



A-Z of Healthy Communities

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT OF ONTARIO HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COALITION & BC HEALTHY COMMUNITIES SOCIETY

D - DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

HOW DOES THE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES APPROACH ADDRESS THE DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH?

The Healthy Communities approach is an integrated, holistic approach to engaging multi-sectoral groups around complex issues, hearing their concerns and challenges and identifying and developing innovative solutions. Local governments, health authorities, community groups and service providers are able to draw on insights and energies from their local communities, which help to inform the development of healthy public policy (OHCC 2011).

Healthy Community activities can lead to outcomes, from the individual to the local, regional, provincial and national level, such as:

- healthier lifestyle choices;
- improved health status;
- increased knowledge, skills, and expertise;
- stronger partnerships;
- cleaner physical environments;
- a growing economy; and
- healthier, and resilient communities.

DESCRIPTION

In 1948, The World Health Organization declared that health “is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1948). The multiple factors and conditions that contribute to, or undermine our individual and community health are known as the “determinants of health” and they encompass the places where we live, learn, work and play.

Examples of the determinants of health include:

- income and social status,
- education and literacy,
- physical environments,
- personal coping skills,
- healthy child development,
- biology and genetic endowment, and
- gender and culture.

When we explore how the determinants come together and influence each other we are better equipped to go beyond mere symptoms and understand and take action on the underlying contributing factors.

The determinants of health can be broadly categorized into the following areas:

- the social and economic environment,
- the physical environment, and
- the person’s individual characteristics and behaviours.

SOME USEFUL RESOURCES ON THE DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

[The World Health Organization: Determinants of Health](#)

[Public Health Agency of Canada: Determinants of Health. What Makes Canadians Healthy or Unhealthy?](#)

[A Review of Frameworks on the Determinants of Health. Canadian Council on Social Determinants of Health. 2015.](#)

REFERENCES

[World Health Organization \(WHO\): Constitution of WHO: principles](#)

[Canadian Healthy Communities Network: The Healthy Communities Approach. A Framework for Action on the Determinants of Health](#)



Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
Coalition des Communautés en santé de l'Ontario



BC Healthy Communities
People. Place. Potential.



OHCC enables communities to create and sustain positive change through equitable community engagement, intersectoral partnerships, political commitment, healthy public policy, and asset-based community development. BC Healthy Communities supports multi-sectoral groups to build their capacity to create healthy communities.