



Canadian Institutes for Health Research Health System Impact Fellowships Dignitas International

The CIHR's [Health System Impact \(HSI\) Fellowship program](#) is founded on partnerships with health system and related organizations that are committed to providing novel experiential learning opportunities for PhD trainees and/or post-doctoral fellows that accelerate their professional growth and career readiness.

[Dignitas International](#) is a Canadian medical and research organization with operations in Malawi and Northwestern Ontario. We innovate sustainable solutions to global health challenges, build resilient health systems, and advance the right to health for marginalized people and underserved communities.

Dignitas Operating Model: Dignitas' unique operating model, with its intersection of medical care, research and knowledge translation and exchange, enables us to engage at all levels of a health system. We strengthen frontline clinical capacity and develop innovative programs to address health systems barriers experienced by communities facing a high burden of disease and unequal access to services. Our research agenda builds from our medical programming by studying these gaps and barriers, tests interventions to improve patients' health, and informs our work to develop new models of care to improve patient outcomes. We utilize three main approaches in carrying out our research: operational, clinical and social science research. But we do not conduct research for research's sake. We design and carry out research that is policy and practice relevant. We utilize an integrated knowledge translation methodology to engage policymakers, practitioners and fellow researchers in the development of our research questions to ensure relevance, during implementation and once we have generated new evidence during dissemination to maximize impact and research uptake.

Dignitas HSI Fellowships: Dignitas aims to develop innovative solutions to emerging health challenges affecting indigenous communities in Canada and the Global South. We are seeking to host up to four HSI fellowships for 12 or 24 months beginning in September 2018. This is an excellent opportunity for trainees and fellows to gain hands-on scientific and programmatic experience in developing innovative, sustainable solutions to global health challenges.

Program of Work: The HSI fellow(s) will have a range of opportunities to lead and/or contribute to the following depending on the focus of their placement: proposal and partnership development; designing and testing new program ideas; conceptualizing and implementing new areas of study; performing quantitative and qualitative data analysis; conducting systematic reviews; designing and producing knowledge products (e.g. evidence briefs) for Canadian and international knowledge users; coordinating internal planning processes with staff and external processes with partners.

Prospective fellows may express interest in more than one of the four programs of work, but should clearly possess subject matter expertise/experience in at least one of the following:

1. **Non-Communicable Diseases in Underserved Populations**
2. **Climate Change and Health**
3. **Indigenous-led Models of Care**
4. **Indigenous Mental Health**

Programs of Work:

1: Building a Body of Evidence that Drives Equity-Focused NCD Policy and Practice

As new NCD policies and programs are formulated in Canada and around the world, there is an opportunity to better include populations experiencing high rates of NCDs and unequal access to health services in these processes. Meaningful engagement with target groups is critical to designing models of care that are accessible and culturally appropriate. DI's vision is to build a body of evidence that drives equity-focused NCD policy and practice based on international best practice and knowledge exchange. We have developed a network of health leaders from Canada, South America and Africa that is committed to this goal. We will develop and disseminate research and knowledge translation products that promote prevention, earlier diagnosis and treatment of NCDs for marginalized people and underserved communities.

2: Developing Climate Change and Health Programming in Canada and Malawi

DI is currently undertaking a feasibility study in Canada and Malawi that is exploring climate change and health with the aim of identifying a strategic niche for DI in the field and informing the design of a pilot initiative(s). Fellowships in this area will focus on refining, implementing and evaluating the recommendations of this feasibility study. The study will determine how DI can best work with partners to strengthen health system preparedness and response to climate change with a focus on addressing the needs and priorities of Indigenous and underserved populations that are at increased risk to the impacts of climate change due to their location, relationship to the land, health, gender, socio-economic status and other related social determinants.

3: Exploring Local Data to Impact Health Outcomes in Indigenous-led Models of Care

Remote on-reserve First Nation communities in Northwestern Ontario experience a high burden of diabetes, which is linked to other serious health conditions. In response to this critical health issue, DI partnered with the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA) to launch a Community Health Worker (CHW) [Pilot Project](#) with a goal to improve diabetes service provision at the community level. As DI supports SLFNHA to strengthen and grow the CHW program, we plan to broaden this model of care to include self-management and mental wellness support for diabetes patients, and explore how CHWs might also support additional chronic conditions.

As our team moves towards expanding the scope and reach of the CHW Pilot Project, we plan to deploy strategies that: i) partner with Indigenous organizations and communities to implement and evaluate this customized health intervention; ii) develop knowledge management, translation and exchange strategies to engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge users to strengthen evidence-informed decision-making; and iii) support the development of Indigenous-led chronic disease strategies with scientific evidence and relevant local and international best practice learning.

4: Integrating Mental Health into Indigenous Health Programming

DI is exploring new geographies and programmatic areas that reflect community health priorities and enable us to support the development of Indigenous-led models of care to improve health outcomes. We are interested in supporting Indigenous researchers, health system policymakers, managers and frontline staff to help address mental health challenges identified by Indigenous communities as having a significant impact on Indigenous populations in Canada. In response, DI is launching a feasibility study to explore how we can build respectful and sustainable partnerships to help address the mental health needs and priorities of Indigenous populations that are at increased risk and improve mental health care to those underserved in the health system. As part of this study we will also identify opportunities to implement mental health and wellness as a cross-cutting theme within existing IHP projects and initiatives.

Desired Competencies for HSI Fellowship:

- Graduate-level training and work experience

- Subject matter expertise related to one or more of the impact goals;
- Training or background in implementation and/or evaluation science, and knowledge translation and exchange;
- Experience with using qualitative and/or quantitative research methods;
- Experience working in global health or low-resource settings;
- Experience or exposure to working in the non-profit sector;
- Experience or demonstrated commitment to advancing equitable, inclusive and culturally safe health care;
- Proven ability to work in cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary settings;
- Strong desire to learn and innovate.

Supervisor(s): Successful fellows will be mentored and supported to design and test the next wave of novel ideas for programs that respond to current and emerging health challenges in Canada and the Global South. Fellows will be supervised by senior program staff and scientists, and assigned based on program area.

Location and Duration: Dignitas International's headquarter office is in Toronto. Fellowships are 12 or 24 months with an ideal start date of September 1, 2018. Dignitas is well positioned to offer fellows a unique opportunity to develop Canadian-based programming, which will also have application to Dignitas' work in Malawi and other global health settings.

How to Apply: For more information please review the [Eligibility](#) and [How to Apply](#) sections of the funding opportunity. Interested applicants should send their resume and a statement of interest to jobs@dignitasinternational.org with "HSI Fellow Impact Goal # Last_Name" in the subject line **by February 9 2018. Individuals who identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis are strongly encouraged to apply.**

If you have any questions regarding the programs of work above email [Josh Berman](#) regarding [Program Areas 1 & 2](#), and [Katie Johnson](#) regarding [Program Areas 3 & 4](#).