



National Collaborating Centres  
for Public Health  
Centres de collaboration nationale  
en santé publique

## *Influence-in-action: National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health*

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Public health professionals can play a major role in addressing and reducing health disparities, yet they do not always have the knowledge or skills to take action. The National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health (NCCDH) recognizes the formal public health system as a key change agent for health equity, in partnership with anti-poverty and housing advocates among others.

NCCDH draws upon research literature and practice-based evidence and supports networking and knowledge exchange to improve public health organizations' capacity to advance equitable opportunities for health.

### **Addressing health determinants to reduce health inequities involves every aspect of how public health organizations operate:**

- Organizational level - the culture of the organization, how priorities are established, resources are allocated, partnerships are viewed and pursued, and leadership and management are enacted.
- Program level - how needs are assessed, programs are planned and implemented, and performance is assessed.

See: [\*Integrating social determinants of health and health equity into Canadian public health practice\*](#) and [\*Boosting momentum: applying knowledge to advance health equity - 2014 environmental scan\*](#)



# NCCDH STRATEGIES SUPPORT AN INTEGRATIVE PUBLIC HEALTH FOCUS ON HEALTH EQUITY

1. Encourage making health equity an explicit goal

NCCDH has shifted the dialogue toward integrating health equity within [public health expectations](#), encompassing multiple social determinants of health and relevance to all public health programs.

2. Promote public health roles and improve common understanding to advance health equity

NCCDH promotes a set of evidence-informed [public health roles](#) and a [common agenda](#) for equity action.

- [Let's talk](#) resources demonstrate how key health equity concepts apply in public health practice, while a [glossary](#) promotes shared understanding of such concepts.

3. Support the application of promising equity-oriented knowledge and practices

NCCDH's [case studies](#) model public health efforts that show promise in the area of health equity.

- Resources developed to respond to public health need support effective [leadership](#), [intersectoral partnership](#), [community engagement](#) and discipline-specific practice, including [environmental health](#) officers.
- NCCDH consults and partners with public health organizations, provides [training](#), [education](#) and a [library](#) of international resources curated for Canadian value.

4. Facilitate intentional networks and knowledge exchange

NCCDH convenes meetings and regional forums to strengthen collaboration.

- The [Health Equity Collaborative Network](#) is an invitational network of public health's equity specialists, and [Health Equity Clicks](#) is an online community open to practitioners, researchers, and community partners.

5. Influence knowledge translation practices to support action on health equity

NCCDH contributes to adapting health equity knowledge translation [models](#) and methods, and helps make sense of [translating knowledge in a digital world](#).





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## CASE STORY

### *Pan-Canadian leaders forum designed to put knowledge into action*

In 2014, the NCCDH convened *Advancing Provincial/Territorial Public Health Capacity for Health Equity*, a pivotal event to deepen the conversation about what provinces and territories can do to ensure health for all Canadians.

Prior consultations had confirmed that all provinces and territories wanted to better integrate equity into their programs, policies and practices, but their capacity to do this varied. In response, NCCDH invited senior public health decision-makers and researchers to come together. Chief Public Health Officers, Deputy Chief Medical Officers, Executive Directors, Assistant Deputy Ministers, regionally-placed Medical Officers, and Federal guests, were among the attendees who took part in generating knowledge and networks that continue to influence change across the country.

#### Connecting public health leaders and researchers to share evidence and promising practices

Over two days, participants discussed what worked best when integrating health equity into public health and identified knowledge-to-action gaps. Leading researchers presented their latest findings on building organizational public health capacity for health equity. Participants flagged the importance of establishing whole-of-government approaches to narrow the gap between the least and most healthy.

Following the forum, 94% of respondents said that they had gained new knowledge, new information, and at least one new connection.



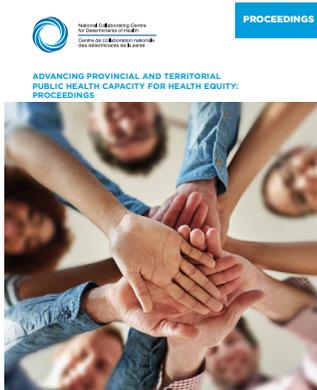
Dr. Benita Cohen, University of Manitoba, MB

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*"I really rely on the NCCDH. Their national networks are super important, the relationship building, the sharing of information, their knowledge. And, I get better connected and acquainted because of the work of the NCCDH."*

PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTITIONER

## Continued momentum to integrate health equity in public health



The NCCDH extended the reach of the forum through [event proceedings](#), distributed to public health networks across Canada. The forum has generated positive outcomes including:

- Manitoba has championed a Health in All Policies approach and has presented this work at national and international conferences.

- Alberta Health Services has partnered with the NCCDH on a number of initiatives, including case stories that illustrate public health action to advance health equity.
- Insights and knowledge shared at the forum informed the [Common agenda for public health action on health equity](#) (2016).
- New Brunswick has convened leaders across departments to explore how government can address social determinants of health and health inequities. More recently, NCCDH trained province-wide public health staff in New Brunswick about equity and applying the *Common Agenda*.

### Five top-ranked actions arising from the forum

- Increase health data reporting by social gradient
- Use geographic information system mapping
- Sustain funding for NCCDH and the other NCCs
- Integrate equity within population health strategic plans
- **Create a framework for health status reporting focused on health equity**



In 2016, the NCCs collaboratively released [Equity-integrated population health status reporting: Action framework](#).

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La version française est également disponible au [www.ccnsp.ca](http://www.ccnsp.ca) sous le titre *Appuyer la santé publique partout au Canada – l'influence des Centres de collaboration nationale en santé publique*.

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