



Due to the long-term nature of health research, the goals and ends of research can be hard to directly attribute to tangible impacts for the greater population. SHRF evaluates its funded research using the framework developed by the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) for return on investment in health research.

As a member of the National Alliance of Provincial Health Research Organizations (NAPHRO) and a contributor to the work of CAHS, SHRF participated in the development of this metric framework.

With an ever increasing demand for public dollars, we all have an obligation to be accountable and transparent, and demonstrate the benefits of investments in health research.

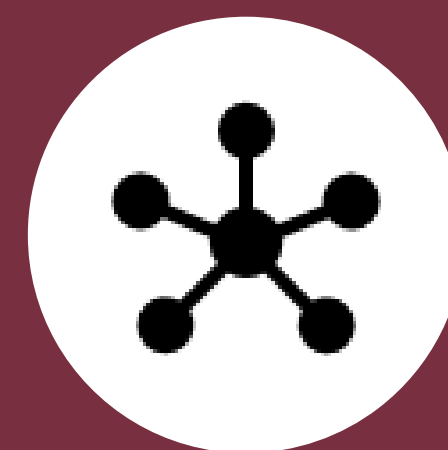
The CAHS framework uses a logic model approach to assess the impacts of health research using indicators within five categories.

The CAHS framework works through how capacity in research produces knowledge that can influence decision making, resulting in improvements to our health care, health, and economic and social well-being. In addition, the framework demonstrates how the impacts of research can influence future research.



Canadian Academy of Health Sciences
Académie canadienne des sciences de la santé

1. Building Capacity
e.g. personnel, additional research activity funding, infrastructure
2. Advancing Knowledge
e.g. research quality, activity, outreach
3. Informing Decision Making
e.g. pathway from research to health outcomes
4. Health Impacts
e.g. health status, determinants of health, health system change
5. Broad Economic and Social Impacts
e.g. activity, commercialization, health benefits, social benefits



Building Research Capacity

Refers to individual or group development that leads to an enhanced ability to perform useful research.

This includes enabling the development of sustainable skills in personnel and trainees; adding or enhancing research infrastructure; and attracting additional financial resources in the support of research.

Advancing Knowledge



Refers to new breakthroughs, discoveries or innovations through health research. It is also the process and mechanisms used to move knowledge beyond the researchers so that it creates awareness, understanding and opportunity to guide the decisions and actions of stakeholders. This includes research outputs (e.g. publications) and outreach activities (e.g. conference presentations, abstracts, co-authored publications) and partnerships developed.



Informing Decision Making

Captures activities that engage appropriate end-users in the translation of research findings into new or revised policies, practices, products, or patient, practitioner or public behaviours in order to serve as pathways to improvements in health and well-being. This includes engagement activities with non-academics, creative or technical products, and influences on policy, practice, patients and the public.

Health Impacts



Measured in a number of ways; however, not all indicators of health have a direct link to research. Following the lead of the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), health impacts are split into three categories: health status (e.g. mortality, morbidity); determinants of health (e.g. behavioural, social and environmental); and health system change (e.g. accessibility, quality, and safety of service).



Broad Economic and Social Impacts

Considered the most difficult impact category to link to research. Many actions need to take place and factors be considered before economic and social benefits of research can be realized. Socioeconomic indicators are categorized into four groups: research activity (e.g. employing people in health research); commercialization (e.g. spinoff companies); health benefits (e.g. direct cost savings); and social benefits (e.g. socioeconomic status).

In line with our values of accountability and transparency, SHRF strives to invest in high-impact research that makes a difference to the health of Saskatchewan people. This strategic goal is supported by using the CAHS impact framework to not only inform the development of effective programs, but also as a way to evaluate and measure the return on investment of our funded research. Saskatchewan health researchers play a key role in helping achieve and demonstrate a positive return on SHRF's investment by considering how the knowledge generated and shared can improve outcomes in each of the five categories of the CAHS impact framework. This starts with considering potential outcomes when writing funding applications and carries through to connecting with SHRF and completing progress, final and follow-up reports.