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## Message from the President – Update on Ethics Reform at CIHR

2013-11-22

CIHR has a unique, legislated mandate to promote, assist and support health research that meets the highest standards of ethics; to foster the discussion of ethical issues and the application of ethical principles to health research; and to monitor, analyze and evaluate issues, including ethical issues, pertaining to health and health research (*CIHR Act, 2000*).

CIHR's role in ethics in research is an issue that CIHR and its Governing Council take very seriously. Ethics is inherent to research excellence, regardless of discipline or area, and CIHR is committed to strengthening the culture of ethics in research, including integrity, in Canada in the programs it funds. We also remain committed to playing a strong leadership role in ethics by encouraging interdisciplinary, innovative and integrative research on ethical issues pertaining to health and health research.

In late 2012, Governing Council commissioned an external Task Force on Ethics Reform to review the ethics function at CIHR and make recommendations for improvements. The Task Force completed its work earlier this year and submitted its final report to CIHR's Governing Council in June 2013 ([Extract of recommendations from report of Task Force on Ethics Reform](#)).

Following extensive discussions with Science Council, CIHR management proposed options to Governing Council for enhancing and embedding the ethics function within CIHR, along the lines recommended by the Task Force.

Governing Council has held a number of fulsome discussions about the best approaches to reinforce CIHR's role in ethics since the Task Force presented its report, most recently at its November 2013 meeting with participation of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the current Governing Council Standing Committee on Ethics. These deliberations will continue at the February 2014 Governing Council meeting. I will provide another update when Governing Council concludes its discussions.

I would like to thank the Ethics Task Force members, Drs. Bartha Knoppers (Chair), Tim Caulfield, Jim Lavery, Michael McDonald and Daryl Pullman, for their time, diligence and thoughtful recommendations. In the course of this review, the Ethics Task Force sought input from internal and external stakeholders; therefore I would also like to thank everyone who provided input.

If you have any comments or questions about the Task Force on Ethics Reform or would like a full copy of their report, please do not hesitate to contact [ethics-ethique@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:ethics-ethique@cihr-irsc.gc.ca).

**Alain Beaudet, MD, PhD**  
**President of CIHR**

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