Leveraging opportunities for public health action to advance health equity
Exploring findings from the 2013 National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health environmental scan

Canadian Public Health Association Conference
Pre-Conference May 26, 2014

Hannah Moffatt
Sume Ndumbe-Eyoh
Connie Clement
The National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health
One of six National Collaborating Centres for Public Health in Canada

Prince George, B.C. | www.nccah.ca
Winnipeg, MB | www.nccid.ca
Antigonish, N.S. | www.nccdh.ca

Vancouver, B.C. | www.ncceh.ca
Hamilton, ON | www.nccmt.ca
Montréal-Québec, QC | www.ncchpp.ca
National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health

Our focus:
• Social determinants of health & health equity

Our audience:
• Practitioners, decision makers, and researchers working in public health
• Organizations in Canada’s public health sector

Our work:
• Translate and share evidence to influence interrelated determinants and advance health equity
Agenda

• Welcome

• Key findings – 2013 NCCDH Environmental Scan
  – Small & large group reflections

• Challenges & opportunities
  – Gallery walk activity

• Implications for action: NCCDH and beyond

• Wrap up & Closing
Objectives

• Support the interpretation of the NCCDH 2013 environmental scan findings

• Apply the environmental scan finding to your public health practice

• Enhance networking while contributing to future NCCDH efforts
Speed Networking

Introduce yourself – who you are & where you are from

In what ways (if any) has public health action to advance health equity changed over the past 3 years?

(Blink don’t think!)
1 idea → 1 action

• Identify an actionable idea you can do in your workplace setting
NCCDH Environmental Scans
Scan objectives

To assess recent change, challenges and opportunities impacting public health action to advance health equity

Methods

Document review (Canadian, published 2010- present)

29 key informant interviews (practitioners, leaders, academics, public health influencers)

4 focus groups (3 English, 1 French)
How has public health action to advance health equity changed?

There is more:

• Momentum - a “health equity buzz”
• Leadership commitment
• Organizational structures, staff, and strategic priorities
• Visible leadership champions
• Research and evidence
• Action from other sectors
How has public health action to advance health equity changed?

*Momentum - a “health equity buzz”*

“It’s an exciting time to be working in the health promotion and health equity field”
How has public health action to advance health equity changed?

**Leadership commitment**

- World Health Organization Commission *Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity Through Action on the Social Determinants of Health*
- Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health

“The inclusion of health equity [in foundational and guidance documents] is moving from the exception to the rule”
How has public health action to advance health equity changed?

Organizational structures

- Health equity strategic plans
- Dedicated health equity staff positions
- Public health standards
How has public health action to advance health equity changed?

Visible leadership champions

- Passionate and courageous leadership identified in local, regional and P/T organizations
- Increased attention to the well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and individuals

"change has occurred where there are strong leadership champions"
How has public health action to advance health equity changed?

Research and evidence

• CIHR-IPPH funding
• PHAC’s Innovation Strategy
• Tools & Resources
  – Equity Lens for Public Health
  – Ontario’s Locally Driven Collaborative Projects
How has public health action to advance health equity changed?

**Action from other sectors**

- Municipalities, non-governmental organizations, community sector, cross-government partnerships, professional associations
  - Different perspectives on issues
  - Opportunities beyond public health programs
  - Access to levers for change in the broader social and economic conditions
Assess and report on:

a) the existence and impact of health inequities, and
b) effective strategies to reduce these inequities.

Lead, support and participate with other organizations in policy analysis and development, and in advocacy for improvement in health determinants and inequities.

Modify and orient interventions and services to reduce inequities, with an understanding of the unique needs of populations that experience marginalization.

Partner with other government and community organizations to identify ways to improve health outcomes for populations that experience marginalization.

Populations experiencing marginalization by virtue of social and economic disadvantage

NCCDH, 2013
Let’s Talk… Public Health Roles for Improving Health Equity
http://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/lets-talk-public-health-roles
Assess and Report

• “Stakeholders only have so much tolerance for our enthusiasm. With data, the opportunities are endless.”

• Increased number of equity-integrated population health status reports
Modify and orient interventions

• “We can’t advocate for other sectors to take a health equity focus if we have not applied the lens to our own health sector programs.”

• Targeted, universal, targeting within universal approaches to public health programs and services
Partner with other sectors

- Ability to advocate “through others”
- Uncovering areas of shared interest
- Building awareness with the “whole of government”
- Engaging marginalized members of our communities
- Yet, silos, protected budgets
Participate in policy development

• Engaging in effective advocacy

• Working upstream and using policy interventions

• Using tools, e.g., Health Impact Assessment
Small group discussion

- How has this change been reflected in your work?
Challenges: 2014 Scan

- Translating interest and commitment into action
- ‘Leveling up’ capacity
- Skills and competencies: (assessment & surveillance, research & evaluation, policy analysis & advocacy, community engagement)
- Building understanding of public health and health equity terms
- Communicating health equity ideas beyond the public health sector
- Measuring impact
Translating interest and commitment into action

• Need to prevent the “de-energizing” of health equity objectives

• Barriers presented by organizational structured, limited organizational “agility”
‘Leveling up’ capacity

• The greatest advancement in health equity capacity may have occurred among “early adopters”

• Learning from experience - successes and challenges

• Few partnerships across the health sector (e.g., acute, primary care)

• Competing priorities
Skills and competencies

• Assessment & surveillance
• Research & evaluation
• Policy analysis & advocacy
• Community engagement
Building understanding of public health and health equity terms

• Blurring of language & concepts
  – Health equity action; Health promotion; Population health; Public health
  – Vulnerable populations, priority populations
  – Targeted, tailored, universal, targeting with universalism

“We need to be better at communicating [the concept of] raising the bar and closing the gap.”
Communicating health equity ideas beyond the public health sector

- Framing of messages suggested to have a significant impact on activities & focus

- Generating messages to resonate with other partners and sectors required
Measuring impact

• More and multiple types of evidence required to guide action

• Data, skills required to effectively assess health inequities
Opportunities: 2014 Scan

- Strengthen networks and sharing lessons learned
- Align common health equity priorities
- Engage other sectors and partners
- Further promote and apply the key roles for public health
Strengthen networks and sharing lessons learned

• Opportunities to learn and share across the country

• Communities of practice
Align common health equity priorities

- Desire for coordinated efforts, common priorities
- Maintain flexibility and responsive local action
- Reinforce actions within context of broader efforts
Engage other sectors and partners

- Creative local and regional examples of intersectoral action

- Health lens to non-health priorities

- Engage others to achieve health priorities
Further promote and apply the key roles for public health
Activity - Gallery Walk

1) Limited public health skills and competencies (e.g., advocacy, health assessment, evaluation) for SDH & health equity

2) Shortage of SDH and health equity partnerships across the health sector (e.g., acute, primary care, competing priorities)

3) Communicating “health equity” that resonates w/ the public and other sectors

4) Working intersectorally w/ well established silos and protected budgets

5) Few examples of “glorious failures” – how can we share successes and challenges across jurisdictions?
Implications for action: NCCDH and beyond

• Harness existing health equity momentum
• Profile and support leadership commitments
• Engage other sectors in health equity action
Implications for action: NCCDH and beyond

• Target knowledge brokering to meet identified gaps in capacity, skills and competencies

• Clarify health equity terms and concepts
Implications for action: NCCDH and beyond

• Link and coordinate public health action
• Facilitate difficult conversations
Meeting the needs of different audiences

- Practitioners request tools to guide practice
- Leaders suggest need for evidence that includes economic case at all levels
- Researchers emphasize knowledge brokering
Feedback to the NCCDH

• What do you think?
Imagine a future in which public health is working optimally to advance health equity.

What does that future look like to you?

- “Health equity is the core that drives everything that is done”
- “We have evidence and can package it in ways community understands.”
- “Staff all speak confidently and in an influential way about health equity.”
- “We all share the same understanding and values.”
Identifying actionable ideas

• One card per person
• Write clearly: “1 idea → 1 action”
• No name on index cards
• 5 rounds of scoring 1 to 5
Thank you

- Thank you for completing the evaluation!