

# Key Sources for Population Health Policy

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**A**lthough there are many resources providing descriptive information about the health of the Canadian population, few highlight options for policy and programs. The Canadian Population Health Initiative maintains a catalogue of web-based sources that include intervention options relevant for informing population health policy and research. These sources are identified using search and selection criteria. This catalogue is a tool for connecting public health to health services and references practical web-based tools for researchers and decision-makers to use in identifying best practices.

The following list of resources is modelled on the *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy* “What’s on the Web” series that has previously listed online resources for population health data. These online resources are highlighted for their relevance specifically to population health policy and intervention research. Please contact [Emily@cihi.ca](mailto:Emily@cihi.ca) for a list of resources from the catalogue relevant for specific public health issues.

## **Prevention Policies Directory, Canadian Partnership against Cancer**

The Prevention Policies Directory is maintained by the federally funded Canadian Partnership against Cancer as an up-to-date resource to inform policy makers about existing practices for the prevention of cancer and related chronic diseases. The website uses a web-crawler technology to scan approximately 285 websites of government and non-governmental organiza-

tions (NGOs) once a month. The resulting database of policies has applicability beyond cancer prevention, as many of the risk factors identified for cancer are also determinants for population health more generally.

The risk factors identified include smoking, alcohol consumption, poor nutrition, a lack of physical activity and certain environmental factors. The key-word search allows for a search by targeted population or by any criteria not identified in the other categories listed on the site. The options provided enable a search of a broad range of policies and legal instruments in Canada aimed at mitigating the risk factors associated with cancer and related chronic diseases. This is useful for conducting jurisdictional scans to identify best practices or to compare prevention policies between jurisdictions. This directory could be used by researchers as well as policy makers and decision-makers. It is not possible to limit search results to policies with an equity focus.

Prevention Policies Directory: [http://www.cancerview.ca/portal/server.pt/community/prevention\\_policies/464](http://www.cancerview.ca/portal/server.pt/community/prevention_policies/464)

List of the websites crawled to populate the database: [http://www.cancerview.ca/idc/groups/public/documents/webcontent/prevention\\_websites.pdf](http://www.cancerview.ca/idc/groups/public/documents/webcontent/prevention_websites.pdf)

## **National Collaborating Centres for Public Health, Public Health Agency of Canada**

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) funds six

National Collaborating Centres (NCCs) for Public Health. The NCCs are tasked with promoting the use of scientific knowledge and improving research uptake by policy makers to strengthen public health policy and practice in Canada. The six NCCs have varying relevance for different audiences:

- The NCC for Environmental Health focuses on the environmental factors that affect health and maintains a searchable directory of innovative practices.
- The NCC for Aboriginal Health concentrates on the health of First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations. It also conducts research specifically on child and youth health and urban health, with a strong focus on the social determinants of health.
- The NCC for Infectious Diseases produces policy-relevant research on important public health issues such as antimicrobial resistance, drinking water quality and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections.
- The NCC for Methods and Tools maintains Public Health +, a searchable database of articles reviewed and rated for the strength of their methodologies and other factors. This centre also provides a searchable registry of methods and tools for knowledge translation in public health.
- The NCC for Healthy Public Policy focuses on analyzing public policies and the public policy process, among other themes. This work is intended to build knowledge on what drives policy change and to make social science tools available to public health workers to help researchers design products that will have a higher uptake by policy makers.
- The NCC for Determinants of Health does not produce new research but, rather, synthesizes existing knowledge on the social and economic factors that affect health, and makes this knowledge usable by policy makers and others.

<http://www.nccph.ca/>



## Additional Population Health Policy Sources

### Population Health, In Brief

The Canadian Institute for Health Information's biweekly news digest, *Population Health, In Brief*, is focused on the most recent policies, programs and publications related to population health. To subscribe, e-mail [Emily@cihi.ca](mailto:Emily@cihi.ca).

### Manitoba Centre for Health Policy

Consisting of analysis of public health policy problems and evaluations of programs, the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy is hosted by the University of Manitoba. Although the work is limited in scope to Manitoba, the research is applicable to other jurisdictions.  
[http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/medicine/units/community\\_health\\_sciences/departmental\\_units/mchp/](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/medicine/units/community_health_sciences/departmental_units/mchp/)



### Interactive Domain Model Best Practices for Health Promotion, Public Health and Population Health

The Interactive Domain Model best practices site is maintained by editor Barbara Kahan and contains a catalogue of organizations and other resources engaged with population health policy and in particular best practices.  
<http://www.idmbestpractices.ca/>



### Wellesley Institute

The Wellesley Institute analyses policy issues in population health and offers solutions. It uses an equity lens and focuses research on affordable housing, healthcare reform, immigrant health and social innovation.  
<http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/>



### Canadian Best Practices Portal, PHAC

The Canadian Best Practices Portal is a collection of evaluated public health programs and interventions that could be considered by policy makers looking for promising or best practices to inform the development of new policies. The key-word search is easy to use and returns a number of evaluated interventions that can be examined at a glance using key-word icons, examined in more depth on the intervention details pages or followed back to an original evaluation source. This is a useful tool for policy makers and researchers alike as it provides only evaluated interventions that cover a broad range of issues in public health. <http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/>

### Health-EU, European Commission

The Health-EU website is located within the European Commission's Europa website, which has previously been identified as a useful tool for population health researchers (Wright 2010). This specific section of the website is highlighted here for its relevance for public health policy research. Health-EU, the Public Health Portal of the European Union, discusses public health practices from across the European Union under a variety of headings. This website is relevant for health system managers, policy makers and public health researchers and is especially useful as a one-stop portal for examining best practices in European jurisdictions. The website takes a population health approach; policies aimed at the determinants of health, such as environments, employment and food safety, are also described. There is no searchable directory of individual interventions, but the search and advanced search functions allow for an effective exploration of the entire site. [http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/health\\_in\\_the\\_eu/policies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/health_in_the_eu/policies/index_en.htm)

### Public Policy and Health Portal, Institut national de santé publique Québec

The Public Policy and Health Portal is funded by the provincial government of Quebec and aims to provide policy makers with the tools they need to consider the public health impact of major policies in any sector of government. The portal is also useful for researchers and health practitioners looking for current healthy public policy practices. The portal is intended to inform Quebec government ministries and others, but it includes policies from international jurisdictions and rates relevant publications with a score from one to 100. Policies are searchable under 10 categories, including education and employment, poverty and social development and urban design. The open-text key-word search also allows for a specific search of policies and research. <http://politiquespubliques.inspq-qc.ca/> HQ



### Acknowledgement

The authors gratefully acknowledge the guidance of Jean Harvey and Keith Denny in the development and review of the manuscript.

### Reference

Wright K. 2010. "Population Health: Data, Trends and Indicators." *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy* 15(1): 62–64.

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