

National Collaborating Centres for Public Health

Applying existing knowledge for better decisions



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de santé
publique du Canada

Canada

When the federal government created the Public Health Agency of Canada in 2004, it also established six National Collaborating Centres for Public Health (NCCPH).

Created specifically to promote and support the use of knowledge and evidence by public health practitioners across Canada, each Centre has a national mandate to focus on a specific area of critical public health importance.

These key areas are:

- ◆ Aboriginal health
- ◆ Environmental health
- ◆ Determinants of health
- ◆ Infectious diseases
- ◆ Healthy public policy
- ◆ Methods and tools

The NCCPH initiative is supported by a dedicated Secretariat at the Public Health Agency of Canada. It is guided by a National Advisory Council of public health experts, and operates through and in collaboration with host institutions located across Canada.

NCC Program Goals

- 1 Promote the use of evidence to support better decision-making across the major domains of public health in Canada
- 2 Make practice-relevant knowledge useful and accessible to researchers, policy makers and public health practitioners across Canada
- 3 Identify and fill gaps in knowledge and in applied research so as to improve public health policies, programs and practice
- 4 Build and strengthen regional, national and international public health knowledge networks to enhance Canada's public health capacity.

Key Functions

- ◆ Synthesize knowledge to support public health practice at all levels
- ◆ Translate and disseminate knowledge to make it useful and accessible to public health policy makers, program managers and practitioners
- ◆ Identify critical knowledge gaps and stimulate work in priority areas
- ◆ Develop linkages between public health researchers and practitioners to strengthen practice-based knowledge networks

The Guiding Principles

The work of NCCs is...

- ♦ **Relevant:** NCC initiatives reflect the needs of practitioners, and are aligned with Canada's overall public health strategy, and the work of the Pan-Canadian Public Health Network
- ♦ **Interconnected:** NCCs strengthen linkages between public health researchers and practitioners at regional, provincial, national and international levels
- ♦ **Coordinated:** NCCs set priorities and operate as members of a network, and focus on national public health priorities.
- ♦ **Complementary:** NCCs complement the work of PHAC and other federal partners, provincial governments, academic institutions, and other key stakeholders
- ♦ **Interdisciplinary:** NCCs support and engage all major public health disciplines operating at the municipal, provincial, regional and national levels across Canada
- ♦ **Participatory:** NCCs adopt a participatory approach involving all relevant stakeholders in planning and implementing initiatives

Our Partners

- ♦ Public health practitioners and policy makers
- ♦ Local, regional, provincial and national public health organizations
- ♦ Multi-levels of governments
- ♦ International stakeholders
- ♦ Researchers and academics
- ♦ Professional associations
- ♦ Non-governmental organizations

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The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health

Mandate

The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAHA) supports Aboriginal communities across Canada in realizing their health goals. The Centre builds bridges between Aboriginal peoples' approaches to public health and health research centres, service delivery agencies, and policy makers at the federal, provincial and regional levels.

Work to date

- ◆ Conducted extensive consultations with Aboriginal organizations, community leaders and public health practitioners to identify priorities and create a strong and durable foundation for future collaboration. A national advisory committee has been established to guide our work.
- ◆ Researched and prepared several scoping reviews and health research papers that identified a dearth of evidence-informed research in areas of public health critical to the health of Aboriginal peoples.
- ◆ Organized and participated in conferences, symposia and dialogue circles on Aboriginal child health issues, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), and on Indigenous social determinants of health.

Priorities

- ◆ Continue to build strong collaborative relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis organizations, communities, leadership and public health practitioners serving these communities
- ◆ Maintain our focus on Aboriginal child health and in particular on FASD, including the publication and dissemination to Aboriginal communities of a review of evidence on FASD.
- ◆ In collaboration with stakeholders, develop initiatives to create and disseminate practical knowledge products on the role of parenting in Aboriginal child health, a topic identified as a priority issue by our advisory committee and in our consultations.
- ◆ Continue our work with Aboriginal organizations and communities in exploring the interface between Indigenous knowledge and the western scientific paradigm.
- ◆ Strengthen the capacity of the Centre to benefit from our advisory committee, to plan our work in an inclusive manner, and to communicate effectively with Aboriginal communities, leaders and public health professionals serving these communities.



National Collaborating Centre
for Aboriginal Health
Centre de collaboration nationale
de la santé Autochtone

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The National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health

Mandate

The National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health (NCCDH) focuses on the social and economic factors that influence the health of Canadians. Our mission is to engage researchers, policy-makers, health practitioners and the public so as to better include knowledge about the broad determinants of health into policy and practice decisions that will better achieve social justice and health for all.

Work to date

- ◆ Established an Atlantic Canada-based consortium of universities and public health authorities to support the work of the Centre.
- ◆ Established a National Advisory committee of experts in the field.
- ◆ Examined and assessed prior work done to identify experts, leaders and best practices in using knowledge about social determinants of health in public health decision-making and practice.
- ◆ Hosted and sponsored multiple think tanks and workshops on the determinants of health, on evidence about the determinant of health, on strategies for using this knowledge in practical ways, and on knowledge gaps related to health determinants.
- ◆ Conducted an environmental scan on evaluated interventions in health literacy.

Priorities

- ◆ Collaborate with other organizations, including other NCCs, to examine how health literacy is framed as a determinant of health within public health practice and policy in Canada.
- ◆ Prepare and disseminate an analytical review of the social and economic determinants of health, conduct an expert roundtable to validate priorities, and disseminate conclusions to the broader public health community.
- ◆ Partner with the WHO and others to examine health determinants related to maternal and infant health.
- ◆ Collaborate with all NCCs and other organizations to contribute knowledge about the determinants of health to their work in key areas of interest.



National Collaborating Centre
for Determinants of Health

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des déterminants de la santé

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Host institution

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The National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health

Mandate

The National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health (NCCEH) focuses on how environmental factors such as drinking water, food, air, and shelter can affect human health, and identifies evidence-based interventions to reduce risks from environmental hazards.

Work to date

- ◆ An environmental scan has been carried out with extensive input from practitioners, policymakers, and researchers in Canada, and a national advisory board has been established to advise on the work of the centre.
- ◆ A comprehensive “Needs, Gaps, and Opportunities Assessment” has been completed to identify priority needs. It points to a lack of surveillance of environmental exposures and risk factors, the absence of an evidence base underlying most current environmental health programs and services, and a lack of systematic evaluation of those programs/services.

Priorities

- ◆ Addressing the gaps identified in the assessment report, in consultation with practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.
- ◆ Producing summaries of evidence on topical issues relevant to practitioners and policymakers.
- ◆ Identifying partners and building capacity in environmental health via secondments, courses, practica, and other training opportunities.
- ◆ Launching a multi-year project to enumerate past cases of waterborne illnesses in Canada, and identifying associated drinking water system risk factors.



National Collaborating Centre
for Environmental Health

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en santé environnementale

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The National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy

Mandate

In NCCHPP, our goal is to support the efforts of the Canadian public health community in promoting healthy public policy through more informed strategies. Our focus is public policy with a potential impact on social, economic and environmental determinants of health. We provide public health actors and partners with relevant research-based information and tools about the potential health impact of policies and about public policy processes themselves, to increase their ability to contribute to these processes and improve the public's health across Canada.

Work to date

- ◆ Began a pilot study to improve knowledge and understanding of various policy options for reducing obesity. The project is identifying promising public policy options to address obesity issues in the Canadian context
- ◆ Documented and summarized multisectoral approaches for healthy public policy, for example Article 54 of Quebec's Public Health Law and the ACTNOW initiative in BC.
- ◆ Prepared in English and French a strategic scan, analyses, and knowledge syntheses in healthy public policy, and created a website to collect and disseminate in both languages, relevant resources for Canadian public health actors (www.healthypublicpolicy.ca).

Priorities

- ◆ Facilitate the use of health impact evaluation in Canada by adapting its methods to specific Canadian contexts; in supporting a network of interested actors; and in acting as a catalyst to develop and disseminate a home-grown expertise to respond to Canadian needs.
- ◆ Encourage the development of methods for knowledge synthesis, exchange and use appropriate to healthy public policy; this includes exploring, for example, deliberative and other andragogic approaches.



Centre de collaboration nationale
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National Collaborating Centre
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The National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases

Mandate

The National Collaborating Centre on Infectious Diseases (NCCID) serves as a bridge between research and evidence in emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, and the questions and practical needs of front-line public health practitioners and policy makers.

Work to date

- ◆ The NCCID has consulted with national, regional and local partners and stakeholders to identify priority focus areas for the work of the centre.
- ◆ Established an advisory committee.
- ◆ Identified HIV Prevention as an initial priority public health area.
 - ◆ Commenced work on synthesizing, translating and disseminating evidence on the spread of HIV, and interventions to prevent its spread.
 - ◆ Conducted a national HIV Prevention Forum with the Public Health Agency of Canada.
 - ◆ Contributors to prevention information at meetings of HIV providers, public health practitioners, and AIDS service organizations.

Priorities

- ◆ Collaborate with stakeholders to continue work on the HIV Prevention Initiative so as to increase the use of known and emerging evidence and best practice in HIV prevention interventions.
- ◆ Conduct a survey of public health practitioners on HIV and other STI prevention interventions, sexual health practices and sexual health training needs in Canada.
- ◆ Produce and disseminate new documents and reports, syntheses papers and survey results on evidence and knowledge related to HIV prevention.
- ◆ Conduct regional “think tanks” and other consultative forums to engage stakeholders in information-sharing on evidence-based policies and interventions to prevent the spread of HIV.
- ◆ Plan with the NCC Aboriginal Health to share HIV prevention knowledge and evidence with Canada’s aboriginal communities.
- ◆ Contribute to the work of NCC Healthy Public Policy on “mapping” public health functions in the area of infectious disease surveillance and control.



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The National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools

Mandate

The National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools (NCCMT) focuses on improving access to and use of evidence-based methods and tools for stakeholders involved in public health policy-making, program decision-making, practice and research in Canada. The Centre's goal is to enhance public health practice by presenting evidence in formats that promotes its use in decision-making at all levels, and encourages researchers and others to fill identified gaps in current methods and tools available to public health practitioners.

Work to date

- ◆ Engaged in national consultations with the public health community at large and with other NCCs to determine existing methods and tools to identify priority activities of the NCCMT.
- ◆ Conducted a workshop with experts in knowledge synthesis, transfer and exchange (KSTE) to identify ways to better support use of knowledge by public health practitioners, policy-makers and researchers.
- ◆ Completed two syntheses of KSTE literature to identify research and evidence on KSTE best practices in public health decision-making.
- ◆ Established a national advisory group of public health and KSTE experts and practitioners to guide the ongoing work of the Centre.

Priorities

- ◆ Build active and sustainable networks of KSTE experts and public health policy-makers, practitioners and researchers, as well as partnerships with other National Collaborating Centres and create linkages with their stakeholder groups.
- ◆ Create an inventory of existing KSTE methods and tools used in public health nationally and internationally and identify gaps in existing methods and tools for future research and development.
- ◆ Prepare and disseminate discussion papers on key topics, including the nature and role of evidence in public health, and the application and use of knowledge management systems in the Canadian public health setting.
- ◆ Develop a collaborative online portal to enable the sharing of relevant research and practice information throughout the public health system in Canada.



National Collaborating Centre
for Methods and Tools

Centre de collaboration nationale
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The NCC Vision

The National Collaborating Centres are a key part of the federal government's strategy to support public health renewal in Canada. The NCCs build on existing strengths to improve the use of scientific and other knowledge to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Canada's public health system. They make useful research available and accessible to public health practitioners, foster linkages among researchers, the public health community and other stakeholders, and promote the sharing of knowledge across this network to strengthen public health practice across Canada.

For more information or to contact us directly

Call **1-877-430-9995** or visit us at:

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/php-ppsp/ncc_e.html