

# **Integrating Internationally-Educated Physiotherapists**

Consensus Building Workshop  
Toronto, ON. November 30 & December 1, 2006

---

## **Consensus Building Workshop Summary**

### **Venue**

The Consensus Building Workshop (CBW) was held from November 30 to December 1, 2006 at the Bank of Montreal Institute for Learning located at 3550 Pharmacy Avenue, Toronto, ON (see right). Funding for this initiative has been provided by the Foreign Credential Recognition Program of Human Resource and Social Development Canada (HRSDC).



### **Participants**

Meeting participants included a total of 55 representatives from government, the physiotherapy community, and other related stakeholder groups as well as seven internationally-educated physiotherapists.

### **Project Overview**

The overarching purpose of the “Integrating Internationally-Educated Physiotherapists” (IEPTs) project is twofold. The first objective is to analyze, quantify and describe the barriers faced by IEPTs as they seek integration into the Canadian health system and the second is to propose remedial action aimed at mitigating the negative effect of these barriers.

Research addressing the first objective was summarized in a diagnostic report and provided to participants in advance of the CBW. Valuable content related to the project’s second objective was generated during the workshop and will directly inform the recommendations made in the final report.

### **Presentations**

- Joseph Vibert and Dawn Burnett – Welcome from the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators (The Alliance) and the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA)
- Michel Doiron – Role, structure and activities of the Foreign Credential Recognition Program
- Zubin Austin – Lessons from the International Pharmacy Graduate Program
- Keith Johnson – Summary of the diagnostic report
- Naomi Alboim – Reflections on the diagnostic report

### Day One: Activities and Outcomes

Participants were divided into a total of eight groups corresponding to the issues set out in the diagnostic report. Groups were asked to define the scope of the issue, recommend strategies to address the issue and then prioritize those strategies. A total of three “crossovers” were held allowing for each group to broaden and deepen the work done by their predecessors. A headline summary of the preliminary strategies reported back in plenary is provided in the table below:

Issue	Preliminary Strategies
<b>Discrepancy in Pass Rates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exam preparation course</li> <li>▪ Diagnostic/pre-assessment tool</li> <li>▪ Detailed data analysis of unsuccessful PCE candidates</li> </ul>
<b>Length of Time to Become Licensed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve overall communication and quality of information on relevant websites</li> <li>▪ Establishment of an international, mutual recognition agreement for physiotherapy credentials</li> <li>▪ Audit and streamline Alliance evaluation processes</li> </ul>
<b>Language Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health-care-specific language testing and training based on professional benchmarks</li> <li>▪ Address systemic language barriers throughout the integration process</li> <li>▪ Language supports: mentoring, on-line and off-line language samples, glossary of terms, self-assessment tools, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of Support Network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of networking opportunities for both IEPTs and Canadian-educated PTs</li> <li>▪ A one-stop shop for information related to Canadian cultural, professional and educational resources</li> </ul>
<b>Information Provided During the Immigration Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Referral information and fact sheets for immigration authorities on regulatory requirements for working as a PT in Canada</li> <li>▪ On-line self-assessment tool to gauge chances of becoming registered as a PT in Canada</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employer engagement programs</li> <li>▪ A centralized job-posting board with associated labour market information</li> <li>▪ Mentorship programs as part of continued competency requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Differences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mentorship programs</li> <li>▪ Bridging programs</li> </ul>
<b>Cost</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Audit and streamline Alliance evaluation (i.e. credentialing and exam) processes</li> <li>▪ Increased disclosure to IEPTs of all costs involved in the integration process</li> <li>▪ Explore the possibility of third-party financing options (i.e. loans, scholarships, service contracts, etc.)</li> </ul>

## **Day Two: Activities and Outcomes**

In an effort to focus discussion on day two, the 21 individual strategies listed above were aggregated into larger categories of action. These included the development of:

- Profession-specific language benchmarking, testing and training programs
- Internship and mentorship opportunities
- Audit of current evaluation processes at The Alliance
- Improved regulatory and professional information at key contact points
- Employer engagement
- Bridging programs

A multi-voting exercise revealed that participants felt that a review of current evaluation processes at The Alliance was the most important strategy to implement. Language, bridging and mentorship programs as well as improved information were also considered to be priority strategies that could help ameliorate the barriers identified in the diagnostic report.

Workshop participants were asked to conceptualize the resources that would be required to realize these initiatives. Plenary discussions revolving around lead roles, potential partners, timing and action plans will help to shape the recommendations ultimately included in the final report.

## **Next Steps**

The project's Steering Committee will discuss the findings of the workshop and incorporate them into the final report. This report, complete with recommendations will be published and presented to HRSDC in March of 2007. As always, if you have any questions regarding this project feel free to contact Keith Johnson at The Alliance, [kjohnson@alliancept.org](mailto:kjohnson@alliancept.org) or (416) 234-8800 x27.