



## New Studies to Help Women Achieve Healthy Weights During and After Pregnancy

*Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions awards \$2.5 million to University of Alberta team.*

(Edmonton, Alberta) October 29, 2013... Pickles, peanut butter, and ice cream have long been associated with a pregnant woman's diet. The problem is expectant women may be consuming too many calories during their pregnancy, making it difficult to shed unwanted pounds after childbirth. Researchers Rhonda Bell, PhD, Linda McCargar, PhD, RD and Paula Robson, PhD are leading a set of studies to promote appropriate maternal and postpartum weight through healthy dietary intake. They have been awarded a Collaborative Research and Innovation Opportunity (CRIO) Program grant for up to \$2.5 million for the next five years, from Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions (AIHS).

Fifty six percent of women gain more weight than is good for them during their pregnancies. Eighty percent of those who are already overweight going into their pregnancy will exceed the healthy weight gain recommendations outlined by Health Canada. "Up until 2009, there was a general message that pregnant women should make sure that they gained enough weight. However, now it looks as though women gain too much weight - for their health during pregnancy, their long term health, and even for the health of their infant," says Dr. Rhonda Bell. There is also a misconception that excess weight gained during the pregnancy period will come off once the mother commences breast feeding. However, many women find the weight doesn't disappear as they had expected.

Drs. Bell, McCargar, Robson, and their collaborators want to determine strategies that will help women achieve healthy weights during and after pregnancy. Their hope is that women will understand what a healthy diet is and what their healthy weight should be during and after pregnancy. They are looking to provide the information they discover to health care providers who work with pregnant women and directly to the women themselves. The research team is recruiting women within one year of giving birth for several of their studies, with follow up analysis throughout the first year.

"Linking people, ideas, healthcare providers, and communities through research activity is the way to deliver innovations that improve the health system and health of Albertans," says Dr. Cy Frank, AIHS CEO. "Our collaborative funding and support programs ensure we invest in the best and most relevant research for the benefit of the province."

### **Media contact:**

Dwayne Brunner, Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions,  
1.877.423.5727 x 224, 403.619.4556 (cell), [dwayne.brunner@albertainnovates.ca](mailto:dwayne.brunner@albertainnovates.ca)



## Background

Rhonda Bell, PhD, and Linda McCargar, PhD, RD are Professors in the Faculty of Agricultural, Life, and Environmental Sciences. Paula Robson, PhD is with Alberta Health Services and an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences, and the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta.

CRIO Programs are focused on the collaborative production of new knowledge, coupled with the translation of research findings to knowledge, or end-users, for impact on the health of Albertans and/or the healthcare system. The intent of CRIO is to link researchers, clinicians, entrepreneurs and end-users in collaborative, multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral research activities that align to areas of strategic priority outlined in Alberta's Health Research and Innovation Strategy (AHRIS). CRIO Programs also provide a unique platform to connect Alberta to national and international initiatives and to leverage additional opportunities.

**Alberta Innovates - Health Solutions** supports top-quality, internationally competitive health research. AIHS research seeks to further our understanding of health and disease, and to produce results that will make a difference to the health, economy and societal wellbeing of Albertans and people around the world. For more information see: [www.aihealthsolutions.ca](http://www.aihealthsolutions.ca).