



President's Report 2022

This has been an exciting and challenging year for the Atlantic Summer Institute! We have had four new developments – two major grants, the release of our policy brief, and our first face-to-face summer institute since 2019.

This year, we have had two proposals approved. The Public Health Agency of Canada awarded ASI a \$250,000 grant from its Intersectoral Action Fund to roll-out our policy brief and mobilize the knowledge we have compiled into action toward upstream investment in infant, child and youth mental health. This is a 12-month project, from March 2022-March 2023. On the heels of this announcement, we were also awarded a grant from the PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being for a 3-year project, at \$100,000 per year, to implement our policy brief in Prince Edward Island. These two projects are complementary to each other. The PEI project will build on the PHAC project by rolling out the knowledge from our policy brief and working with the PEI government, community and non-profit partners to implement it over three years. These two projects provide us with resources to hire staff and engage with partners across the region to work together toward improving infant, child and youth mental health. We anticipate that this collective action on a common agenda will lead to significant outcomes on policy and community levels.

Meanwhile, the ASI Policy Brief Working Group, led by A Way Home Canada, completed its work and presented ASI with a policy brief focusing on upstream investment in mental health promotion, which aims to enable people and communities to optimize their well-being by influencing multiple determinants of health. There are four priorities for action:

- 1) A **whole-of-government** approach to investing upstream, using a Mental Health in All Policies Framework. All sectors and government departments are responsible for building policy to foster wellbeing and mental health equity;
- 2) A **whole-of-society** approach through multi-stakeholder platforms in each province and across the Atlantic Region (ASI) to engage governments, the private sector, civil society and communities to accelerate upstream investment and focus priorities.
- 3) A **whole-of-community** approach through investment in upstream community action to create supportive environments for their infants, children and youth.
- 4) Ensuring communities have the support necessary to do this work is vital through a **sustainable funding model**. We envision a cross-sector, child and youth mental health fund, providing core, multi-year foundational funding, a rigorous approach to innovation and evaluation, and outcome-based.

We released the brief to the public on March 9, 2022. We took advantage of the opportunity to brief the PEI political caucuses, which led to the official opposition putting a motion forward to the PEI Legislative Assembly urging Government to implement the recommendations of the Atlantic Summer Institute on upstream investment as outlined in the ASI policy brief. The motion was unanimously approved with the Minister of Health and Wellness stating in the “house” that the brief is providing them with a “road map” for upstream investment. Follow-up meetings with ministers and senior staff have quickly ensued. Each province will have its own plan, guided by the Knowledge Mobilization Report that came with the policy brief. We hosted four provincial workshops in July to introduce the policy brief to key people and organizations in each province and invite their feedback. We also presented the brief at our Atlantic Policy Forum in August.

With the easing of COVID era restrictions, we decided to offer a hybrid event in the summer of 2022 – **Together Again: Regenerating the Power of Connection!** We had 139 registrants, of whom 106 came together at Holland College in Charlottetown for the first time in 3 years! The program for the Atlantic Policy Forum highlighted three themes - Communities matter, Relationships matter, Connections matter. Together we can foster policy actions that influence upstream investment in promoting well-being, resilience, and regenerating connection throughout Atlantic Canada and beyond.

The program kicked off with a keynote interview conducted by Dr. Trevor Hancock, Professor Emeritus, School of Public Health and Social Policy, University of Victoria, with Dr. Ilona Kickbusch, Director of the Global Health Programme at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland. This historic moment featured two of the leading figures in the health promotion movement world-wide and major contributors to the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion (1986) which still guides our work in 2022. Excerpts from this interview will be offered by ASI On-line to spread the message about creating a “wellbeing society.” The program offered the Atlantic Showcase, plenary panel sessions, round table discussions, workshops, networking opportunities, a Youth Leadership Program, and a Children’s’ Program. It concluded with a panel on Collaborative Leadership for a Well-being Society. It was another successful event, based on feedback from anecdotal sources and the evaluation report. As we look toward 2023, we have begun to plan around the theme – Inspiring Hope through Community Action!

I want to thank our board members who have contributed to the success of ASI this year - Robert Cahill, Karen Clarke, Susan Hartley, Charlene Kippenhuck, Cathy Leslie, Linda Liebenberg, Arianne Melara, Adina Nault, Chantal Peng, Tyler Simmonds, Eva Sock, Ron Brun, and Patsy Beattie-Huggan. Special thanks go to Patsy and her team at The Quaich, who provided the person power to make all of this happen - Chantal Peng, Youth Leadership Coordinator, Claire Chilton and Ellen Theuerkauf, Communications Coordinators, Anne Götz and Helena Jestaedt, international interns (Furtwangen University, Germany), and Wendy Kraglund-Gauthier, WKG Educational Consulting, On-line Technical Support.

As we head into the fall of 2022, we are on a sound financial footing, our knowledge mobilization plan for the policy brief is in full swing, with community workshops being planned in each province and two regional workshops for Indigenous leaders and communities. We also plan to present the brief to the Council of Atlantic Premiers to gain the support of their leadership from the top, while we work from the bottom up to secure engagement and buy in from communities and government departments. These are heady times, with grand plans, high stakes, and resources to support us as we fulfill our mission to be a catalyst for social change in the Atlantic Region!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Malcolm Shookner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and 'S'.

Malcolm Shookner
President