E-News

CHEPA researchers have been helping to shape Canada’s health system since 1988. Located at McMaster University, CHEPA (chepa.org) is a multidisciplinary centre providing timely and relevant evidence to inform policy-making at all levels of the health-care system.

CHEPA news is an electronic newsletter available by email or on the CHEPA website (chepa.org). If you would like to subscribe, send an email to ramsay@mcmaster.ca. If your email address is changing, please let us know.

New grants

CHEPA members were awarded a number of grants this winter, collectively and as individual researchers.

A multidisciplinary CHEPA-led team was awarded a one-year $265,000 Operating Grant for economic forecasting by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. The research project, entitled Investing in primary and secondary prevention: Economic forecasting to inform policies regarding amortization of program costs, is co-led by Jeremiah Hurley, Dean of McMaster University’s Faculty of Social Sciences and a member of CHEPA, and CHEPA Director Jean-Éric Tarride, and involves eight other

In this issue

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- Faculty changes -- Stephen Birch retires; Laura N. Anderson and Mitchell Levine join CHEPA
- Congratulations to three recent Health Policy PhD grads!
- CHEPA upcoming workshops
- More than 20 new publications

Photo: Jason Busse, co-director of the Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Medicinal Cannabis Research (CMCR), presented a CHEPA seminar on November 15, 2017, about the implications of legalizing cannabis and preliminary findings from a review of using cannabis to manage chronic pain. For information about CHEPA seminars, click here.

Workshops

Personalizing patient care under uncertainty: Techniques to inform development of clinical guidelines and treatment choice is a two-day conference beginning April 11 featuring Prof. Charles Manski, who pioneered advances in partial identification across many policy applications. His recent work addresses opportunities to build further robustness and rigour into clinical decision-making in relation to patient care under uncertainty, with applications to clinical guideline development, prognosis and treatments. For more information, click here.

As part of the 2018 Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health
CHEPA members - Laura N. Anderson, David Feeny, Michel Grignon, Emmanuel Guindon, Christopher Longo, Gillian Mulvale, Daria O’Reilly and Arthur Sweetman, as well as experts from other faculties and universities, as well as government.

Following a national peer-reviewed competition, CHEPA - represented by Michel Grignon, Christopher Longo, Daria O’Reilly, Hsien Seow and Jean-Éric Tarride - was selected as one of the few prequalified vendors to provide Health Economics expertise to the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC), until March 31, 2019. In this role, CHEPA will provide CPAC content-specific expertise to advancing cancer-related pan-Canadian initiatives in economic evaluations, health system sustainability, and efficiency.

As well, the McMaster Health Forum and researchers in CHEPA will continue co-hosting a program, Harnessing Evidence and Values for Health System Excellence, that has been newly awarded more than $2-million in funding by Ontario’s Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) through its Health System Research Fund (HSRF) Program Awards. The program will be co-led by John Lavis, the Forum’s director (and a member of CHEPA), and CHEPA’s Julia Abelson, who is also an adjunct faculty member of the Forum.

Individual CHEPA members were also awarded grants this winter:

Ellen Amster is principal investigator on a project entitled The Morocco-Canada Network for Maternal and Infant Health: Determining research priorities and a framework for action, which received a $20,000 Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) Population Health Global Health Planning Grant for the 2018 calendar year. CHEPA member Lydia Kapiriri is among the co-investigators.

Andrew Costa is principal investigator on ACTivation on Unstable Chronic Disease Program: Educating and Training Caregivers in the General Management of Unstable Chronic Diseases, which was awarded an Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Caregiver Education and Training Program, Education - New Project grant of $445,567 over five years.

Christopher Longo is principal investigator on Pan-Canadian examination of cancer patients out-of-pocket costs (Ontario sub-study), which received a $36,000 Cancer Care Ontario Planning and Regional Programs Grant for 2017-2018. He was also awarded $9,000 from the University Research Excellence Fund for Interdisciplinary Research for Economic Analysis of Cancer Outcomes, also for this year.

(CADTH) Symposium (Halifax, April 15-17), CHEPA members Daria O’Reilly, Mitchell Levine and Jean-Éric Tarride, in collaboration with other representatives from CADTH, are organizing a pre-conference workshop entitled An Introduction to Health Technology Assessment, being held on April 15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information and to register, click here.

CHEPA in the media

Katherine Boothe’s opinion piece Canadian pharmacare closer to becoming a reality was featured on theconversation.com website on March 2.

New Publications

Journal articles

Abelson J. Patient engagement in health technology assessment: what constitutes ‘meaningful’ and how we might get there. Journal of Health Services Research and Policy. 2018. 0(0) 1-3.


Michael Wilson was a co-recipient of a $40,000 CIHR Patient-Oriented Research Collaboration Grant in collaboration with Claire Kendall (nominated principal applicant from the Bruyère Research Institute) and Ron Rosenes (a leader and activist in the HIV sector). In partnership with the Living with HIV (LHIV) Innovation Team and the Ontario HIV Treatment Network, the grant will contribute to funding a series of three citizen panels and a stakeholder dialogue at the McMaster Health Forum in 2018 to address pervasive system-level challenges in the design and delivery of comprehensive care for people living with HIV in Canada.

Prof Stephen Birch retires

Stephen Birch, one of CHEPA’s longest-serving members, has retired from McMaster University and is now the Taylor Chair and Centre Director of the University of Queensland, Australia, Centre for the Business and Economics of Health. He received many awards and accolades over his career at CHEPA and has hundreds of publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals. In the 2011 World Bank rankings of health economics researchers, he was ranked equal 1st in Canada and equal 35th in the world, based on the volume and impact of his publications.

New faculty and appointments

CHEPA welcomed two new faculty members this winter: Laura N. Anderson, PhD, and Dr. Mitchell A. H. Levine, MD, MSc, FRCPC, FISPE, FACP. Anderson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence and Impact (HEI) at McMaster University and an Adjunct Scientist in the division of Child Health Evaluative Sciences at the SickKids Research Institute. Levine was recently appointed Chair of Canada’s Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB) after serving as a member and Vice-Chair of the Board since 2011. He is a Professor at McMaster in both the Departments of HEI and the Department of Medicine, Division of Clinical Pharmacology.


She was also appointed a senior consultant for “The Human Story of Illness: Health Humanities Portraits for Physicians in Training, led by Principal Investigator Sandy Sufian of the University of Illinois-Chicago which received data. Journal of Pain and Symptom Management. 2018. 03.10. S0885-3924(18)30135-0.


Laidsaar-Powell R, Buttow P, Charles C, Gafni A, Entwistle V, Epstein R, Juraskova I. The TRIO framework: Conceptual insights into family caregiver involvement...
Faculty presentations

Julia Abelson was part of a panel on exploring models of patient engagement at the Clinical Trials Ontario Conference, held in Toronto on March 28.

Michel Grignon was the keynote speaker at the Mapping the Global Dimensions of Policy 7 conference at McMaster University on February 6, where he spoke on An Economist’s Perspective on Aging, and also held a seminar in January at Dalhousie University’s Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine about the social gradients of health.

Health Policy PhD program

Three Health Policy PhD candidates successfully defended their doctoral theses this winter:

Neil Barr defended his PhD thesis, Physician Communication via Information and Communication Technology: Understanding its Role in Health System Performance on January 26. His supervisor was Glen Randall. Barr is continuing to teach and conduct research at McMaster.

Avram Denburg, a 2015 Trudeau Scholar and CIHR Fellow who was supervised by Julia Abelson, successfully defended his thesis entitled The politics of child health technologies: Social values and public policy on drug funding for children in Canada, on February 22. A graduate of McMaster’s medical school, Denburg is a staff oncologist at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, specializing in hematology/oncology.

Christina Hackett successfully defended her thesis, The health and mental health of Indigenous peoples living in Canada: Understanding distal, intermediate and proximal determinants of health, on March 23. Her supervisor was Gillian Mulvale. Hackett is working as a Senior Research Associate with the not-for-profit Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) in Ottawa.

Other student news:

Valentina Antonipillai helped to organize the Mapping the Dimensions of Global Policy 7 graduate student conference, held Feb 5-6 at McMaster, and also chaired its Health Policy session in which she presented Policy agenda-setting and causal stories: How organized interests redefined the problem of refugee health policy treatment decision-making. Patient Education and Counseling. 2017.100:235-246.


in Canada Expanding the Scope of Policy Analysis. Donya Razavi was the discussant in that session.

Antonipillai also presented A comparative analysis of asylum health policy changes in Canada and England at McMaster’s Department of Health Research, Methods, Evidence and Impact (HEI) Research Day on March 29. Graham Dobbs presented Socioeconomic determinants of overburdening out-of-pocket drug spending in Canada from 2010-2014 at the same session.

Ahmad Firas Khalid completed two research consultancies this winter with the World Health Organization and with Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières. Khalid was also an Expert Panelist for the 6th University Internationalization Seminar New Frontiers for Intra-American Cooperation on The Role of Universities in Building the Knowledge and Human Capital for Better Preparedness and Response to Natural Disasters, held by the WHO/ Pan American Health Organization.

The Health Policy PhD program will be hosting a student "Meet & Eats" event on May 29th at the Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research (CAHSPR) conference in Montreal to provide information for students interested in learning about health policy, health economics and health services research training opportunities at McMaster.

In addition to these publications, several CHEPA members and students presented their research at scientific conferences.

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