

Patterns of health and disease are largely a consequence of how we learn, live and work.

Health of the Nation

A Population Health Perspective

Volume I : February 2004 Available in French >



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Canadian Institute
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Taking health
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PULSE

Welcome to *Health of the Nation*

This is the inaugural issue of *Health of the Nation* and it coincides with the release of the Canadian Population Health Initiative flagship report *Improving the Health of Canadians 2004*. Our aim in producing this newsletter is to provide a pan Canadian voice, perspective and forum for discussion of population health issues. *Health of the Nation* will be produced quarterly. We encourage you to participate in expanding our collective understanding of current research on population health issues, best practices in policy development, program management, and knowledge exchange.

If you have an article to submit, research findings to discuss, or emerging themes you would like to examine, our editorial review committee would like to hear from you. Please email CPHI at healthofthenation@cihi.ca.

INSIGHT AND HIGHLIGHTS

New Report Examines Inequalities in Health

Improving the Health of Canadians 2004

Canadians must focus on opportunities to improve health



February 2004 The inaugural report from the Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI) takes stock of enduring inequalities in health in Canada, including among children, Aboriginal Peoples and low-income Canadians. *Improving the Health of Canadians 2004* focuses on why some Canadians are healthy and others are not; and underscores some of the choices we face in creating more equal opportunities for good health.

“This report highlights how long-term choices in social policy – from physical activity in schools to pensions for seniors – can also have profound implications for our health,” says Dr. Cameron Mustard, Chair of the CPHI Council and a leading population-health researcher. “Let’s look more closely at the health of disadvantaged groups, especially Aboriginal Peoples. We need to understand the health needs of low-income families. We also have to confront new challenges, such as obesity, which the World Health Organizations has recognized as a worldwide epidemic.”

The report reviews how income and health are linked, and examines the tendency of Canadians to have poorer health at low levels of income. The report also looks at three other issues: obesity, the health of Aboriginal Peoples and early childhood development. For each issue, the report examines the latest research on what factors influence Canadians’ health—and the implications of policy choices on health.

CPHI produced *Improving the Health of Canadians 2004* to bring attention to these issues and promote understanding of the broader factors influencing the health of Canadians.

“This report is a starting point for discussion about where we go from here as Canadians,” says Jennifer Zelmer, CPHI’s Vice-President of Research and Analysis. “Most fundamentally of all, we need good information about what works and what doesn’t, and how the choices we make today affect our health tomorrow.”

To access the report online go to www.cihi.ca/ihc2004.

WHAT'S NEW?

New Release in First Nations Health

Measuring Social Capital: A guide for First Nations Communities

By Javier Mignone



CPHI, in partnership with Javier Mignone and the Centre for Aboriginal Health Research at the University of Manitoba, have just released a new, plain language guide for First Nations and other researchers. The guide provides information on a research tool for measuring social capital. "Social Capital" is a concept based on the idea that communities work well or poorly based on the ways in which people interact. Researchers will be interested in this tool as one method for investigating the question of why some First Nations communities are healthier than others.

Social Capital as a Determinant of Health in First Nations Communities by Javier Mignone, Janet Longclaws, John O'Neil and Cameron Mustard is one of the outcomes of the Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI) Funded Research. This report is available only in pdf format. To download a copy of the report go to www.cihi.ca following the link to Canadian Population Health Initiatives under Research and Reports.

Community Mapping in British Columbia

Early Development in Vancouver: Report of the Community Asset Mapping Project

By Clyde Hertzman

The Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI) is pleased to announce the e-release of the report, *Early Development in Vancouver: Report of the Community Asset Mapping Project*, by Clyde Hertzman, Sidney A. McLean, Dafna E. Kohen, Jim Dunn and Terry Evans of the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP). The report provides a baseline analysis of the state of early child development, its social and economic determinants, and the resources available for children aged 0-5 in one complex Canadian community, Vancouver. Issues addressed in the report include: neighbourhood differences in children's school readiness; socio-economic characteristics; neighbourhood climate; early health risks, detection and intervention; childcare, literacy and parenting programs; and school success.

Early Development in Vancouver: Report of the Community Asset Mapping Project, is a prototype tool that communities can use to assess progress in improving understanding of determinants for children's health and development. The Canadian Population Health Initiative is distributing the report as part of its efforts to collect, analyze and promote population health evidence and improve understanding of the determinants of health.

The report can be downloaded in early April from the HELP Website at www.earlylearning.ubc.ca or at the CPHI section of the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) web site at www.cihi.ca, following the link to the Canadian Population Health Initiative under Research and Reports.

POPULATION HEALTH AROUND CANADA

Investment in Research

Since launching its Request for Proposals (RFP) in July 2000, CPHI has provided approximately \$11 million in funding for 45 population health research initiatives. While CPHI has closed its initial research RFP, it will continue to support strategic, policy relevant research on CPHI's priority themes by commissioning targeted research to build evidence, and by commissioning "state-of-the-evidence" reviews. Support for synthesis of research to address what we know/don't know on priority issues will provide a strong evidence base for new themes to be profiled in the second *Improving the Health of Canadians* report. Over the next several months, CPHI will be announcing specific priorities and plans involving researchers and research funders in its knowledge generation and synthesis activities. Please continue to check the CIHI/CPHI website for these announcements at www.cihi.ca.

Population Health Education Workshops

CPHI offers a full-day education workshop, *Applying a Population Health Perspective to Health Planning and Decision-Making*. This workshop is intended to provide participants with a basic understanding of population health and with the tools to apply population health concepts to health planning. To date, the workshop has been delivered to health planners, health delivery personnel and health systems analysts in Edmonton, Victoria and St. John's. This month, the workshop was offered in Winnipeg and Richmond, BC, and a customized version of this workshop was delivered in Kelowna. Our 2004 schedule of workshops will be posted in April. Please check the website www.cihi.ca for a location near you.

Improving the Health of Canada's Youth: From Research to Policy



CPHI co-hosted a workshop with the Canadian Adolescents at Risk Research Network (CAARRN) on February 19-20, 2004. Entitled *Improving the Health of Canada's Youth: From Research to Policy*, the workshop goal was to help researchers improve their understanding of the policy development process and develop their capacity to shape policy implications from their research. Decision-makers and NGOs attending the workshop had the opportunity to learn about the findings of CPHI-funded research investigating healthy transitions to adulthood. A copy of the workshop report will be available online in April 2004 at www.cihi.ca.

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Public Views on Population Health

Decisions made outside of the health system, for example by departments of finance, education, social services and justice, businesses, municipalities and community groups can have a profound impact on health. A recent CPHI survey revealed that only 1 in 3 Canadians are able to identify factors affecting health that go beyond food, exercise, smoking or drug addiction. By continuing to provide the best evidence on what works and what doesn't in public policy choices, CPHI aims to stimulate dialogue, debate, knowledge generation and knowledge exchange. We will be releasing the report on *Public Views on the Determinants of Health* in the summer of 2004. Check our website for release dates of this and other important reports at www.cihi.ca.

LOOKING FORWARD

March - June 2004 Pan Canadian Briefings – *Improving the Health of Canadians*



The Canadian Population Health Initiative (CPHI) seeks to stimulate dialogue and debate on policy choices, which affect Canadians' opportunities to enjoy good health. *Improving the Health of Canadians* 2004 explores what we know and what we need to learn about the determinants of health. Following the February 25th launch of the flagship report *Improving the Health of Canadians* 2004, CPHI will be scheduling a series of briefings to be held in cities across Canada. The briefings are designed to provide researchers, policy and decision makers, NGOs, and others with a strategic overview of CPHI/CIHI, followed by a review of key findings of the report and a dialogue on its implications. Your participation in these briefings will support efforts to build awareness of population health issues, create opportunities for knowledge exchange and generate policy debate and dialogue.

Dates will be finalized in the coming weeks. If you are interested in participating and would like to be on the mailing list please email healthofthenation@cihi.ca.