



The CIHR Institute of Population & Public Health (IPPH) is located in Toronto, Ontario, the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the enduring presence and resilience of Indigenous peoples in this area and are grateful to share the land and resources.

IPPH acknowledges that the current state of Indigenous health in Canada is a direct result of colonialism and systemic racism including current and past Canadian government policies. Colonialism and systemic racism manifest in many ways throughout society including in our health systems and health research ecosystems. We are committed to accelerating progress on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls-to-Action to tackle the systemic roots of these issues which includes meaningful collaboration with Indigenous partners to identify and address the distinct health needs of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous populations. We are additionally committed to addressing health inequities through the research we fund and the policies and processes we enact. We will work expeditiously to remove barriers and increase needed investments, always listening carefully to Indigenous colleagues, partners, elders, and communities.

Transforming Public Health is the strategic plan of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Institute of Population & Public Health (CIHR-IPPH). This plan articulates four priorities for the coming few years – Healthy Cities, Equity Science, Global Public Health, and Public Health Systems – that together will improve the health and health equity of people in Canada and around the world.

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Transforming Public Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the field of population and public health in many ways: it has exposed the fragility of our health systems, the need for better integration of public health into health care, the lack of emergency response capabilities, and the unacceptable inequities within and across societies. These long-standing challenges are not new but point to the need for urgent systemic change.

Difficult times call for a period of reflection and growth. Public health – whose success is often invisible – has demonstrated its importance. The value of public health has never been clearer. Understanding that the future depends on strong public health systems, the CIHR Institute of Population & Public Health (IPPH) in Spring 2021 hosted a series of open dialogues on the Future of Canada's Public Health Systems as detailed in our [Moving Forward Report](#) (March 2022). This strategic plan is the direct result of these dialogues, along with CIHR's [Strategic Plan 2021-2031](#) (June 2021), the Chief Public Health Officer's [A Vision to Transform Canada's Public Health System](#) report (December 2021), and the past five years of work under IPPH's previous [The Future is Public Health](#) strategic plan (November 2018).

While *The Future is Public Health* charted an ambitious course for IPPH, it also became increasingly clear that the present depends on public health too. We are facing simultaneous health, climate, and social emergencies, each calling for systemic changes, bolder preventative measures and more equitable outcomes.

Over the past five years IPPH has focused on three priority areas – Healthy Cities, Equitable AI, and Global Health Policy – along with capacity-building across our broad mandate of population and public health. Much of what we have accomplished is detailed in our Institute's

[Impact Report](#) (June 2022). However, we also recognize there is much more work to do in all of these areas as we work to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and rebuild our public health systems for a more equitable, resilient and sustainable future.

Supporting strong public health systems begins with understanding what makes successful systems in the first place. Each of our priority areas have contributed to solving a public health problem – the Healthy Cities Research Initiative is transforming the health of the 82% of Canadians living in cities; Equitable AI has equipped public health with new methods to advance health equity; and Global Health Policy established scaffolds to better prepare for health emergencies – but more work is needed. In light of new circumstances, IPPH is evolving our three existing priority areas to better support Canadian researchers, knowledge users and decision-makers to address the challenges that we now face. We are also introducing a fourth priority area dedicated to Public Health Systems.

This new priority area will help shape Canada's public health systems by generating evidence on key public health system research priorities, enabling learning public health systems, and strengthening the alignment between community, practice and policy needs and the health research ecosystem. Working with partners, we will aim to support system transformations that are strong and resilient, as well as anti-colonial, anti-racist and anti-ableist.

Detailed in this plan are new and refreshed objectives, actions and intended impacts to support the incredible work of Canada's population and public health researchers and those who use research to inform their programs, policies and decisions.

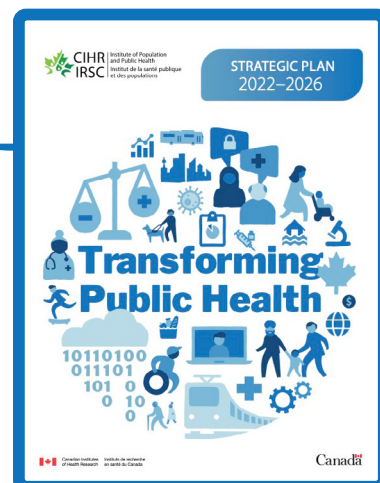
Informing the plan



Expected impacts

IPPH investments are guided by past learnings, present-day context, the knowledge needs of partners and communities, and priorities identified by the diverse population and public health community. To ensure

research has impact, the actions in this strategic plan emphasize applied research solutions, adaptable funding models and intersectoral partnerships. Together, the commitments made in this plan are intended to respond to the evolving needs of Canada's public health



Prioritizing Equity

Population and public health is a field inextricably linked with equity; it is perhaps the only health discipline with equity as a central tenet. While past IPPH strategic plans have always included equity, in this plan we are taking a bolder and more explicit approach by building a priority area around it, embedding it within each objective across all four priorities, and integrating it into all our practices.

In addition to advancing equitable health outcomes, operationally we aim to ensure fairness in our research funding competitions and the granting process, espouse a wider variety of perspectives within the health research ecosystem, and work to eliminate barriers for researchers and communities facing conditions of marginalization. Our strategies and activities to achieve these goals are detailed in [the equity plan on IPPH's website](#) and outlined below.

IPPH's equity plan will be continuously updated for transparency and accountability. The list of activities will continue to grow and will include actions identified in the May 2022 workshop hosted jointly with the National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health, Future Search: Action for Disrupting White Supremacy and Racism in Public Health Systems. We will continue to contribute and implement actions outlined in the CIHR and Tri-Agency Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) action plans. Finally, we will work with partners to identify, implement and scale these initiatives for even greater impact.

Advancing equitable health outcomes

- Explicitly name racism as a risk factor in funding opportunities and other materials, as opposed to race or skin-colour
- Fund research on anti-colonialism, anti-racism and anti-ableism
- Identify mechanisms that empower communities facing marginalization to be co-partners in driving health research priorities
- Normalize health equity impact assessments within evaluation criteria for IPPH research funding
- Enable training opportunities that are specifically focused on advancing equitable health outcomes

Advancing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in research

- Analyze IPPH's funding to identify exclusionary patterns and implement strategies to address them
- Reduce accessibility barriers for communities facing marginalization to benefit from research
- Support the creation and use of better mechanisms to engage and compensate communities for their contributions to research
- Require professional development for IPPH staff on anti-colonialism, anti-racism and anti-ableism
- Continue to diversify the IPPH Institute Advisory Board membership to ensure 50% of the board are women and there is diverse representation across career-stages as well as racial and Indigenous identities
- Decline invitations to participate in non-diverse events (e.g., all-male panels) and ensure all IPPH-hosted events reflect the diversity of Canada

systems, enable new opportunities for researchers to have impacts, and improve the health and health equity of Canadians and people around the world. Over the coming year IPPH will develop a performance measurement framework. This framework will include qualitative and quantitative

key performance indicators for each priority area as well as IPPH's equity plan. These indicators will consider IPPH's programs, policies, processes, grants, and how funded research is ultimately used to shape practices, programs and policies. Developed in consultation with

IPPH's Institute Advisory Board and CIHR's Planning, Evaluation & Results team, the performance measurement framework will allow IPPH to demonstrate progress on the objectives set out in this plan and enable a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

+Healthy Cities



Continued commitment



Overarching goal

Maximize the potential of urban areas to promote better health and equity across all populations.

In the wake of a global pandemic and continued urbanization, understanding the health-promoting potential of urban environments has never been more important. After laying the groundwork, IPPH's Healthy Cities priority area became CIHR's [Healthy Cities Research Initiative \(HCRI\)](#), a 10-year, \$44+ million major initiative in collaboration with six CIHR Institutes and numerous other partners. With many ambitious goals set out by the leading Institute(s), much work remains to be done.

Our unfinished agenda is heavily centred on equity and ensuring that postal codes are no longer a strong predictor of health. This includes a deeper dive into research that centres the diverse experiences of Urban Indigenous communities across the country; better understanding how the built environment, policies and programming in cities impact sex and gender; and supporting the development and integration of timely and high-quality data for healthy cities research. Fostering connections between researchers and their partners will be critical to share lessons learned and to scale up interventions across disciplines and among urban centres. Achieving these goals will require IPPH to focus on strengthening intersectoral engagement with cities and building a community of practice within the growing healthy cities research community.

Deepen the understanding of how cities promote health and health equity

- Fill knowledge gaps through both data science and intersectoral partnerships
- Identify opportunities to learn from urban contexts outside of Canada

Embedding Equity

Target and protect investments for research with and by people facing conditions of marginalization

IMPACT

An evidence-base that allows cities to become engines of good health

Capacity-building

Cultivate the next generation of healthy cities implementation science leaders through training and mentorship opportunities

- Develop applied training and leadership opportunities that promote intersectoral solutions and build health equity
- Fund and support trainees, including through the Healthy Cities Research Training Platform, and connect them with the wider HCRI network

Embedding Equity

Prioritize research that builds an evidence base in under-researched areas such as better understanding the gendered impacts of urban spaces and the diverse experiences of Urban Indigenous communities

IMPACT

Cohorts of researchers that are trained to work with cities to address the social determinants of health and identify what interventions work for whom, when and why

Knowledge mobilization

Create opportunities for cities and researchers to work together to implement evidence-informed interventions

- Identify opportunities for research that is co-led by researchers and implementation partners
- Foster an intersectoral community of practice among the HCRI-funded researchers, community partners, government agencies and implementation experts
- Fund annual opportunities for city-to-city learning on evidence-informed health interventions

Embedding Equity

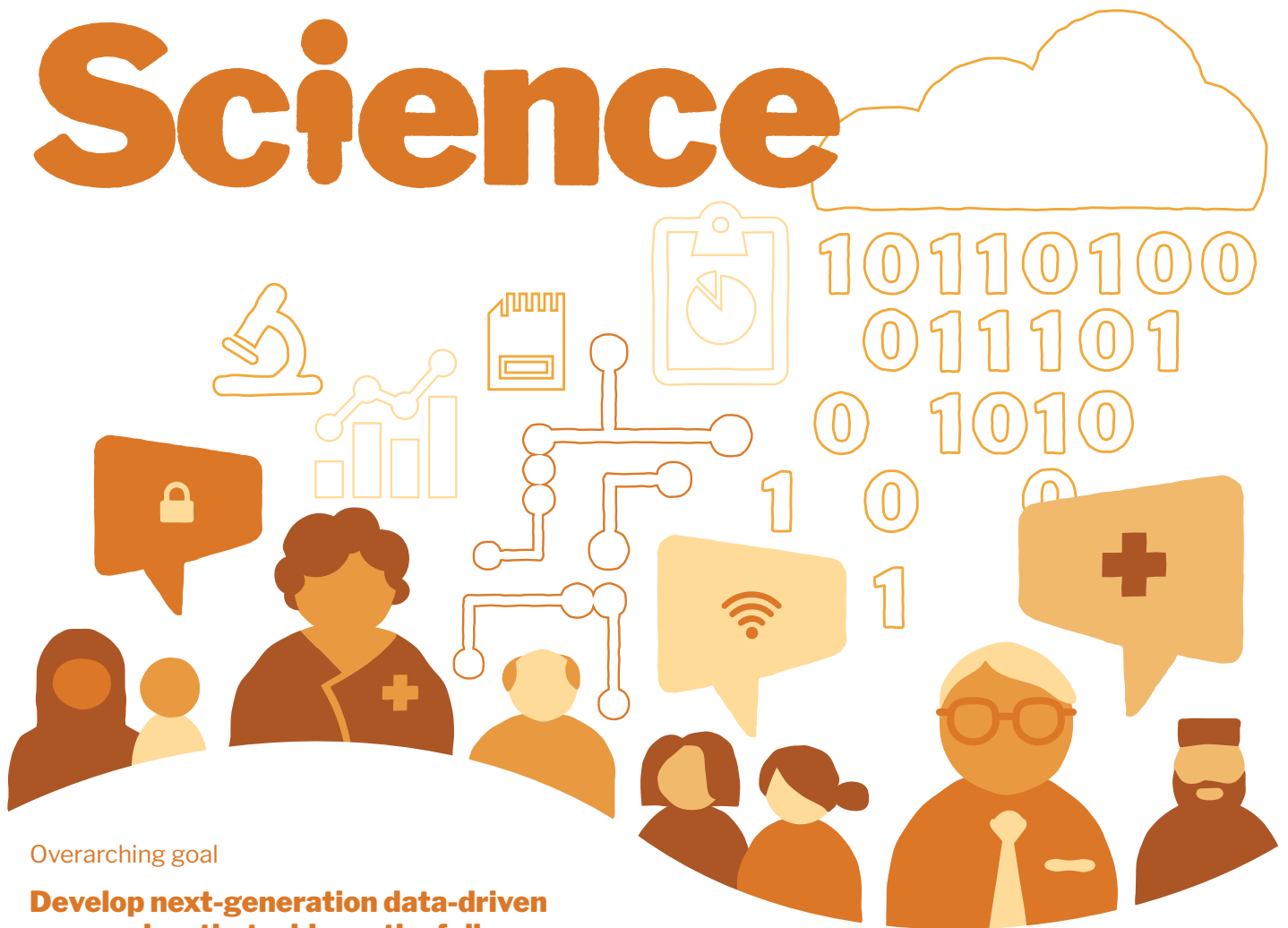
Elevate the voices of community organizations by identifying and adapting funding mechanisms that recognize their essential contributions to research

IMPACT

Cities that seek and use research-based solutions to achieve their health and health equity goals

Equity Science

Evolving our perspective



Overarching goal

Develop next-generation data-driven approaches that address the full range of factors that perpetuate experiences of disadvantage and discrimination and affect population health.

IPPH's Equitable AI priority area sought to build capacity at the intersection of AI and population and public health research. After accomplishing much of what we set out to do, the priority area needed to evolve to tackle the limitations of current data science approaches. An expanded scope would allow us to account for the complex factors that shape our lives and experiences and lead to health inequities.

Our Equity Science priority area will strengthen the health research ecosystem by leveraging social justice and intersectionality frameworks in the development of data-driven methods for new solutions that are anti-colonial, anti-racist, and anti-ableist. Through strategic partnerships, IPPH aims to activate capacity-building opportunities in equity science that centre community voices across the population and public health research spectrum, catalyzing larger shifts over time.

Research excellence

Advance the development and use of data-driven approaches that meaningfully centre perspectives of people facing conditions of marginalization

- Drive the invention and use of community-led and community-based data-driven approaches for health solutions
- Develop clear standards and best practices for doing data-driven, community-centred research

Embedding Equity

Intentionally elevate perspectives of people with lived and living experience to co-develop new approaches for how knowledge and solutions are produced

IMPACT

Data-driven research approaches and solutions created in active partnership with communities for self-determined priorities

Capacity-building

Equip a cadre of researchers with next-generation tools to unpack the root drivers of structural discrimination and disadvantage and identify solutions to address them

- Support transdisciplinary training and mentorship opportunities for data-driven research grounded in critical theoretical frameworks with an eye to long-term partnership-driven mechanisms
- Leverage previous Equitable AI investments that focus on AI, big data and public health equity

Embedding Equity

Train researchers to address equity, power, intersectionality and social justice using inclusive data-driven approaches

IMPACT

Many researchers equipped to address structural drivers of inequities

Knowledge mobilization

Mobilize a coalition of partners to catalyze, support, scale-up and mainstream the use of data-driven approaches for equity

- Champion the value of equity science and marshal the elements needed in the research ecosystem to support it
- Link community-led tables with decision-makers and researchers to enable data-driven research that can inform policy-making

Embedding Equity

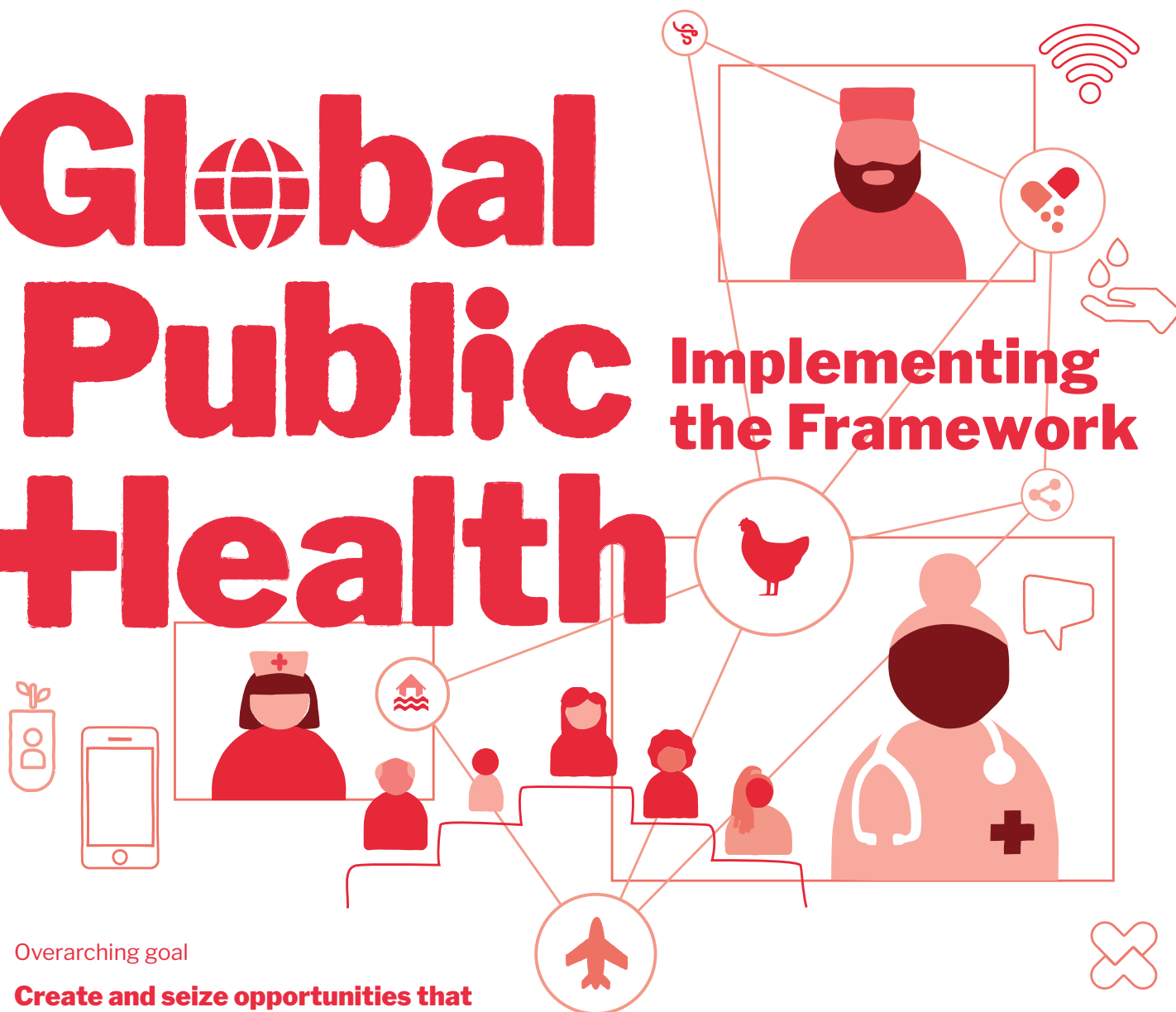
Expand awareness of how to design and apply data-driven approaches in research and research policy for equitable outcomes

IMPACT

Widespread use of data-driven equity approaches and a transformed research culture that supports and incentivizes researchers to use them

Global Public + Health

Implementing the Framework



Overarching goal

Create and seize opportunities that advance CIHR's commitment to make Canada a world leader in leveraging the power of research to accelerate global health equity for all.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that good health for all requires global solidarity – shared risks require shared responsibilities. IPPH's past global health commitments to strengthen emergency research response mechanisms, build strong global research-to-policy networks, and centre equity helped position Canadian population and public health researchers to make important contributions to the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and achieving the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires continued prioritization of global public health research and action.

Building on lessons from the last five years, IPPH will continue to support Canadian researchers to build and strengthen global partnerships, generate equity-focused solutions to shared global challenges, and recognize the “One Health” interconnections among human, animal and environmental health. Guided by *Global Health 3.0: CIHR's Framework for Action on Global Health Research 2021-2026* (May 2021), we will work with partners to fund research that responds to local needs and challenges, transforms gender norms, and prioritizes collaboration with researchers based in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). By mobilizing interdisciplinary networks, we will empower Canadian researchers to build collaborative relationships with communities and decision-makers and ensure that today's shared global challenges are met with equity-focused and evidence-informed global solutions.

Research excellence

Accelerate transformative global public health research that improves global health equity

- Collaborate with partners to support interdisciplinary research on global public health issues including One Health challenges like antimicrobial resistance, chronic disease prevention, and climate change
- Develop and launch initiatives to advance gender transformative research and research approaches

- Equip researchers to develop authentic partnerships with colleagues in LMICs

Embedding Equity

Work with partners to identify and implement research funding strategies that respond to local priorities and transfer power to those most impacted by global health inequities

IMPACT

New knowledge that drives the design and implementation of equity-focused solutions for global health challenges

Capacity-building

Empower researchers to conduct ethical and policy-relevant research on shared global health challenges

- Catalyze doctoral and post-doctoral training opportunities in global public health
- Advance CIHR's efforts to adopt, implement and scale-up the **CCGHR Principles for Global Health Research**

- Create opportunities for Canadian researchers to inform national and global decision-making

Embedding Equity

Support the development of authentic partnerships among researchers in Canada and LMICs

IMPACT

Canadian researchers are leaders in ethical, equity-focused global health research and have strong, lasting relationships with communities with whom they work

Knowledge mobilization

Support partnerships to facilitate the development of evidence-informed global health policies

- Nurture networks of researchers, research funders, practitioners and policymakers
- Highlight interconnected global health opportunities in all Institute partnerships and priorities

- Enhance global intersectoral partnerships to address key public health issues

Embedding Equity

Cultivate opportunities to integrate global health evidence and innovation into Canadian public health transformation

IMPACT

Strong interdisciplinary communities of practice that bring together researchers and policymakers to respond to present and emerging global health priorities

Public + Health Systems

Supporting Transformation



Overarching goal

Strengthen the field of public health systems and services research in Canada to enable public health systems transformation and improve the health of all Canadians.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the inequities in our societies and demonstrated the importance of responsive and resilient public health systems. Over the past five years, IPPH has invested in several opportunities aimed at strengthening Canada's public health systems research capacity. However, in the face of ongoing and intersecting health, climate and social emergencies, the need for a cohesive public health systems and services research agenda has never been greater.



IPPH's Public Health Systems priority area will generate research to support decision-making across the public health ecosystem – including governance and financing models; public health data systems and surveillance; workforce training and capacity building; implementation of effective and equitable public health delivery; monitoring and evaluation – to inform Canada's future public health systems. We will unite partners to develop and act on a shared agenda, strengthen mechanisms and approaches that ensure community voices are engaged throughout the research process, and embed equity, anti-colonialism, anti-racism and anti-ableism as cornerstones of effective public health systems.

Generate evidence on key public health system research priorities

- Build a coalition to develop a unified public health systems and services research agenda in Canada
- Fund research on key public health systems priorities

Embedding Equity

Targeted opportunities focused on building anti-colonial, anti-racist and anti-ableist public health systems

IMPACT

An evidence-base to inform choices about how to design, finance, govern and deliver more effective and equitable public health systems in Canada

Capacity-building

Enable a learning public health system that can undertake context-specific systems research

- Create interdisciplinary training and mentorship opportunities including embedded training programs
- Establish pathways for training diverse researchers who work across academia, practice and community

- Catalyze the identification, collection, and use of cross-jurisdictional, robust and consistent public health data

Embedding Equity

Integrate mechanisms to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion is prioritized in training and mentorship opportunities

IMPACT

The necessary people, data and tools are in place to support systems transformation, including the ability to measure, monitor and evaluate performance and the capability for continuous system improvement

Knowledge mobilization

Strengthen the alignment between public health research and community, practice and policy needs

- Facilitate research-practice-policy-community partnerships that guide research priority-setting and implementation strategies
- Support research that meets community needs in public health decision-making

Embedding Equity

Create mechanisms that embed community perspectives into public health systems research and knowledge mobilization

IMPACT

A roadmap driven by communities and citizens on how to achieve an effective, equitable, anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-ableist learning public health system



Institute of Population
and Public Health
Institut de la santé publique
et des populations

**Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Institute of Population and Public Health**
160 Elgin Street, 10th Floor
Ottawa ON K1A 0W9
Telephone: 613-941-2672
www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/13777.html
ipph-ispp@cihr-irsc.gc.ca

