



Municipalities and Counties Influencing Health

Together, we build healthy communities



“A Healthy Community...

provides all people with the ability to make choices in a community that offers opportunities for access to: affordable housing, transportation, healthy and nutritious foods, recreation, education and employment, medical and social services, clean air & water and a safe environment within an inclusive and socially cohesive atmosphere”

Individual and community health is affected by the environments in which we live, work, play, and learn. To create a healthy community, residents, municipalities, organizations, and businesses must work together to make changes to our environment.

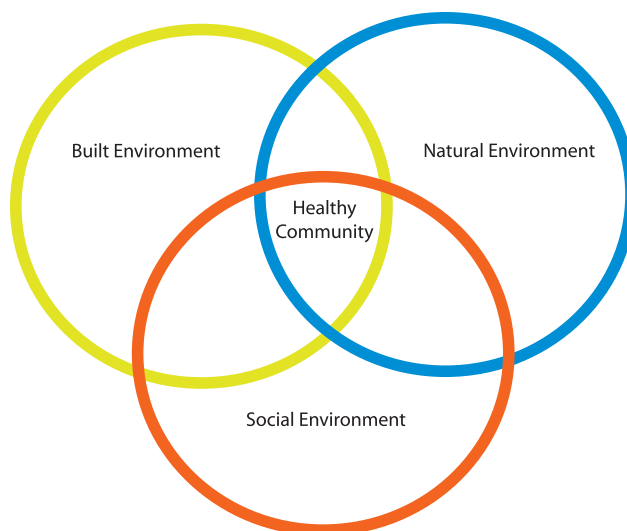
The **Built Environment** refers to our human-made surroundings, including buildings, structures, landscaping, roads, trails, parks and utilities.

The **Social Environment** refers to the culture that an individual lives in and the people that an individual interacts with.

The **Natural Environment** encompasses things occurring naturally on Earth, including the air we breathe and the water we drink.

Municipal decision makers are in a unique position to impact health as they advocate for and influence the design and delivery of community structures, policies, programs and services.

Municipalities and Counties, in partnership with Public Health, can positively affect the health of our residents. Public Health encourages both counties and each municipality to discuss key health issues affecting our community and find solutions that work for our unique communities.



Some key health issues in Grey Bruce are:

- Cardiovascular disease and cancer are preventable and yet are the leading causes of death in Grey Bruce residents
- 61% of Grey Bruce adults are overweight or obese (CCHS, 2013-14)
- 58.6% of Grey Bruce residents aged 12 and older are physically active (CCHS, 2013-14)
- 37% of children watch 15 hours or more of television each week
- Motorized vehicle crashes are the number one preventable cause of injury and death among children and youth in Grey Bruce
- The rate of falls in Grey Bruce is nearly double the provincial rate
- 22.4% of those aged 12 and older who drank were regular heavy drinkers (CCHS, 2013-14)
- 22% of adults currently smoke
- Over 3000 families in Grey and Bruce are considered low income

These health issues incur huge costs to our provincial health system, which results in less money being directed to support municipal programs. Currently, health care costs account for 46 cents of each provincial government dollar. This number is expected to rise to 70 cents by 2022. Health promotion programs are cost effective and often show a positive return on investment.

How can Public Health, Municipalities and Counties work together for the health of Grey Bruce residents?

Public Health professionals are available to work in partnership with council, staff and committees, along with other community organizations, on key health issues. The following pages list some ideas on how Public Health and municipalities can begin to work together to create healthier communities. Public Health would be delighted to hear your ideas. Call us at 519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 and ask to speak with your community's Public Health liaison.

1 Establish and strengthen connections

- Establish staff liaisons between Public Health and Municipalities/Counties
- Develop mutual awareness of organizational mandates, strategic directions, governance and decision making processes
- Identify and work together on mutually beneficial priorities and strategies
- Participate on committees to provide feedback and evidence related to potential health impacts
- Identify potential links between organizations that could support positive health outcomes
- Create links between municipal, county and public health web sites



2 Integrate health policies into community planning

A growing amount of research confirms that the way a community is designed affects the long term health of the residents who live and work in that community. Public Health is working to promote planning policies that take into account active and alternative transportation, access to healthy and affordable food, childcare, and recreational opportunities, while creating neighborhoods that are welcoming and safe.

Public Health professionals are available to comment on a variety of plans and to work with municipalities and counties to achieve the healthiest communities possible.

Public Health would like to comment on the following Plans:

- 5 year Official Plans
- Secondary Official Plans
- Strategic Plans
- Master Plans
- Comprehensive Zoning Bylaws
- Large commercial/institutional type development
- Plans of sub-division/condominiums
- Road re-construction
- Other applications upon the municipality's request

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Ideas for healthy community initiatives

"Health in All Policies is an approach to public policies across sectors that systematically takes into account the health implications of decisions, seeks synergies, and avoids harmful health impacts, in order to improve population health and health equity." (WHO, 2013)

There are a variety of ways that Public Health and Municipalities can collaborate to support a healthier community. The following are a few examples of healthy community development that can be addressed:

Community Planning

Planning Applications

- The Health Unit and other community stakeholders are circulated on planning applications to ensure health is considered during new developments
- Include external partners in the official plan review process

Improve options for active and alternative transportation

- Incorporate "Complete Streets" concepts during road construction and re-construction
- Plan and map safe routes to schools and other key destinations
- Review county and municipal transportation plans for health and social impacts
- Design road networks that are safe, connected and integrated

Use community assessments to facilitate an inclusive community

- PLAY-Friendly
- Age-Friendly
- Youth Friendly

Safety and Injury Prevention

- Improve shade availability in community spaces in order to provide protection from the sun
- Provide education to the community about recreational water safety
- Connect new businesses to Public Health for information on regulations within the Health Promotion and Protection Act
- Develop concussion policies that ensure a safe return to play for participants

Healthy Weights

- Improve options for healthy food in recreation centers & vending machines
- Implement policies that increase access to participation in recreation
- Endorse the Breastfeeding Friendly Toolkit

Substance Use

- Create a culture of moderate alcohol use by limiting alcohol outlet density and strengthening municipal alcohol policies
- Encourage developers and builders to implement smoke free policies in multi-unit dwellings



For more information, contact Public Health
519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456
Facebook Page: Grey Bruce Health Unit

www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca
Twitter: GBPublicHealth