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# Windsor-Essex County Community Picture

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AN URGENT  
GREEN-LIGHT  
INITIATIVE FOR  
COMMUNITY  
HEALTH

Executive Summary



# Windsor-Essex County Community Picture

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Windsor-Essex County (WEC) is the southernmost tip of Canada. In 2006 the total population of WEC was 393,402. It is comprised of seven municipalities, the City of Windsor, and Pelee Island:

- The Town of Amherstburg (N=21,748)
- The Town of Essex (N=20,032)
- The Town of Kingsville (N=20,908)
- The Town of Lakeshore (N=33,245)
- The Town of LaSalle (N=27,652)
- The Town of Tecumseh (N=24,224)
- The Municipality of Leamington (N=28,833)
- The City of Windsor (N=216,473)
- Pelee Island (N=287)

## A SNAPSHOT OF OUR COMMUNITY

- WEC has a higher percentage of non-Canadian citizens (6.5%) than the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network region (ESC LHIN) (4.9%), but lower than the rest of the province (7.5%).
- Francophones make up 3.5% of WEC, compared to 4.1% for Ontario.
- 22.4% of WEC residents are immigrants, compared to 28.3% in Ontario.
- The most common non-official language in WEC is Italian (3.1%).
- Almost 50.0% of WEC residents have some level of post-secondary education, which is comparable to the rest of the province (51.0%).
- WEC has the second highest unemployment rate in Canada, 9.6% (February, 2011).
- In WEC, 13.1% of residents are considered low-income, compared to 15.3% in Canada.
- A nutritious food basket for a family of four in WEC costs less per week than the provincial average; \$160.66 per week compared to \$169.17.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SIX PRIORITY AREAS

### TOBACCO USE AND EXPOSURE

- Approximately 34.6% of WEC males ages 20 to 34 are smokers, compared to 28.2% of the same age group in Ontario.
- 70.7% of WEC residents surveyed supported a ban on tobacco use at all outdoor sport and recreation areas.

#### Recommendations

- Decrease tobacco use and exposure through policies that ban tobacco use at all outdoor sport and recreation areas (e.g., sports fields, playgrounds, beaches).
- Decrease tobacco use through policies that ensure equal and affordable access to smoking cessation supports.
- Encourage workplaces to have comprehensive tobacco policies in place which include smoking cessation promotion and support for employees, retirees, and family members.

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## ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

- 32.4% of WEC residents aged 20 to 44 reported being non-low risk drinkers.
- 26.0% of ESC LHIN region residents aged 18 and over exceeded the low-risk drinking guidelines, compared to 23.0% in Ontario.

### Recommendations

- Promote, support, enforce, and monitor municipal alcohol policies.
- Decrease substance use, misuse, abuse, and harms by promoting and supporting comprehensive substance and alcohol policies in the workplace.
- Encourage responsible drinking through policies promoting, supporting, enforcing, and monitoring safer bar practices.

## HEALTHY EATING

- Only 40.7% of WEC residents ate fruits and vegetables five or more times per day, compared to 44.1% in Ontario.
- Adults ages 35 to 44 have the lowest rates of fruit and vegetable consumption (28.4%), and seniors ages 65 and older have the highest rates (46.6%), when compared to other age groups in WEC.

### Recommendations

- Promote the adoption of the Healthy Meetings Policy by workplaces and community agencies throughout WEC.
- Promote healthy eating through policies that increase the availability of healthy foods and limit food and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar, or salt in workplaces, recreation sites, and public facilities.
- Promote healthy eating through policies that help ensure affordability and accessibility to culturally and personally acceptable foods.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Only 26.6% of WEC residents were active and 20.4% were moderately active, compared to 25.7% and 24.1% in Ontario, respectively.
- Research shows that only 15.4% of Canadians meet current physical activity recommendations each week.

### Recommendations

- Promote physical activity through policies that support active transportation by developing better designed built environments and supportive infrastructure for all modes of transportation.
- Promote physical activity through policies that subsidize low-income families and priority populations to access community recreational programs and services.
- Promote physical activity through the implementation and monitoring of the Daily Physical Activity policy in schools.

## INJURY PREVENTION

- Falls are the leading cause of major traumatic injury in WEC (51.0%), followed by transport (30.0%), intentional (14.0%), and other (5.0%).
- 60.0% of major traumatic falls in WEC resulted in in-hospital death.

### Recommendations

- Reduce injury by establishing policy to ensure safe built environments for children and seniors (e.g., making the crossing lights longer, reducing speed limits around senior residential areas and schools).
- Reduce injury by establishing a school policy mandating the use of safety equipment when engaging in active transportation (e.g., require children to wear bright or reflective clothing when bicycling to school).
- Reduce injury by adopting policies mandating migrant worker employers to provide injury prevention training to their employees.

## MENTAL HEALTH

- 77.7% of WEC residents self-rated their mental health as very good or excellent, compared to 74.0% in Ontario.
- 27.6% of WEC residents perceive most days of their lives were quite a bit or extremely stressful, compared to 24.3% in Ontario.

### Recommendations

- Promote positive mental health through policies that support public awareness, advocacy, and educational campaigns to end the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illnesses.
- Promote positive mental health in the workplace through implementation and adherence to the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and other relevant workplace policies that promote work/life balance.
- Promote positive mental health through policies that include yearly management, union, and key stakeholder training to recognize and act upon signs of distress or mental health problems and accommodate needs of employees.
- Promote positive mental health through policies that increase availability and access to treatment for mental illnesses including depression screening, suicide risk assessment, and early intervention for all employees.

To access this Executive Summary and the complete Windsor-Essex County Community Picture report please visit [www.goforhealth.ca](http://www.goforhealth.ca)



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