

MRC - Health Research Task Force established
in March 1993.

Briefing Notes for Dr. Howard Clark
Visit from the Honourable Benoit Bouchard, Minister of Health
February 2, 1993.

Your visit to Dalhousie is auspicious as the University has selected Health Studies as one of only two Areas of Special Emphasis and a broadly representative Task Force on Health Studies has been working for the past two years to give substance to this designation. The Task Force has generated a vision which incorporates a holistic view of health, a spirit of collaboration among the varied disciplines and communities with an interest in health and a commitment to excellence in pursuit of the vision. Important elements are enhanced cohesion and a sense of common purpose in Health Studies, interdisciplinary approaches, productive partnerships between the University and a variety of external communities and a role for Dalhousie as a regional resource for health-related education, research and community service in the Atlantic provinces.

This vision has sprung from a growing understanding of the contemporary concept of health and how to achieve it. Health is seen as a dynamic resource to be used to enhance productive living, and the "Health For All" program undertaken by the World Health Organization recognizes the relationship between socio-economic policy and the health of the population. Canada has embarked upon a course of health promotion efforts, meaningful public participation and healthy public policy in its efforts to augment the health status of Canadians. The four Atlantic provinces are turning to regional models of planning and delivery of health services in order to ensure that dollars spent on health care are in fact having some effect on the health of the population.

All of us are pleased to see the broadened mandate of the MRC in its new strategic plan as the inclusion of research about health policy, health services and population health will be helpful as we move to implement our vision of Health Studies. We are also encouraged by the recently announced funding of the Atlantic Health Promotion Centre for Productive Living at Dalhousie by SSHRC and NHRDP. This Centre will draw together researchers from Atlantic area universities and individuals and communities interested in research about health promotion, facilitating partnerships that will yield new knowledge about health promotion techniques. This initiative is representative of others currently under consideration at Dalhousie. For example, the Faculty of Medicine is developing Vision 2000, a health research initiative that will spearhead the Faculty's approach to research over the next several years. Interested colleagues from many sectors of the University are discussing ways in which Dalhousie could join with the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research in its program on Population Health. The University is considering ways in which it can give substance to its role as a resource to the community by working in collaboration with provincial governments and community groups to develop regional health planning models.

I am sure that your visit will demonstrate to you that Dalhousie is committed to establishing Health Studies as a strong, progressive and productive force within the University and throughout the Atlantic provinces.