

















No one should be at risk of poor health because of their social and economic situations.

Members of municipal government play an important role in shaping policies that impact all aspects of our lives, including our health. Public Health Sudbury & Districts looks to these leaders to take action in improving opportunities for health by building a sustainable path forward to optimally support the health of those in our communities.



Access to health care and health care system sustainability is

seen as the number one issue determining how people will vote. Did you know that investing in health promotion and preventive measures are less costly and keep us out of hospitals and clinics in the first place? Addressing income, social status and supports, education, and literacy are important factors that impact our health.

Public Health Sudbury & Districts encourages that the following issues are prioritized when developing health platforms. These priorities were informed by those prepared by the Association of Local Public Health Agenciesⁱ and can be found on their website.

Issues and recommendations on key public health priority areas



Opioids



- Ontario has one of the highest prescription rates in Canada for opioids, a class of drugs which includes fentanyl, morphine, and OxyContin. Crime and suffering occurs when these medications are misused and sold on the street.
- Drug misuse has serious impacts on our communities. There were 1053 opioid-related deaths in Ontario from January to October 2017, a 52% increase over the previous year. Further, there were 7658 emergency department visits related to opioid overdoses, a 72% increase over the previous year.

Key recommendation

Support a proactive, comprehensive, and multi- stakeholder plan for opioids that includes education, harm reduction, treatment, and enforcement.

- Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among Ontarians and one of the leading causes of death, disease, and disability in Ontario. Last year, there were more alcohol related hospital admissions in Canada than for heart attacks.
- » Broad social implications of harmful alcohol use include injuries, violence, motor vehicles collisions, family disruption, unemployment, and workplace accidents.

Key recommendation

Support the development of Municipal Alcohol Policies, planning and implementation of alcohol-related interventions and other policy levers to reduce risk and harm from alcohol.

Issues and recommendations on key public health priority areas





- » Food insecurity—not having enough money to buy food—affects one in eight households in Ontario. When income is too low, people do not have enough money for rent, bills, and food. One in six children in Ontario lives in households that are food insecure.
- Social assistance rates are not enough 64% of Ontario households that rely on social assistance do not have enough money for food.
- Incomes are not enough for many working people. Almost 60% of households in Ontario that are food insecure obtain their income from employment, yet they still have difficulty having enough money for food.
- » Lacking sufficient money for food takes a serious toll on people's health. Adults in food insecure households are more likely to suffer from chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and anxiety; their children are more likely to suffer from mental health problems and teenagers are at greater risk of depression, social anxiety, and suicide. Being food insecure is strongly associated with being a higher user of healthcare.

Key recommendation

Investing in affordable housing and accessible and affordable public transportation while supporting and working with anti-poverty coalition and food policy councils.

- Smoking is responsible for lung and heart diseases and cancers, costing billions in Ontario in direct healthcare costs. This expense is borne by all tax payers, whether they smoke or not. There is growing support in Canada for an endgame a strategy to create a future that is free from commercial tobacco.
- The modernized Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy was released in 2018 with recommendations aimed at reducing the health burden of tobacco and vapour products in Ontario.
- » Recommendations of the strategy are intended to achieve a drastic reduction in tobacco use by 2035 and reduce the number of smoking related deaths by 5000 each year, producing benefits to health and reduce healthcare costs.ⁱⁱ

Key recommendation

Support municipal leaders' use of local law-making authority to restrict tobacco and reduce exposure in areas not covered by provincial legislation.

Support the implementation of the modernized Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy, announced May 2018, to achieve the lowest smoking rates in Canada and support the end game goal by 2035.

Issues and recommendations on key public health priority areas





- Cannabis in certain forms is expected to be legalized in Ontario on October 17, 2018. Individuals aged 19 years and older will have the freedom to buy and use cannabis.
- The brain is still developing until the mid-20's. Frequent cannabis use is related to deficits in learning, which impacts educational outcomes and mental health.ⁱⁱⁱ Cannabis has different effects on the developing brain than alcohol and should have a different legal age.

Key recommendation

Support the development of Municipal Cannabis policies for the planning and implementation of cannabis-related interventions and other policy levers to reduce the risks from cannabis use.

- One-third of Ontario workers do not have employee health benefits. Many adults cannot afford to see a hygienist or dentist. People who don't have regular dental cleanings, fillings, and extractions can end up in the emergency department. This was the case for approximately 60,000 patients in Ontario in 2014, with a cost of \$30 million to the health care system.
- Ontario already has programs that extend dental care to children in lower-income families, but many adults still can't afford dental care.

Key recommendation

Support fluoridation of municipal water supplies.

Support municipal leaders engagement and collaboration in the development of a provincial adult/senior oral health strategy.

Issues and recommendations on key public health priority areas





- The mental health and well-being of Ontarians is heavily influenced by the social, economic, and physical environments where people live, learn, work, and play.
- The impact of mental health, mental illness and addictions in Ontario on life expectancy, quality of life, and health care utilization is more than 1.5 times that of all cancers and more than 7 times that of all infectious diseases.
- Promoting the mental health and well-being of Ontarians requires a collaborative approach, involving stakeholders across various sectors.

Key recommendation

Support healthy public policies that promote positive mental health. Invest in programs and services that promote safe and supportive housing and environments.

- » A built environment is designed to meet the daily needs of all people.
- The layout and features of our environment can predict our behaviours and our exposure to health hazards. The design and feature of our built environment can help or hinder us in making healthy choices like getting exercise, using public transit, relaxing outside, and finding healthy foods to buy.
- The built environment holds tremendous potential for addressing many current public health issues such as obesity, community safety, social inequities, mental health, and exposure to environmental hazards.

Key recommendation

Support the strengthening of municipal policies that support active public transit use, social cohesion, and the preservation of agricultural lands and natural spaces.

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