

Determinants of Health approach in Canada

Council for Early Child Development National Conference
Sackville, New Brunswick
Thursday May 14, 2009
Senator Wilbert J. Keon

Early Childhood Education and Care: Next Steps

The Committee's recommendations are:

- ◆ *That the Prime Minister appoint a Minister of State for Children and Youth, under the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, with responsibilities to include working with provincial and territorial government to advance quality early learning, parenting programs and child care, as well as research human development and early childhood development and learning;*

Early Childhood Education and Care: Next Steps (continued)

- ◆ *That the Minister for Human Resources and Social Development appoint a National Advisory Council on Children, to advise the Minister of State for Children and Youth and through the Minister of State, other Ministers on how best to support parents and to advance quality early learning and child care. The Council membership is to include Parliamentarians, other stakeholders, community leaders and parents, with appropriate representation from Aboriginal communities;*

Early Childhood Education and Care: Next Steps (continued)

- ◆ *That the Government of Canada call a series of meetings of federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers with responsibility for children and youth, beginning within one year of this report to:*
 - a. *establish a pan-Canadian framework to provide policies and programs to support children and their families; and*
 - b. *establish a federal/provincial/territorial Council of Ministers responsible for early learning and child care and parental supports, to meet annually, to review Canada's progress with respect to other OECD countries, and to share best practices within Canada. ; and*

Early Childhood Education and Care: Next Steps (continued)

- ◆ *That the Government of Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial counterparts and researchers, create an adequately funded, robust system of data collection, evaluation and research, promoting all aspects of quality human development and in early childhood programming including the development of curricula, program evaluation and child outcome measures.*

SENATE POPULATION HEALTH STUDY

A Healthy Productive Canada: a determinants of health approach

WHAT THE STUDY IS ALL ABOUT???

- ◆ Population health and health inequities
- ◆ Human capital
- ◆ Human development
- ◆ Environmental sustainability
- ◆ Wholistic health and wellness
- ◆ Well-being
- ◆ All of which share the same goal: creating a society in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive creative lives.

Why a Population Health Approach?

- WHO data indicate that Canada ranks 9th among 30 countries in terms of healthy life expectancy at birth for women.
- Unicef statistics show that we rank only 12th among 21 industrialized countries in terms of children well-being.
- The Euro-Canada Health Consumer Index places Canada 23rd out of 30 in Total Index Score, and 30th out of 30 in Best Value for Money Spent.

In other words, this index shows that we spend more money to achieve worse results than the other countries surveyed.

Social Determinants of Health

- ◆ Income and social status
- ◆ Social support networks
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Employment / working conditions
- ◆ Social environments
- ◆ Physical environments
- ◆ Personal health practices and coping skills
- ◆ Healthy child development
- ◆ Biology and genetic endowment
- ◆ Health services
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Culture

Four reports issued to date:

- ◆ The **first** report highlighted the situation in selected countries;
- ◆ The **second** report focuses on Cuba—its health and early education system, as well as the lessons the committee learned first-hand.
- ◆ The **third** report looks at what federal, provincial and territorial governments are doing here in Canada to develop and implement population health policies.
- ◆ The **fourth – Issues and Options** - is an outline of the issues facing the development of a population health policy in Canada, and also presents policy options. This report has helped to launch a debate on the role that the federal government can play in helping to reduce health disparities.

<http://senate-senat.ca/health-sante.asp>

**direct link to the Senate
Subcommittee on Population
Health website**

DISPARITIES REDUCTION STRATEGY

Strategies must focus on some population groups:

- **Aboriginal peoples**
- **Canadians in the lowest income brackets**
- **Children**

- ◆ Overall, the testimony suggests that there is enough evidence to take action now.
- ◆ Sir Michael Marmot, the World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinants of Health's final report states that there is enough knowledge to recommend action now.

Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit Recommendations¹

- ◆ First, a national population health framework to set the stage and lead the way.
- ◆ Second, a coordinated and integrated population health-information infrastructure that includes culturally appropriate, community-relevant indicators.
- ◆ Third, a plan to assess population health initiatives and relay the information to policy makers.
- ◆ Fourth, a life-course perspective on health disparity issues and setting priorities.
- ◆ Last, education, research, training, and professional opportunities

¹ *Recommendations for action on the social determinants of health: a Canadian perspective*, University of Regina, Regina, SK and University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK., *The Lancet* Vol. 372 November 8, 2008

- ◆ Natural fit between the holistic understanding of health and well-being that is traditional to Aboriginal communities and the spectrum, of determinants identified in the population health literature.

- ◆ First Nations Communities are at the core of any progress to be made.

Health status

Health status affected by unique determinants related to:

- ◆ the history of colonization and its understanding
- ◆ efforts to regain self-determination
- ◆ community control
- ◆ geographical locations,
- ◆ cultural and traditional characteristics and knowledge, and
- ◆ language.

Aboriginal peoples health is influenced by physical health issues:

- ◆ low family income,
- ◆ non-adequate housing and overcrowding
- ◆ poor nutrition and lack of food security
- ◆ low educational attainment
- ◆ lower levels of physical activity

Aboriginal peoples health is also influenced by mental, emotional and spiritual health

- ◆ The spiritual and emotional health have been affected greatly by the history of the role in Canada. The loss of culture has been significant and, the Committee needs, it was told, to talk about it in relation to health.

Experiences in the early years lay the foundation for a child's development, affecting lifelong health, well-being and learning outcomes.

Range of possible action addressing the determinants of health

- ◆ **Community health and social service resources**
- ◆ **Public awareness**
- ◆ **Federal government's role in terms of monitoring, evaluating and reporting what is going on in different provinces**
- ◆ **Key challenges to policy formulation in targeting the determinants of health is found in the structure of governments.**

WHAT MUST BE DONE

The federal government can develop a whole-of-government approach:

- Establish health goals and targets
- Use health impact assessments
- Consolidate a sound database and research infrastructure based on longitudinal studies from conception to death

WHAT MUST BE DONE

Federally

- ◆ Prime Minister of Canada take the lead
- ◆ Cabinet Committee on Population Health be established and chaired by the Prime Minister of Canada

Provincially

- ◆ The Premier of each province establish and chair a Cabinet Committee on Population Health

WHAT MUST BE DONE

Municipally

- ◆ The mayors establish and chair a Population health Council Committee

Communities

- ◆ Volunteer sector and community organizations set up community councils on population health to engage the entire community through this approach

WHAT MUST BE DONE

Intergovernmental collaboration between:

- ◆ governments,
- ◆ business sector
- ◆ community organizations

Intersectoral action to:

- ◆ join up strategies that address the range of health determinants

Urban development agreements offer a good and effective model of intersectoral action

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- ◆ Establish a population health information system with longitudinal capacity for the human life course
- ◆ Monitor, evaluate and report on the Population Health Status annually
- ◆ Support special longitudinal studies
- ◆ Compare longitudinal information from Aboriginal, low income and other groups

WHAT MUST BE DONE

Population Health Information System/Database Infrastructure

- ◆ Statistics Canada, in collaboration with Canada Health Infoway, the Canadian Institute for Health Information, Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, provincial database and community accounts, etc.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- ◆ Everyone should be given the best start in life, this begins at the prenatal and early childhood stages

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- ◆ Build and support strong communities that promote mental and physical health, well being, productivity and low crime.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- ◆ Polyclinics at the community level that integrate education, health, social services and deal with the entire human life course. (B.A. in Grand parenting)

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- ◆ Drilling down to the postal codes
- ◆ Community development around polyclinics models, Community accounts models such as in Newfoundland, integrated health and human development services as in Manitoba and Saskatchewan
- ◆ Let communities develop the most appropriate approach themselves.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- ◆ Stem the disease epidemic with a population health approach

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- ◆ Increase productivity through communities promoting well being and productivity throughout the life course...hence a prosperous economy.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- ◆ Improve well-being in the workplace thus increasing productivity

Healthy People, Healthy Performance, Healthy Profits: The Case for Business Action on the Socio-Economic Determinants of Health, The Conference Board of Canada, October 17, 2008

Life Course Stages and Policies for Population Health / Well-Being and Productivity

