

Information and Informed Consent Form

Date: December 1, 2022

Study Name: Still Swimming Against the Tide?: A follow-up study to explore Ontario-based Social Determinants of Health Public Health Nurses' (SDH-PHNs') Experiences in Role Enactment.

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled **Still Swimming Against the Tide?** This study exploring the role of the Social Determinants of Health (SDH) Public Health Nurse is being undertaken by nursing researchers from York University and St. Francis Xavier Schools of Nursing: Dr. Cheryl van Daalen-Smith (Co-Principal Investigator), Dr. Judith MacDonnell (Co-Principal Investigator), Dr. Elizabeth McGibbon (Co-Investigator), Dr. Danielle MacDonald (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health (NCCDH); Co-investigator) and Dr. Claire Betker (Co-Investigator), who also brings support through her role as the Scientific Director of the NCCDH. Collectively, we bring significant experience in practice and education focused on public health nursing, equity, and policy. We are aiming to create a welcoming space for diverse SDH-PHNs to share their insights and experiences about the SDH-PHN role.

Researchers

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Purpose of the study

The Social Determinants of Health Public Health Nursing (SDH-PHN) role was launched in Ontario health units in 2012 to support health equity goals. A study completed in 2015 supported by the NCCDH examined the development and implementation of the SDH-PHN role. In their findings, McPherson, Ndumbe-Eyoh, Betker, Oickle and Peroff-Johnston (2016) described SDH-PHN leadership and factors influencing implementation of the SDH-PHN role, characterizing the nature of that role as "Swimming Against the Tide".

The environment for SDH-PHNs since 2015 has changed considerably. **The purpose of this follow-up study** is to explore the enactment of the SDH-PHN role in Ontario since 2015 through the lived experiences of SDH-PHNs themselves and informed further by senior nursing leadership with public health units (PHUs) in Ontario.

The research questions are:

1. Since 2015, what activities and strategies have SDH-PHNs been engaged in?
2. What supports and challenges to the enactment of the SDH-PHN role are identified by SDH-PHNs?

3. What roles do senior leadership, organizational culture and context play in the enactment of the SDH-PHN role and a public health unit's (PHU's) capacity to support the role?
4. Is there an impact of structurally embedded workplace inequities (e.g., devaluing of nurses' expertise and opinions, disempowerment, lack of structures through which to influence decision-making) on health inequity priorities and on the enactment of the SDH-PHN role?
5. From their perspective, to what degree do the activities of SDH-PHNs influence their respective organization's capacity to address health equity action?
6. In what ways has the global pandemic of COVID-19 affected the work of the SDH-PHN?

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research

1) SDH-PHNs who have been/were formerly in the role since 2015 will be invited to complete a **confidential online survey**. The survey will take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete.

Participants will be provided a link to the survey. Participants are not required to provide identifying details such as their name, email address or public health unit. Their survey responses, including name, email address or public health unit will be held in confidence and made available only to the Research Coordinator who is affiliated with NCCDH/StFX (NCCDH RC) and providing study coordination support. Name/email, if provided, will be removed from the survey data that is shared with the rest of the research team who will be analyzing the survey data and it will be stored separately and securely from other survey data. No code will be kept that could allow future re-linkage. Participants will have lots of opportunity to share their perspectives on the SDH-PHN role but can opt out of answering any question.

The survey will be open for 3 months. Detailed study information and a survey consent form are provided to participants at the beginning of the survey. Participants who consent to participate will have access to the survey. A link to that information/consent form will be provided in the footer of each survey page for participant reference.

Participants can log onto the survey and review all questions prior to starting to complete it. Responses are saved once participants move to the next page. If participants stay on the same device and keep the browser open, they may take as long as they need to complete the survey. However, although participants can access the survey at any time during the designated time period, once they start the survey participants will not be able to re-enter the survey at a later time without starting over since the data they inputted previously will not have been saved. Therefore, it is recommended they set aside the time to do it all in one sitting and choose their device with that in mind. Data that has been entered, even if the survey has not completed will be recorded and analyzed. Participants who wish their data removed can withdraw from the survey up until the final date that it is available by contacting the NCCDH RC.

The researcher(s) acknowledge that the host of the online survey (e.g., Qualtrics) may automatically collect participant data without their knowledge (i.e., IP addresses.) Although this information may be provided or made accessible to the researchers, it will not be used or saved without participant's consent on the researchers' system. Further, because this project employs e-based collection techniques, data may be subject to access by third parties as a result of various security legislation now in place in many countries and thus the confidentiality and privacy of data cannot be guaranteed during web-based transmission.

Be sure to submit your completed survey before **February 28, 2023**.

The study **also involves an optional follow up focus group** with current/former SDH-PHNs who completed the survey. The purpose of that focus group is to discuss emerging study findings and strategies to move forward. To receive information on that optional confidential focus group from the NCCDH RC, survey participants have the option of providing their name and email in the space provided in the survey. Any contact information entered here will also be kept in strict confidence. Please note that completion of a separate focus group consent form is required to participate in the SDH-PHN focus group.

The study findings will be reported in a way that do not identify individuals or public health units. All responses will be saved on a secure university server and password-protected devices.

Please note: Current or former SDH-PHNs who are interested in participating in this study may be enrolled in graduate programs where they are taught or supervised by nursing faculty at York University or StFX University who are also research team members. If nursing research team members hold roles as both educators/supervisors and researchers in this study, that could put them in potential or actual conflict of interest for some student SDH-PHNs who will have an opportunity to participate in this research. In the interests of ensuring that all current/former SDH-PHNs can decide freely whether to participate or not, a contact at each of York University and StFX University, Drs. van Daalen-Smith and McGibbon, respectively, listed on the bottom of the informed consent form, will be available to answer study questions for interested SDH-PHNs at any point in the study. SDH-PHNs who are interested in participating in a follow-up Zoom focus group will have the option to participate in one of two focus groups. They will have full knowledge of who is facilitating the **focus group and a choice to participate in one** facilitated by either York University faculty, Drs. Van-Daalen-Smith/ MacDonnell or by StFX University faculty, Drs. McGibbon/Betker.

We ask that any eligible SDH-PHNs who are also enrolled in a graduate program at either York or StFX University communicate with the study contact at the institution where they are not enrolled and if they are interested in participating in a focus group, opt for the one facilitated by nursing research faculty members at that other institution. The focus group facilitator/s will request that focus group participants keep confidential any conversation shared in the focus group including participants' names or public health unit. The NCCDH RC, who is affiliated with NCCDH/StFX, but has no relationship with any SDH-PHNs, will ensure that any reference to name/email/public health unit is removed from the written transcription. They will securely store SDH-PHNs' name/email separately from data that is shared with the whole study team for analysis. In this way, any nursing faculty member who holds dual roles as researcher and educator/supervisor with a given SDH-PHN who is also a student, will not be made aware of their decision to participate or not in the study or focus group. There will be no negative impact of their decision to participate or not participate in or withdraw from the study on their grades or their relationship with the relevant professor/s.

2) At the end of the survey, SDH-PHNs will be invited to participate in an optional focus group to be scheduled at a later date to discuss emerging study findings. It will held via Zoom conferencing technology, audio-recorded and facilitated by research team members. In that focus group, findings from a recent confidential survey with SDH-PHNs about factors that

supported and created barriers for the SDH-PHN role and anonymized findings from recent interviews with interested Chief Nursing Officers from Ontario public health units will be presented in a way that do not identify survey or interview participants or their health units. The goal of that optional focus group is to discuss and identify strategies and solutions that will support the SDH-PHN role.

Risks and Discomforts

Participants may be concerned about potential workplace or career risks related to disclosure of sensitive information. Given this, in the confidential survey, we will ask participants not to disclose the name of their public health unit and we will report the findings in a way that will not identify public health units or participants. We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You

There are no known benefits from participating in this research. Participants may benefit indirectly by contributing to the knowledge about this public health nursing role. This research can potentially enhance the recognition of PHN leadership in relation to health equity strategies and supports for SDH-PHNs in that role.