CNIB: Focus on the Future

In Canada, CNIB is the first place people turn to when they discover they are facing significant vision loss. CNIB helps people regain their independence by providing access to specialized rehabilitation services, innovative consumer products, and one of the world’s largest libraries for people with print disabilities. Recently, the 88-year-old organization has made some changes, including a new brand and visual identity, as well as an exciting new approach to research.

INTEGRATED RESEARCH PROGRAM

A Director of Research was appointed in November 2005 to head up CNIB’s new integrated research department and programs. The department is now structured in a way that will facilitate a more integrated approach to research at CNIB and will bring all research endeavors, both medical and social, under one umbrella.

The focus of Research at CNIB, which includes the mandate and direction of the former E. A. Baker Foundation, is:

- Identifying and proposing CNIB’s research strategy and agenda;
- Generating grants to develop and sustain research programs;
- Coordinating peer reviews of research applications;
- Developing partnerships with other agencies to advance CNIB’s research agenda;
- Ensuring that CNIB staff are aware of the nature and implications of research projects;
- Supporting the integration of research data and outcomes in service delivery;
- Assisting the development of research skills within CNIB;
Ensuring appropriate knowledge transfer, dissemination and publication of research results for research programmes conducted by CNIB.

Funding sub-specialty training in optometry and ophthalmology

CNIB’s National Board established a Research Committee as a standing committee of the Board in 2005.

VISION REHABILITATION EVIDENCE-BASED REVIEW (VREBR)

Current research initiatives include an examination of the effectiveness of low vision rehabilitation. The Vision Rehabilitation Evidence-Based Review (VREBR) is a comprehensive “Study of Studies” that will produce a compendium of worldwide research on low-vision rehabilitation. Each chapter will be co-authored by nationally and internationally recognized research specialists in each of the topic areas, and will be an invaluable resource for other researchers in Canada and around the globe. Principal co-investigators are Dr. Phil Hooper (Chair-Chief of Ophthalmology at the University of Western Ontario, and Director of the Ivey Eye Institute) and Dr. Graham Strong (Professor of Optometry at the University of Waterloo).

Chapters completed thus far include: Terminology, Demography and Epidemiology of Low Vision, Low Vision Secondary to Age-Related Macular Degeneration and Low Vision and Driving. Dr Graham Strong of the University of Waterloo was the lead author of the Low Vision and Driving chapter, which looks at an issue that eye care professionals, and optometrists in particular, will be seeing more and more of as their patients age.

CAO has offered to publish the chapters or excerpts of the VREBR in a future issue of the Canadian Journal of Optometry. The Chapters will also be housed electronically on the VREBR website at [insert web address here].

NEW LOOK REFLECTS CNIB’S HOLISTIC NATURE

In addition to the new research model, CNIB has undergone a revitalization of its public image. The 88-year old organization has a new logo and tagline that reflects CNIB’s diverse role and reminds Canadians of its continuing role in all aspects of vision health. The organization has also changed its name from The Canadian National Institute for the Blind to its acronym, CNIB.

CNIB’s new English logo is a combination of the blue, lowercase letters CNIB, with a green tree icon to the right of the letters. The braille equivalent of CNIB appears in white within the tree. Below the logo are the words “vision health, vision hope.” The French logo has lowercase INCA with the braille equivalent of INCA in white within the tree. Below the logo are the words “santé visuelle, une vision pour l’avenir.” The tree symbolizes growth, community, stability, hope, health and renewal.

“CNIB is not changing what it does – we are simply throwing open the doors and reacquainting Canadians with this modern and dynamic organization,” said Sanders. “We are an organization with a long, important history and we need to revitalize our image and our focus to ensure that our services reach everyone who needs them.”