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The choices we make are shaped by the choices we have. Some communities have easy access to affordable fresh produce; others have only convenience stores and fast food outlets. Some of us have nice homes, clean parks and safe places to walk; others don’t.
Message from Community

Through consultation and discussion with community, NGOs, government and RHAs, a readiness to create a strategy that would result in an integrated approach to healthy communities was evident. The need to extend that integration beyond the scope of the health sector, recognizing the impact of social, economic and environmental factors was also clear.

With the support of the Minister of Healthy Living, Health in Common began to coordinate the development and implementation of a strategy that would create an opportunity to further align efforts intended to support healthy communities.

In an effort to build on existing efforts, those involved in the development of existing strategies and frameworks and representatives from existing coalitions and networks were invited to take part in the Healthy Living Summit process. This brought people together to develop a shared vision, mission and strategic directions to shape the future of healthy living in Manitoba – making the healthy choice the easy choice.

What started as a discussion about the creation of a healthy living strategy shifted to a focus on creating healthy communities – resulting in *Vibrant Communities: A Plan for Action*.

*Vibrant Communities: A Plan for Action* reflects the vision, mission and guiding principles developed by stakeholders, as well as priority focus areas based on available evidence, stakeholder consultation and alignment at the Pan-Canadian level.
A Plan for Action Framework

Vision: Thriving People, Vibrant Communities

Mission: Create sustainable environments that advance the right to wellbeing for all Manitobans

Guiding Principles:
- Collaboration
- Community Involvement
- Informed Decisions
- Fairness
- Inclusion

Priority Focus Areas:
- Community Development
- Healthy Public Policy
Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles

• Collaboration
  Work together, within and across sectors, building on existing success and avoiding duplication

• Community Involvement
  Be continually informed by and responsive to community voices

• Informed Decisions
  Base decisions on consultation, best available evidence and promising innovation

• Fairness
  Ensure equity through a commitment to social justice

• Inclusion
  Embrace and respect diversity within communities

"reduce health inequities
Summit Participant"
Priority Focus Areas

Based on stakeholder consultation, available evidence and alignment at the Pan-Canadian level, *Vibrant Communities: A Plan for Action* focuses on two related areas - Community Development and Healthy Public Policy.

Community Development

We can not address the wellbeing of individuals without recognizing that people live in communities.

While there is no universal model for action that is applicable to all communities, there is a need for “a model process that enables, supports and empowers communities to engage with their citizens – and the various public, non-profit, community and private-sector organizations in the community – to develop a shared vision and unique, tailored actions to achieve that vision.”¹ This process must build on community strengths, not weaknesses – asset-based community development.

This community development approach allows communities to address challenges they have identified and build the community capacity they require. This means creating and supporting a process and system that meets locally identified needs, not implementing national or provincial priorities directed at local issues.

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Healthy Public Policy

Inter-sectoral by nature, healthy public policy is intended to better coordinate public policies in multiple sectors. This is required to address the factors that determine wellbeing and to reduce inequities. Some people are less healthy than others due to low household income, low levels of education, lack of adequate housing or poor working conditions. These social and economic conditions are the main cause of the huge health disparities that exist. In a province as wealthy as ours, these inequities are unacceptable.

As recommended by the Senate Subcommittee on Population Health, successfully addressing these conditions requires a whole-of-government approach. This approach recognizes that public policies are health policies; acknowledging that healthy public policy can diminish inequity and disparities in health.

Developing healthy public policy requires a process informed by and responsive to community voices. In this way community development and healthy public policy are inherently linked.

“acknowledge that people are experts in their own lives

*Summit Participant*

“take lens off individual and onto the system and structures that prevent access

*Summit Participant*

“ask the fairness question of all policies, laws, actions, etc.

*Summit Participant*
Moving to Action

Next Steps

- **develop a Vibrant Communities Charter**

  In an effort to create a shared movement, stakeholders recommended developing a healthy living charter that supporters could sign on to. Through the consultation process the language shifted from healthy living to a focus on community; this recommendation reflects that change in language.

- **hold Vibrant Communities Symposium on March 10th and 11th, 2010**

  The Symposium is an acknowledgement of the need to further engage with those involved in creating Vibrant Communities from a social, environmental and economic perspective.

- **develop a plan for moving forward**

  While priority focus areas have been identified, there is a need to create a workplan reflecting the social, environmental and economic perspective of Vibrant Communities. This process will begin at the Vibrant Communities Symposium.

- **develop an evaluation framework and plan that will monitor the progress and measure effectiveness of the Plan for Action**

  In an effort to determine the effectiveness of working collaboratively toward a shared vision the Plan for Action will include short and long term outcomes.

Getting Involved

As we move forward there will be an opportunity for involvement through partnership in a broad collaborative movement; setting direction and identifying areas for action to achieve the Vibrant Communities vision. A coordinating body will act in a decision making capacity and working groups will be utilized to complete the workplan. Health in Common will move this forward by supporting the coordinating body and working groups.
Getting to the Plan for Action

Stakeholder Consultation

Through consultation and discussion with community, NGOs, government and regions, a readiness to create a strategy that would result in an integrated approach to healthy communities was evident. The need to extend that integration beyond the scope of the health sector, recognizing the impact of social, economic and environmental factors, was also clear.

With the support of the Minister of Healthy Living, Health in Common began to coordinate the development and implementation of a strategy that would create an opportunity to further align efforts intended to support healthy communities.

A range of stakeholders were brought together at the Healthy Living Summit to develop a shared vision, mission and strategic directions to shape the future of healthy living in Manitoba – making the healthy choice the easy choice. This overall strategy approach was intended to allow for collaborative action, strengthening community action, creating supportive environments, evaluation and monitoring, and building healthy public policy. ²

In an effort to build on existing initiatives, invited stakeholders were those involved in the development of existing strategies and frameworks and representatives from existing coalitions and networks.

Manitoba Health and Healthy Living also brought together division representatives to contribute to the vision, mission and strategic directions and create a complimentary internal strategy.

Through the discussion of strategic directions the desire to work toward a common vision with a shared plan was clear. Community engagement and involvement was identified as essential, as was the need for a culture of collaboration, and the alignment of existing initiatives.

Addressing equity and advancing action on social justice through the assessment of plans and policies was clearly articulated as a shared priority.

This process resulted in the shared vision, mission and guiding principles, as well as priority focus areas, creating a framework that will allow stakeholders to move forward collectively.


Available Evidence

Moving forward we need to invest in initiatives that are effective.

The available evidence clearly supports the use of community development which allows community members to set their own priorities. It also shows policies making healthy choices easier, cheaper, and more convenient, having a much greater impact than interventions directed at individuals or the public.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Impact</th>
<th>Potential Impact</th>
<th>Less Impact</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Environments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Target Environments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Target Environments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• policies that make healthy choices easier</td>
<td>• tangible changes in schools, workplaces</td>
<td>• workplace promotional events, contests, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• restrict unhealthy products</td>
<td></td>
<td>• school-based with little environmental change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target the Public</strong></td>
<td><strong>Target the Public</strong></td>
<td><strong>Target the Public</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• community development (residents set priorities)</td>
<td>• well-designed social marketing</td>
<td>• mass media appeals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Broader Determinants of Health</strong></td>
<td><strong>Target Individuals</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• healthy economic, social &amp; environmental policy</td>
<td>• individual counseling</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• group programs</td>
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</tbody>
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"have the courage to stop doing what doesn’t work"

*Summit Participant*
Alignment with Pan-Canadian Initiatives and Reports

The need to work collaboratively, across sectors, is clearly articulated at the Pan-Canadian level. While this is not an exhaustive list of examples, it illustrates this shared intent and the need to focus on community development and healthy public policy.

**Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy**

Based on a population health approach, the Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy is a conceptual framework for sustained action. With the vision of a healthy nation in which all Canadians experience the conditions that support the attainment of good health, its goals are to:

- improve overall health outcomes; and
- reduce health disparities.

As an integrated approach involving many sectors working together toward common goals, the Strategy offers a means to ensure greater alignment, coordination and direction, and provides a forum to work collaboratively to address common risk factors.

**Sustainable Development in Public Health: A long term journey begins**

*(Public Health Agency of Canada)*

There is growing consensus that the wellbeing of populations and sustainable development are interrelated, long-term objectives that must be addressed in an integrated manner. At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and again in 2002 at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, protecting, promoting and maintaining health have been at the core of sustainable development initiatives.

The Strategy clearly states that sustainable development cannot occur in the midst of persistent socio-economic inequalities, large-scale environmental degradation or widespread disease. Similarly, the promotion of wellbeing requires sound physical and built environments, a prosperous economy and a just society.
Healthy People, Healthy Performance, Healthy Profits: The Case for Business Action on the Socio-Economic Determinants of Health 2008 (Conference Board of Canada)

Making the case that businesses and employers should take action on the socio-economic determinants of health, this report identifies actions business can take to achieve positive health outcomes and benefit the bottom line. Many of the most successful initiatives identified rely on strong partnerships and collaboration with other organizations in the public and non-profit sectors.


The strategy focuses on enhancing integration of the three pillars of sustainable development - environmental, economic and social. Highlighting the ongoing implementation of the Agricultural Policy Framework and examining the progress towards sustainable agriculture in Canada, collaboration is identified as a priority as the next generation of Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food policy is developed.

The Chief Public Health Officer’s Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2008

The Chief Public Health Officer of Canada’s first annual report identifies the following priorities:

- social investments;
- community capacity;
- inter-sectoral collaboration;
- knowledge infrastructure through a better understanding of sub-populations; and
- leadership in public health, health and cross-sectoral levels.
One World One Health: From Ideas to Action

One World One Health recognizes the linkages between animal, human and ecosystem health. The key recommendations of the report include:

- foster political will;
- support partnerships and collaborations;
- encourage data sharing and integration;
- build capacity especially at the local level;
- develop communication strategies/plans;
- provide incentives for reporting adverse events; and
- encourage stakeholder and community engagement.

WHO Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health

Closing the Gap clearly states that “unequal living conditions are the consequence of poor social policies and programmes, unfair economic arrangements, and bad politics.”

The World Health Organization is clear that action on the social determinants of health must involve the whole of government, civil society and local communities and business. Emphasizing that policies and programmes must embrace all the key sectors of society not just the health sector.
A Communities Agenda  
(Canadian Community Economic Development Network)

Building on the collective input of CED community leaders from across Canada, the Communities Agenda Policy Framework focuses on:
- building fairer and stronger local economies;
- tackling poverty and homelessness; and
- securing investment in sustainable communities.

CCEDNET recognizes that healthy community development requires an integrated approach to complex community problems, defining community development as local action that creates economic opportunities and enhances social and environmental conditions.

How are Canadians Really Doing?  
(Canadian Institute of Wellbeing)

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing is a new way of measuring wellbeing. It provides unique insights into the quality of life of Canadians, including our standard of living, our health, the quality of our environment, our education and skill levels, the way we use our time, the vitality of our communities, our participation in the democratic process, and the state of our arts, culture and recreation.

The report emphasizes the need for inter-sectoral collaboration and the important role of public policy to enhance Canadians sense of wellbeing and overall health.

“Canada’s environmental performance is, by most measures, the worst in the developed world. We’ve got big problems.”

Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2006)
Stakeholder List

Representatives from the following networks and coalitions and people involved in developing the following strategies and frameworks were participants in the stakeholder process (Healthy Living Summit process):

- Addictions Agencies Network
- Advancing Age: Promoting Older Manitobans
- Agencies for School Health
- Alliance for the Prevention of Chronic Disease
- Arthritis Society
- Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
- Beyond Kyoto
- Canadian Cancer Society Knowledge Exchange Network
- Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative
- Coalition for Safer Waters
- Community Health Assessment Network
- Diabetes: A Manitoba Strategy
- Environmental Health Guide (Health Canada)
- Envisioning the Future: Manitoba Health Research Strategy
- Fall Prevention Strategy
- FASD Strategy
- First Nations Community Wellness Working Group
- GLBTIQ Coalition
- GO Teams: Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives
- Green Manitoba
- Health Promotion Network
- Healthy Child Manitoba
- Healthy Kids Healthy Futures
- Healthy Living and Populations
- Healthy Sexuality Action Plan
- Health Programs and Services Executives’ Network
- Injury Free Manitoba: A Provincial Injury Prevention Strategy
- Lighthouses
- Manitoba Alliance for Mental Health and Mental Illness
- Manitoba Association of Community Health Centres
- Manitoba Association of School Trustees
- Manitoba Centre for Health Policy
- Manitoba Eco-Network
- Manitoba Harm Reduction Network
- Manitoba Health and Healthy Living
- Manitoba Phys Ed Supervisors Association
- Manitoba Public Health Association
- Manitoba Suicide Prevention Network
- Manitoba Tobacco Reduction Alliance
- Manitoba Water Safety and Drowning Prevention Strategy
- Manitoba Women’s Health Strategy
- Mental Health Managers Network
- Mental Health Promotion Champions Network
- Parent Child Coalitions
- Partners in Planning for Healthy Living
- Partners Seeking Solutions with Seniors
- Primary Health Care Network
- Provincial AIDS Strategy
- Provincial Spiritual Care Network
- Provincial STD Control Strategy
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Public Health Managers Network
- Public Health Network of Manitoba
- Recreation Connections
- Regional Diabetes Program Framework
- Rewarding Work
- Rural Development Institute
- Safe Environments (Health Canada)
- Sport Manitoba
- Strategic Framework to Fight Cancer
- Strengthening Families
- Suicide Prevention Framework
- Teen Services Network
- Tobacco Control Strategy
- Youth Addictions Agency Network
References


“Community coalitions direct the creation (sustaining) of healthy communities

*Summit Participant*

“...the evidence shows that people with better incomes, better education and better social supports enjoy better health than those with fewer social and economic opportunities.

*Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada*
*Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2008*

“...combine various strategies behind single action plan

*Summit Participant*

“...Research shows that 15 per cent of a person’s health is attributable to biology and genetic factors, 10 per cent to the physical environment, 25 per cent to the reparative work of the health care system and 50 per cent to socio-economic conditions, which are generally beyond people’s control.

*A Healthy Productive Canada: A Determinant of Health Approach*
*Final Report of the Senate Subcommittee on Population Health*