy theory and research methodology. Good stuff indeed!*

*~ Dr. Kurt P. Bierschock, State Institute for Family Research, University of Bamberg, Germany*



## A Portrait of Women's Health

Volume one of the series focuses on the value and uniqueness of Canadian women's health, the distinction between women's health and family health and the consequences of a lack of research and funding into women's health issues. The booklet outlines the actions necessary to "catch up" for all the years that health researchers have failed to incorporate sex and gender variables into their research.

### Significance:

Although Atlantic Canada makes up 8.2 per cent of the Canadian population, the region receives just 2.9 per cent of all medical and research funding and only 4.7 per cent of all social science and humanities research funding. Atlantic Canadian women have the highest rates of pay inequity and unpaid work, the highest rates of environmental illnesses, the highest rates of cancer-related deaths and the highest rates of female and child poverty in all of Canada. Women use the health care system more than men because they have a longer life expectancy and women spend a greater proportion of their lives in poorer health. Women comprise of 52 per cent of the Canadian population.

### A Portrait of Women's Health in Atlantic Canada ...

*is a rich treasure. I could write of what an excellent analytical model it presents for all of us, taking familiar details but giving them a different context and therefore different policy implications. I could reflect on how refreshing it is to read about our health without once having to reach for a dictionary of medical terms. I could just admire the transparently recorded field research with the different women of the Atlantic and the textured picture of priorities that presents. I can celebrate that such a publication is just well written, so that it never stops being a pleasure to read it. It's a tool for activists, a resource for decision makers, a text for students, and now a part of the herstory of the women of Atlantic Canada. Congratulations on a work of real value!*

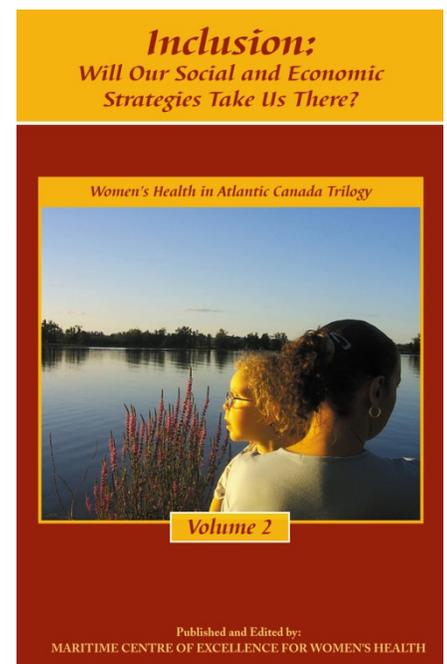
*~ Dr. Marilyn Waring, Department of Economics, University of New Zealand*

## **Inclusion: Will our Social and Economic Strategies Take us There?**

Volume two of the trilogy contains material developed through what came to be known as the "Inclusion Project." This publication presents the problem of poverty and a unique shift in thinking to move away from a concentration on child poverty towards an analysis of social and economic exclusion of women and their children.

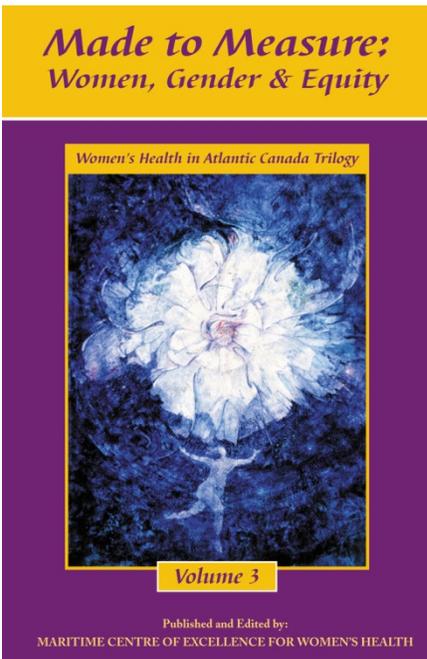
### **Significance**

The National Council of Welfare identified three major groups of poor women in Canada: Single women under 65 (40 per cent are poor). Single women over 65 (40 per cent are poor). Single-parent mothers under 65 with children under 18 (poverty rate is 74 per cent in Atlantic Canada). In 1994, New Brunswick women working full-time earned 64 per cent of the earnings of men, only two percentage points more than in 1971. The women's labour-force participation rate is 69 per cent nationally, and 54 per cent in New Brunswick.



**Canadians** ... have always understood the intricate and intimate relationships between the health of society's members and the well being of society as whole. In this time of economic down sizing and social policy restraint, we all ask hard questions about our social fabric and the kind of society we want in the new millennium. This new book provides a timely and thought provoking perspective. It describes the reality of groups of people in our society who remain outside of the new prosperity; it gives a welcome sampling of programs and policies that seek to address exclusion. It also challenges us - to not only give these groups a tangible face, but to consider the impacts of exclusion on both the excluded and society as a whole. As we engage in the economic and social policy debates to come, *Inclusion: Will our Social and Economic Strategies Take us There?* is an important resource – not just within Atlantic Canada but across the country.

~ Madeline Boscoe, RN, Executive Director, Canadian Women's Health Network



## Made to Measure: Women, Gender and Equity

Made to Measure presents perspectives from both pioneers and newcomers to the field of gender-based analysis. The vision of these academics is a future where the consideration of gender differences and similarities in research, policy and action will become a routine practice.

## Significance

The idea of gender-based analysis has been evolving over the past 30 years in the international arena. In 1995, the Canadian government adopted a policy requiring federal departments and agencies to conduct gender-based analysis of future policies and legislation. Women with health problems face obstacles at two levels: recognition of their problems, and the ability to organize to prevent problems.

*Given the difficulty ... of achieving a genuine gender balance in our public and private institutions, and the persistent undervaluing of women's unpaid caring roles, it is important to share our theoretical advances and practical experiences relating to gender equity. This collection, reflecting the speeches and papers presented at the Made to Measure conference (Halifax, 1999), is a timely publication. It explores issues related to gender-based analysis in research, policy, and action; reflects perspectives from around the world; and extends the networking function of the conference itself to an even wider constituency. Made To Measure: Women, Gender and Equity should not only be widely read, but its findings should be the first wave of a sea-change in how research, policy, and politics are conducted.*

*~ Dr. Margaret Conrad, History  
Department, Acadia University*