

# Kungatsiajuk: Supporting the Healthy Smiles of NunatuKavut Children

## What is this research about?

We are conducting a three-year research study on the oral health of children living in south-eastern Labrador. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) - Institute of Aboriginal Peoples Health is funding the research.

**Purpose:** *This research project will bring together two kinds of knowledge - biomedical knowledge and Indigenous knowledge - that will make a unique contribution to our understanding of the oral health of Aboriginal children.*



## What is the oral health research study?

The study will be collecting information on the dental health of children in southeastern Labrador, talking with community members, and working with community members to create and share stories about oral health.

## Who will be conducting the research?

The research is being conducted by Drs. Debbie Martin, Mary McNally, and Heather Castleden. The researchers are faculty members at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The research team has worked with a Community Advisory Committee and the NunatuKavut Health and Social Sector to develop an agreement on how the research will be conducted.

## Why is this research being done?

This study will allow us to gather information that may help improve the oral health for children and youth in southeastern Labrador.

## How do you learn more about the research?

For more information, please call:

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## PROJECT TIMELINE:

October 2011 -  
September 2014



## PROJECT LOCATION:

South East Coast of  
Labrador, NL

## FUNDING:

\$387,575  
over 3 years



## This project has six key objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Identify community perspectives regarding issues related to oral health promotion and oral health care service delivery in NunatuKavut.
- **Objective 2:** Collect baseline oral health data for children from birth to age 17.
- **Objective 3:** Design and implement community-level interventions for children, tailored to the oral health needs, resources and preferences of the community.
- **Objective 4:** Establish and examine the role and utilization of oral health navigation services provided by a Healthy Smiles Coordinator
- **Objective 5:** Monitor and evaluate the participatory processes, and our ability to generate community-driven policy recommendations related to oral health promotion and oral health service delivery.
- **Objective 6:** Provide policy recommendations that will inform culturally-appropriate oral health promotion activities and oral health service delivery.



## KEYWORDS

oral care, community-based, intervention research, Aboriginal communities, children, disease prevention, Inuit of NunatuKavut, Newfoundland and Labrador

## Oral Health is a Research Priority in NunatuKavut

The recognition that poor oral health is an important health priority for people living in communities along the southeast coast of Labrador is not new. The Grenfell Mission organized volunteer dentists to provide dental services in these communities as early as the 1800s. More recently, in 2006, community leaders and researchers participated in an interdisciplinary community-based health planning workshop, 'Community Health Research in Labrador: Listening, Learning and Working Together' which identified poor oral health as among the top research priorities requiring immediate attention.

Logistic and financial barriers associated with geographic isolation and travel costs are identified as being among the greatest impediments to accessing professional dental care. This suggests that even though children have publicly-funded dental coverage, other significant barriers prevent them from receiving consistent dental services. Access to healthy food is also challenging due to lack of availability and high cost. This leads to less healthy food options, which can also have a negative impact on oral health. Service delivery and health promotion initiatives required to meet the oral health needs of this population are currently largely unknown.

## PARTNERS:

- Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program - Dalhousie University
- Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre (AHPRC)
- Faculty of Dentistry - Dalhousie University
- Faculty of Dentistry - University of British Columbia
- Faculty of Health Professions - Dalhousie University
- Faculty of Management - Dalhousie University
- IWK Health Centre
- Labrador-Grenfell Health Authority
- NunatuKavut Community
- The Newfoundland & Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research - Memorial University

## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS (PI):

### Debbie Martin (Nominated-PI)

Assistant Professor, School of Health & Human Performance, Dalhousie University

### Mary McNally (CO-PI)

Associate Professor, Faculties of Dentistry and Medicine, Dalhousie University

### Heather Castleden (CO-PI)

Assistant Professor, Faculties of Management and Medicine, Dalhousie University

## PROJECT TEAM

## INVESTIGATORS:

### Debora Matthews

Associate Professor, Faculty of Dentistry, Dalhousie University

### Mark Filiaggi

Associate Professor, Department of Applied Oral Sciences, Faculty of Dentistry and School of Biomedical Engineering, Dalhousie University

### Joanne Clovis

Associate Professor, Faculty of Dentistry, Dalhousie University

### Ferne Kraglund

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Dentistry, Dalhousie University

### Jennifer MacLellan

Assistant Professor, Division of Pediatric Dentistry, Faculty of Dentistry, Dalhousie University

### Stephen Bornstein

Director, Newfoundland & Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland

## COLLABORATORS:

### Darlene Wall

Health and Social Sector Manager, NunatuKavut

### Rosamund Harrison

Professor, Division of Pediatric Dentistry, University of British Columbia

### Peter Hornett

Chief of Dental Services, Labrador-Grenfell Regional Integrated Health Authority

### John Graham

Regional Coordinator, Newfoundland & Labrador Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program

### Sandra Crowell

Managing Director, Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre (AHPRC), Dalhousie University

## COMMUNITY ADVISORS:

- Laverne Campbell, Charlottetown
- Megan Hudson, Mary's Harbour
- Joan Jenkins, St. Lewis
- Judy Pardy, Cartwright
- Margaret Rumbolt, Mary's Harbour
- Student representatives

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