

Executive Summary

The Ontario Heart Health Network (OHHN): Collaborative Policy Scan Project demonstrates an innovative approach of using a descriptive study design to scan for policies across **37 Ontario communities in five areas** 1) access to nutritious foods; 2) access to recreation and physical activity; 3) active transportation and the built environment; 4) prevention of alcohol misuse and 5) prevention of tobacco use and exposure **across three sectors** a) *Government* (district/region; county; municipality; township); b) *Education*: school boards and c). *Health Care*: hospitals as a worksite (e.g. workplace health policies).

A protected, web-based data collection system that standardized the data collection of eleven consultants was designed and utilized. Data was collected between October 26, 2009 and December 13, 2010 by scanning publicly available websites and/or contacting representatives via telephone or email using information provided by OHHN members.

Data was collected for 525 regions/counties/municipalities/townships and villages; 80 school boards and 105 hospitals. 43 summary reports and over 500 individual reports have been generated to provide a “snap-shot” of policies.

The findings from this study has created a **baseline inventory of policies that exist at the provincial level based on local data** (e.g. formatted raw data) to inform the transition of OHHP-Taking Action for Healthy Living Community Partnerships to Healthy Communities Partnerships under the Ministry of Health Promotion’s new Healthy Communities Ontario approach to be implemented in 2010.

The findings listed in this report provide an **opportunity** for Healthy Communities Partnerships to learn more about the types of policies that exist in Ontario; investigate where specific policies exist; identify whether or not these policies are in development or have been implemented; and determine who the intended population is for a policy. By investing time into reviewing the current findings and the raw data generated from this study, Healthy Communities Partnerships can build on what others have accomplished.

This study also provides data that supports and/or will inform future opportunities for Healthy Communities Partnership to engage in policy work within a health promotion context. Policy work is part of a comprehensive approach to health promotion that is far reaching and long lasting.

Therefore, these results can aid Healthy Communities Partnerships to develop a comprehensive community action plan. Resources provided to guide future policy work in the areas of: access to nutritious foods; access to recreation and physical activity; active transportation and the built environment; prevention of alcohol misuse and prevention of tobacco use and exposure across local governments, school boards and hospitals as a worksite can also assist in the development of a comprehensive community action plan. Healthy Communities Partnerships can utilize this information to inform their transition from OHHP-TAFHL Community Partnerships to Healthy Communities Partnerships under the Ministry of Health Promotion’s new Healthy Communities Ontario approach.

This study is a small step forward towards understanding the types of policies that exist in Ontario. More is known about the state of policy in Ontario than before this study was conducted but more work in this area is needed.