Nova Scotia Public Health

Healthy Communities
Protocol

Expectations

Understanding

Public health will

- conduct assessments and seek understanding regarding the health of the population, emphasizing

  - the health status of populations

  - behavioural risk factors

  - the state of underlying social, economic, and physical environments and their influence on behavioural risk factors and population health status. Such environments involve culture, industry influence and tactics (e.g., marketing, advertising), accessibility, affordability, and communities' readiness for change.

  - the existence and impact of inequalities and inequities and the effects of these upon priority populations

  - understanding the evidence and best/promising practices for influencing supportive environments

  - understanding and validating information through processes that include perspectives of those most affected by the issue, as well as community partners and the community

  - collaborating with partners to interpret results and to inform policy and collaborative action

Priority Setting and Planning

Public health will

- use the planning cycle to conduct a situational assessment, identify and prioritize options, and develop a comprehensive implementation and evaluation plan to.

  - determine the appropriate public health response based on the incidence, frequency, severity, risk perception, burden, preventability, communicability, and social determinants of health pertaining to the situation

  - use assessment and surveillance outputs to identify and describe priority populations

  - tailor the public health response based on priority populations and disparities in health outcome, providing a mix of targeted and universal approaches, as appropriate, to achieve outcomes outlined in the implementation plan

  - provide support to school communities in using the program planning cycle to conduct a situational assessment, identify and prioritize options, and develop a comprehensive implementation and evaluation plan

Partnership

Public health will

- establish and sustain relationships with a wide range of partners to understand needs, build support, and collaboratively take action to create healthy communities (see Partnership Protocol). The specific partners, and relative roles, will vary with the nature of the issue, the context, and the time. Broadly, categories of potential partners include

  - community health boards

  - federal, provincial, regional, and municipal levels of governance

  - district health authorities

  - sport and recreation settings

  - schools and school boards

  - regulated child-care settings

  - community coalitions and community based organizations

  - education institutions

  - others, as issue or topic require

Health Equity

Public health will

- incorporate consideration of inequalities and inequities in planning, assessing, implementing, and evaluating actions (see Health Equity Protocol), specifically:

  - provide scientific and contextual evidence to identify potential means of addressing inequities, such as upstream social determinants of health with respect to communicable disease, chronic disease and injury, affordable housing, food security, and discrimination

  - conduct planning and priority setting that includes addressing policy leverage areas regarding health inequities and the upstream prevention of communicable disease, chronic disease, and injury

- engage in discussions with community partners and members of priority populations to further understand the impact of health inequities and social determinants of health on specific populations with respect to communicable disease, chronic disease, and injury

- advocate for healthy public policies that address supportive social, economic, and physical environments that contribute to improving health and reducing health inequities, communicable disease, and chronic disease, and injury by addressing root causes and the social determinants of health

Policy

Public health will

- seek to influence the establishment and implementation of healthy public policies and the creation or enhancement of supportive environments[28] at federal, provincial, and local levels that address the social determinants of health,[29] in order to improve the health of the population and reduce health inequities

- support community based action to enable and sustain a comprehensive approach to an identified issue, by

  - building community capacity and partnerships

  - raising the understanding and profile of the public health issue

  - collaborating with partners to address the issue

  - developing and facilitating access to knowledge so as to inform policies, programs, and practices that may address the issue

Environments Supporting the Reduction of Harmful Impacts of Alcohol

Public health will

- seek to influence the establishment and implementation of healthy public policies at federal, provincial, and local levels to reduce the harmful impacts of alcohol through best practices and evidence related to

  - pricing and taxation structures

  - access and availability

  - marketing, advertising, and promotions

  - sale and distribution of alcohol

  - industry behaviour

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- support community based action to enable and sustain a multisectoral, coordinated, culturally relevant approach to alcohol-related issues and reflect a shared responsibility for solutions by

    - building community capacity and partnerships

    - raising the understanding and profile of alcohol as a critical public health and safety issue (see Health Equity Protocol)

    - shaping cultural norms to reduce harmful impacts of alcohol

    - collaborating with partners to reduce the harmful effects of alcohol

    - developing and facilitating access to knowledge to inform policies, programs, and practices to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm

Environments Supporting Healthy Food and Beverages[30]

Public health will

- seek to influence the establishment and implementation of healthy public policies at the federal, provincial, and local levels to support healthy food environments regarding

    - food security

    - incentive (for healthy) and disincentive (for unhealthy) approaches to improve access to, affordability, and consumption of healthy foods and beverages

    - production, promotion, distribution, and procurement of healthy local foods and beverages

    - access, availability, affordability, and consumption of healthy foods, including vegetables and fruit, in culturally appropriate and responsive ways

    - limitations on fat, added sugar, salt, caffeine, and artificial trans fats in the food supply

    - decreasing marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages, especially to children

    - physical/built environments that encourage and support healthy foods and beverages

    - implementation of the WHO Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes

    - improving nutrition information on food products and on menus, including those in restaurants

    - development of food knowledge and skills through a range of universal and targeted initiatives (e.g., community gardens, community kitchens)

- provide leadership and support the establishment, implementation, and evaluation of culturally responsive healthy eating policies in publicly funded institutions, including sport and recreation settings, healthcare settings, post-secondary education settings, and municipal and provincial government settings

- provide leadership and support the implementation and monitoring of the Standards for Food and Nutrition for Regulated Child Care Settings and of the Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools (see Healthy Development Protocol)

- support community based action to improve access, availability, and affordability of healthy foods and beverages and to reduce food insecurity by

  - building community capacity and partnerships

  - raising the understanding and profile of healthy eating and of healthy food and beverage environments as critical public health issues (see Health Equity Protocol)

  - collaborating with partners to achieve an environment in which healthy food and beverage choices are the default option

  - developing and facilitating access to knowledge to inform policies, programs, and practices aimed at achieving a healthy food and beverage environment

Environments Preventing Intentional and Unintentional Injuries

Public health will

- seek to influence the establishment and implementation of healthy public policies at federal, provincial, and local levels to prevent injuries by

  - encouraging a variety of settings, such as schools, child-care settings, workplaces, recreation and sports settings, and healthcare settings, to adopt evidence-based injury prevention policies and programs

  - advocating for modifications to the built environment, equipment, homes, and toys to enhance injury prevention

  - coordinating and consolidating injury prevention and other health promotion efforts across the life span in a variety of settings (see Environments Supporting the Reduction of Harmful Impacts of Alcohol)

  - advancing injury prevention by building on the work of community, local, provincial, Atlantic, national, and international efforts

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- support community based action to develop injury prevention initiatives by

  - building community capacity and partnerships

  - raising the profile and understanding of injuries as a critical public health and safety issue (see Health Equity Protocol)

  - developing and facilitating access to knowledge to inform policies, programs, and practices aimed at preventing injuries

- support meaningful involvement of youth and priority populations in the development, implementation, and evaluation of activities and consultation processes within the Nova Scotia Injury Prevention Strategy (note link to Healthy Development Protocol)

Environments Supporting Physical Activity[31]

Public health will

- seek to influence the establishment and implementation of healthy public policies at federal, provincial, and local levels to encourage access to physical activity in the following:

  - physical/built environments that encourage and support incorporation of physical activities into activities of daily life

  - active transportation (walkability, cyclability) at the local and provincial levels

  - access to public transportation

  - understanding the factors/conditions/considerations needed to improve physical activity in a variety of settings

- support community based action to create environments which encourage physical activity by

  - building community capacity and partnerships

  - raising the profile and understanding of physical activity and of sedentary behaviours as forming a critical public health issue (see Health Equity Protocol)

  - collaborating with partners, including priority populations, to establish environments conducive to physical activity as the default option

  - developing and facilitating access to knowledge to inform policies, programs, and practices to support physical activity and physical activity literacy

Environments Supporting Sexual Health[32]

Public health will

- seek to influence the establishment and implementation of evidence informed healthy public policies at federal, provincial, and local levels to improve the sexual health of populations by

  - encouraging a variety of settings, such as schools, child-care facilities, and healthcare settings, to adopt evidence informed sexual-health promotion policies and programs across the life span

  - advocating for Comprehensive Sexual Health Education and supporting the integration of sexual health-related issues in Health Promoting Schools (see Healthy Development Protocol)

  - collaborating with partners to address factors in the environment that contribute to sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (see Communicable Disease Prevention, Management, and Response Protocol)

  - raising the understanding and profile of intimate-partner and sexual violence as key public health issues

  - raising the understanding and profile of sexual health and hypersexualization (marketing, advertising, and promotion) as critical public health issues (see Health Equity Protocol)

  - collaborating with partners to reduce homophobia, transphobia, and sexism and to support gender equity and inclusive environments (e.g., Gay–Straight Alliances)

- support community based action to enable and sustain a multisectoral, coordinated, culturally relevant approach to creating supportive environments for sexual health, including work to address hypersexualization, reflecting a shared responsibility for solutions (see Healthy Development Protocol) by

  - building community capacity and partnerships

  - shaping cultural norms to normalize sexual health and reduce the harmful impacts of hypersexualization

  - collaborating with partners in culturally appropriate ways to improve access to services, create supportive environments, including advocating for comprehensive sexual health education, and addressing issues across the life span in sexual health

  - developing and facilitating access to knowledge to inform policies, programs, and practices to build resiliency

  - helping to build capacity in professionals working in sexual health-related fields (e.g., healthcare providers, educators)

- collaborate with community partners and youth to influence the development and implementation of healthy policies and the creation or enhancement of supportive environments regarding sexual health-related services (see Healthy Development Protocol)

Tobacco-Free Environments

Public health will

- seek to influence the establishment and implementation of healthy public policies at federal, provincial, and local levels in the following policy areas:
  - pricing and taxation structures, involving but not limited to
    - monitoring tax rates and advocating for tax increases where appropriate
    - continuing to collect the evidence around tobacco tax rates and the impact on disparities of population
    - exploring the potential funding of the Nova Scotia Comprehensive Tobacco Controls Strategy through various mechanisms
  - promotion and product placement:
    - monitoring the tobacco industry's evolution in advertising methods and introduction of new products
    - supporting national and intergovernmental action to adopt standardized plain tobacco packaging
    - maintaining and improving current measures to prevent the industry from promoting and advertising tobacco
  - access:
    - continuing to reduce numbers of tobacco vendors in Nova Scotia
    - improving compliance rates with respect to sales to minors
    - monitoring the tobacco-selling community and taking appropriate action to reduce the presence of tobacco products in communities (note link to Environmental Health Protocol)
    - monitoring evidence concerning the impact of the location of tobacco vendors on tobacco use
  - tobacco-free social and workplace environments:
    - enhancing smoke-free places and addressing the emergence of new products, like waterpipes and e-cigarettes
    - supporting the development of comprehensive tobacco policies in publicly funded institutions, including healthcare facilities
  - industry behaviour:
    - informing policies, programs, and practices to assist government to address industry responsibility for past and current practices

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■ support community based action related to the Comprehensive Tobacco Control Strategy to enable and sustain an evidence-based, multisectoral, coordinated, and culturally relevant approach to prevent and reduce tobacco use in order to protect citizens from exposure to tobacco products, as well as to expose tobacco industry practices by

- building community capacity and partnerships

- raising the profile and understanding of issues associated with tobacco use, in the effort to present it as a critical public health and safety issue (see Health Equity Protocol)

- collaborating with partners to create tobacco-free environments, including
  - First Nations leadership, so as to build collaborative tobacco use prevention efforts in Mi'kmaq communities in an effective, best practices, and culturally competent and culturally safe manner
  - African Nova Scotians, LGBTI, and immigrant communities, so as to build culturally competent prevention and promotion approaches

- developing and facilitating access to knowledge to inform policies, programs, and practices to prevent and reduce tobacco-related harm

■ support meaningful involvement of youth in the development, implementation, and evaluation of all aspects of the Comprehensive Tobacco Control Strategy activities and consultation processes (see Healthy Development Protocol)

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[28] The whole approach to the *Thrive!* strategy is to build supportive environments.

[29] Public health's ability to establish policy on the social determinants of health is unique to the community and dependent on the readiness of governance structures and on new or emerging issues.

[30] This work assists in building supportive environments as identified in *Thrive!*

[31] This work assists in building supportive environments as identified in *Thrive!*

[32] The World Health Organization (WHO) defines sexual health as "a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence." There are links between sexual health and alcohol. Analysis and policy work related to hypersexualization and corporate influences on sexual health are key parts of an upstream approach to sexual health issues. A strong link exists with the Healthy Development Protocol, because the foundations for sexual health/healthy sexuality occur during developmental periods. However, issues regarding sexual health/healthy sexuality clearly extend into adulthood. Sexuality is a life-span issue. There are also clear linkages with the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (see Communicable Disease Prevention, Management, and Response Protocol), as well as the prevention of some cancers (e.g., cervical, liver) by vaccinating against some sexually transmitted diseases (see Publicly Funded Immunization Protocol). Nevertheless, the concept of sexual health includes but is broader than simply the prevention of unintended pregnancies and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. It includes the development of positive self-concept and identity (body image, sexual orientation, gender identity), healthy relationships, and the prevention of intimate-partner and sexual violence.