

# Report from The Arctic Human Health Initiative (AHHI)

**Sustainable Development Working Group Meeting  
October 30-31, 2007. Vadso, Norway.**

## **1. Purpose of Project:**

The Arctic Human Health Initiative (AHHI) is an Arctic Council IPY coordinating project that aims to advance the joint circumpolar human health research agendas of the Arctic Council and the International Union for Circumpolar Health. The AHHI will link researchers with potential international collaborators and will serve as a focal point for human health research, education, outreach, and communication activities during IPY (2007-2008).

The goal of AHHI is to: “Increase awareness and visibility of human health concerns of Arctic peoples, foster human health research, and promote health strategies that will improve health and well being of all Arctic residents”.

These goals can be met by:

- **Expanding Research Networks** that will enhance surveillance and monitoring of health issues of concern to Arctic peoples, and increase collaboration and coordination of human health research
- **Fostering Research Activities** that will examine the health impact of, anthropogenic pollution, rapid modernization and economic development, climate variability, infectious and chronic diseases, intentional and unintentional injuries
- **Promoting Education Outreach and Communication** that will focus public and political attention on Arctic health issues, using a variety of publications, printed and electronic reports from scientific conferences, symposia, and workshops targeting researchers, students, communities, and policy makers
- **Promoting the translation of research into health policy, community action including implementation of prevention strategies and health promotion**

The AHHI currently provides management and oversight of more than 30 individual project proposals.

## **2. Contribution to the Sustainable Development Framework Document:**

The mandate of the Arctic Council’s Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) is to “propose and adopt steps to be taken by Arctic States to advance sustainable development in the Arctic, including opportunities to protect and enhance the environment and the economies, culture and health of the indigenous communities and other inhabitants of the Arctic, as well as to improve the environmental, economic and social conditions of Arctic communities as a whole” (*Iqaluit Declaration 1998*). *The Sustainable Development Framework Document (Barrow, 2000)*, outlined 6 areas of special importance, subsequently adopted as part of the *Sustainable Development Action Plan (Reykjavik 2004)*. These areas of importance (priority subject areas) included:

- Health of people working in the Arctic
- Sustainable economic activities and increasing community prosperity
- Cultural heritage including language
- Prosperity and capacity building for people in the Arctic particularly children and youth
- Sustainable development of natural resources
- Development of transportation infrastructure

Human health is a critical component of any sustainable development program.

**3. Deliverables:**

Project deliverables at the 2008 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting will include a comprehensive report on progress of the AHHI.

**4. Date of approval, date of proposed finalization:**

The AHHI was approved as a Sustainable Development Working Group Project and entered into the SDAP October 2006. This is an IPY coordinating human health project (IPY # 167) and will continue as needed beyond 2009.

**5. Leaders, participants:**

Steering committee members include:

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**6. Progress since last SDWG meeting:**

The AHHI Website is updated and located at [www.arctichealth.org](http://www.arctichealth.org)  
The website contains detailed information on the aim and objectives of the AHHI, a listing of projects proposed as part of AHHI, linked to project descriptions, AHHI partners, publications and past and upcoming events.

A Steering Committee was established at a meeting in Banff Alberta, Canada, April 24, 2007. Members were selected from the membership of the International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH). Members were selected on their expertise, professional experience, and experience within the fields of Arctic human health. All eight Arctic Countries and indigenous peoples organizations are represented on the Steering Committee.

The role of the Steering committee is to provide scientific expertise on matters relating to the AHHI, and as needed to the Arctic Council SDWG, and to provide general guidance in regard to the operation and management of AHHI.

Partial support for core administrative activities is being supplied by the University of Alaska Anchorage and the US Centers for Disease Control & Preventions, Arctic Investigations Program, located in Anchorage Alaska.

AHHI held a project workshop in association with The International Network for Circumpolar Health Research (INCHR) Circumpolar Health Research meeting, Banff, Alberta, Canada April 20-25, 2007. ( [www.inchr.org](http://www.inchr.org) ).

Project overviews were presented by Yang Mayo, Public Health Agency of Canada, Prevalence of HPV infection and cervical dysplasia in the northwest Territories (EoI # 1121); Laurie Chan University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, British Columbia “ Arctic Resiliency and Diversity (Full Proposal 183); Jon Oyvind Odland Contaminants and Human Health A circumpolar study of new contaminants in women of reproductive age (Full Proposal 356); Research and Action Plan for human health risk reduction in the Arctic EoI 1113, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program Human Health Assessment Research Program workshop (Full Proposal 145); Andrew Koslov Institute of Developmental Physiology, Russian Academy of Education, Moscow Russian Federation, Public health in the Russian Arctic-an analytical review for Russian Program of International Polar Year 2007-2008 (EoI # 1139); Anders Koch Statens Serum Institute Copenhagen Denmark Burden of Infectious Diseases in Greenland (EoI 1107); Hepatitis B in Aboriginal Populations in the Arctic (EoI 1109); Dionne Gesink-Law and Beth Rink Montana State University Bozeman Montana, Sexually Transmitted diseases in northern Frontier populations (EoI 1141); Pam Orr Health Sciences Center, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Canada, ‘Haplotype diversity in Candidate genes for susceptibility/resistance to disease among circumpolar aboriginal populations (EoI 1185); Rhonda Johnson University of Alaska Anchorage; Development of a Women’s Health Track at the International Congress on Circumpolar Health, Yellowknife NWT, July 2009 (EoI 1223); Arja Rautio University of Oulu, Oulu Finland. Arctic Health Projects of the University of Oulu. Circumpolar Health and Wellbeing (EoI 1045), International Journal for Circumpolar Health (EoI 1046);

AHHI updates were presented to the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program Human Health Assessment Group meeting May 8-11, 2007, in Lofoten, Norway.

An overview and AHHI updates were presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Science Arctic Science Conference held in Anchorage Alaska, September 24-26, 2007.

**7. Main developments forseen until next SDWG meeting:**

An overview of AHHI will be presented at the Canadian Conference on International Health Ottawa, Ontario, Canada November 4-7, 2007.

An AHHI workshop and Steering Committee meeting is being planned in the spring of 2008, in Tromso Norway.

An AHHI workshop is planned for the 6<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS VI) Nuuk, Greenland, August 25-29, 2008.

**8. Contribution to Capacity Building:**

A goal of AHHI is to promote the translation of research into health policy, community action including implementation of prevention strategies and health promotion. A key element in this process is involvement of the community in implementation of appropriate intervention and health promotion options.

**9. Gender equality:**

All research activities support gender equality.

**10. SDWG Plan Table update 2007-2008**

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