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Our Mission

Promote the inclusion of activities to address the social determinants of health within the mandate of local Public Health units

Advocate provincially and nationally for reducing health inequities

Present one Ontario Public Health voice on issues related to the social determinants of health

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Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

In December 2008, Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, "*Breaking the Cycle*", was released. This report is available at www.growingstronger.ca. The Joint Work Group on the Social Determinants of Health provided input into this strategy by making several recommendations.

Highlights of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy:

- An aggressive target of reducing the number of children living in poverty by 25% over 5 years
- A commitment to tracking and publically reporting on a series of measures designed to steer policy-making over the long-term
- An increase to the Ontario Child Benefit
- Increased investment in education and early learning
- A set of initiatives designed to foster positive local initiatives
- A commitment to review social assistance with the goal of removing barriers and increasing opportunity
- Plans to introduce legislation to solidify Ontario's long-term commitment to poverty reduction
- An collective effort from all levels of government, the private and non-profit sectors and citizens across the province

Bill 152, the Poverty Reduction Act, 2009

- The proposed Poverty Reduction Act, 2009 will meet one of the commitments in the Poverty Reduction Strategy: legislation to solidify Ontario's long-term commitment to poverty reduction
- The proposed Act would require our current and future governments to:
 - Maintain a meaningful and measurable long-term poverty strategy
 - Annually report on the strategy
 - Consult key stakeholders, including low-income individuals, before developing new strategies

Poverty prevention resources & links:

[Growing Stronger Together - Ontario Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#)

[Campaign 2000](#)

[Campaign 2000 - Ontario](#)

- [Poverty Reduction Plan for Ontario - What Actions Can You Take?](#)
- [The Road Ahead: Poverty Reduction in Ontario](#)

[Poverty Watch Ontario](#)

[Income Security Advocacy Centre \(ISARC\)](#)

- [The Transition Child Benefit - Factsheet](#)

[Why Is It So Tough to Get Ahead \(John Stapleton\)](#)

[Anti-Poverty Strategies in Canada and Elsewhere \(Canadian Social Research Links\)](#)

[National Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology - report on poverty, June 2008](#)

[Poverty Quiz – Test your knowledge about family poverty in Canada](#)

Put Food in the Budget Campaign

The 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction, in partnership with the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA), launched an Ontario-wide campaign for a Healthy Food Supplement. The proposed \$100 Healthy Food Supplement represents a first step towards income adequacy among social assistance recipients. The \$100 healthy food supplement was not announced in the recent budget. Access to adequate food, however, remains an essential prerequisite to population health. It is important that public health continue, with their partners at the Social Planning Network of Ontario and 25 in 5 to raise awareness of the linkages and causal pathways among income, access to food and health. For more information, visit <http://povertywatchontario.ca/put-food-in-the-budget/>.

Current Activities

Disaggregating the Data

Disaggregating data by socio-economic indicators in health status reports can be a useful in identifying priority populations. Toronto Public Health released "*The Unequal City: Income and Health Inequalities in Toronto*" in October 2008; this report disaggregated data to investigate the distribution of health outcomes and risk factors by income groupings. From an epidemiological perspective, disaggregating data by income poses methodological and statistical challenges, particularly in regards to sample size.

In November 2008, Dianne Patychuk and Daniela Seskar-Hencic collaborated to develop a set of resources that are in line with the new Ontario Public Health Standards. These resources provide ideas, steps and examples to support individuals and organizations working for equity in health in Ontario. These resources include:

- *First Steps to Equity: Your Guide to Equity-based Program Planning* ([www.opha.on.ca/resources/docs/First Steps to Health Equity-2008-2010.pdf](http://www.opha.on.ca/resources/docs/First_Steps_to_Health_Equity-2008-2010.pdf))
- *Putting it All Together for Health Equity* ([http://www.opha.on.ca/resources/docs/Putting it all Together for Health Equity-Slides.pps](http://www.opha.on.ca/resources/docs/Putting_it_all_Together_for_Health_Equity-Slides.pps))

This group is planning on further work to follow-up on these initial resources and invites other interested individuals and/or organizations to join them. If you're interested, please contact Daniela Seskar-Hencic at sdaniela@region.waterloo.on.ca.

Local Application of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

In an effort to identify how Ontario's public health units can apply Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy at a local level, we are undertaking an exercise to map local public health activities to policies, programs and services that are consistent with the recommendations in the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Our goal is to provide health units with concrete actions to support the Poverty Reduction Strategy at a local level.

As a first step we are inviting individuals from the public health community to contribute by providing suggestions and/or participating in a smaller workgroup. If you are interested, please contact Theresa Schumilas, Work Group Chair, via email at stheresa@region.waterloo.on.ca.