



An initiative of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto, in collaboration with the Centre for Research on Inner City Health (CRICH) at St Michael's Hospital, with numerous community partners.

Healthier Cities & Communities Symposium Report

OCTOBER 23-24, Li Ka Shing Institute

Toronto, 2013

A Vibrant Start

A packed house and palpable buzz an auspicious start for the launch of the new Hub @ DLSPH

The Symposium marked the launch of a new initiative in Healthier Cities & Communities within the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University, in collaboration with the Centre for Research in Inner City Health (SMH) and numerous and growing list of community partners. Read more about the symposium in the pages that follow and online at <http://healthiercitysymposium2013.wordpress.com>

We take this opportunity to thank the 2 student RAs who contributed so substantially to this effort (Rebecca Cheff, DLSPH, and Samantha Cochrane, OISE), as well as numerous volunteers and the following HCC Symposium Steering / Planning Committee members: Sudha Sabanadesan (TPH), Renee Lyons (Bridgepoint), Bob Gardner (Wellesley Institute), Maritt Kirst (OTRU/CRICH), and Morgan Lay (DLSPH).

The illustrations in this report come from environmental facilitator/evaluator and graphic recorder Charlotte Young who was on hand for the entire day Thursday, Oct.24. <http://www.envision-synergy.net/>. Suzanne Jackson & Catherine Mah offered insightful reflections on the day as rapporteurs. Thank-you!!

We extend appreciation also to Howard Hu, inaugural Dean of the DLSPH, for his support of this initiative

Pat O'Campo & Blake Poland, HCC co-leads



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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Keynote Highlights

One of the founding fathers of the healthy cities movement worldwide, Dr. Trevor Hancock, a public health physician, and Professor/Senior Scholar at the School of Public Health and Social Policy at the University of Victoria, gave our opening Keynote address. Here are a few highlights:

“A healthy city is one that is continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing to their maximum potential.” Hancock & Duhl, 1986

The history of healthy cities: a local and global perspective, from the Health of Towns Commission (UK, 1843) to Dr Charles Hastings (Toronto Medical Officer of Health, 1910-1929) to the emergence of the Healthy Cities movement at WHO to Healthy Toronto 2000 to the present. Toronto was named “The healthiest of large cities” by MacLean’s Magazine in 1915. **Healthy Toronto 2000** was innovative on many fronts and resulted in the establishment of a Healthy City office and Food Policy Council.

3 Challenges to Health of Cities in the 21st Century...

1. Rising inequity in access to major determinants of health.
2. Declining ecosystem health, hitting marginalized groups the hardest.
3. The need for healthy urban governance - putting citizen wellbeing (rather than the economy) at the centre of planning and decision making.

Trevor shared some thoughts on the direction for the School of Public Health and a need for a focus on Equity; Sustainability; and Governance. His suggestions included a potential joint MPH and MUP. He called for a greater emphasis on process in evaluation research as well as a need to develop partnerships.

Dr David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health, Toronto Public Health, was our discussant.



Symposium by the Numbers

1.25 days

>150 attendees

1 keynote & 1 opening panel

18 concurrent breakout sessions

40 presentations/workshops

80 presenters

9 posters

30 organizations represented

7 institutions of higher learning

Photo above: David McKeown & Trevor Hancock. Courtesy of Charles-Antoine Rouyer



HCC Symposium in the News

Read French? Check out coverage of the Healthier Cities & Communities Symposium in the GTA francophone news service “L’Express”, written and submitted by Charles-Antoine Rouyer.

Here is the link to the full article:

<http://www.lexpress.to/archives/13311/>

Opening Panel

For our opening panel on Thursday morning, 4 dynamic individuals, each leaders in their respective fields, were invited to share their thoughts and insights on 3 key questions:

1. what builds healthier communities?
2. what inspiring example do you want to share from your own work?
3. what key burning questions remain for you about building healthier communities that could animate discussion amongst participants and catalyze future work in the Healthier Cities & Communities hub?



Panelist	Q1: What Builds Healthier Communities?	Q2: Inspiring Examples	Q3: What Burning Questions Remain?
Dr David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health, Toronto Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good information about determinants of health, accessible to all stakeholders at a scale that makes sense to people • effective local governance • an engaged community that is organized, has the capacity to engage and process to do so, can influence decisions 	<p>Apartment Neighbourhoods project in the inner suburbs, as a collaboration of several agencies & city departments to remove barriers to health in city planning/policies.</p>	Evolution of our transit/transportation system (access, active transportation) – in the midst of a once-in-a-generation public conversation
Dr Jim Dunn Associate Professor, Department of Health, Aging & Society, McMaster University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equity of incomes & property • social production of urban health inequities – how inequities created & sustained socially • land & housing markets amplify inequities 	<p>Current Regent Park redevelopment</p> <p>Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Strategy of the city of Hamilton</p>	How to create a framework of understanding about how urban health inequities are created and sustained that can be understood & embraced by elites?
Axelle Janczur Executive Director, Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services	<p>What frameworks are we using to understand and measure community health? Need to use something like the Canadian Index of Well-being.</p>	Community hubs focused in high need areas – multiple services under one roof, space for community use, synergy as a result of working together.	How to manage with the reality of being expected to do more with less? Building sense of community & belonging – what are indicators?
Lorna McCue Executive Director, Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (shared) values (Healthy Communities is a value-based movement) • relationships (authentic, longstanding) • knowledge • engagement 	<p>Haliburton Communities in Action</p> <p>Chatham-Kent: the Healthy Communities Partnership and the Community Leaders' Cabinet</p>	Who is involved and who is missing? How to change the perception of Healthy Communities as a movement for the middle class?

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

Following the opening panel, most of Thursday comprised 5 waves of concurrent breakout sessions. Eighty (80) presenters from academia, public health, and a wide range of community-based organizations, NGOs and groups animated (40) presentations and workshops, varying in length from 10-60 minutes each, exploring issues of practice, measurement, and theory.

Sessions were grouped by topic as follows: Aboriginal health / Active transportation / Built environment / Collaboration / Education / Environment and health / Food / Healthy public policy / Injection Drug Users / Neighbourhoods / Neighbourhood indicators / Social environment / Spatial inequalities and methods / Welcoming & age-friendly communities

Presenters and attendees delved into solution-focused responses to building healthier cities and communities. Presenters discussed the importance of meaningful community engagement. They shared initiatives that orient to the design of healthy environments in terms of evidence-based community planning, food systems, built environment, and affordable and active transportation. In exploring the research that supports healthy initiatives, presenters discussed methods of community partnership, sampling, measurement, and analysis that are being used to evaluate healthy cities, neighbourhoods, and communities, and to assess impacts on social and health equity. Collaboration and equity were key cross-cutting themes, as well as data/knowledge/information (issues of measurement, data quality & accessibility, evaluation, best practices, and . In her closing remarks as one of the rapporteurs for the day, Suzanne Jackson (DLSPH & Director, WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promotion) noted that many presentations focused either on specific populations or issues, or at the macro level. She identified the need to better connect micro and macro in order to effectively build healthier cities and communities in the months and years ahead.

What Participants Told Us

We conducted an online survey of participants after the symposium. This is some of what they told us:

Thank you for organizing a dynamic and important gathering. The mix of presenters and participants was very rich... I was not the only one who felt it to be a very worthwhile day.

I am pleased that there is a resurgence of interest and action in support of Healthy Cities, which seems to have waned in past years. There is a need... to make the "hub" idea inclusive of academic, public-sector, NGO, private-sector and un-affiliated representatives ("just folks"...) for it to be effective.

What I appreciated most about the day was:

Solutions oriented focus

Everyone who came. The thrilling energy of all the participants and presenters.

Learning about some great initiatives and networking with those involved in them.

It was a great opportunity to bring together academics and direct service agencies which is not something I often get the chance to do in Toronto

Re-energizing the Healthy City/Communities movement



Next Steps

Here is what we are planning next:

- expand & redefine mandate, role & composition of Steering Committee
- further outreach & engagement
- formation of 'constellations'
- healthier cities theme in upcoming global health conference (2014)
- graduate course on Healthier Cities & Communities (Winter 2014)
- strategic plan



About the Healthier Cities & Communities Hub

The emerging thematic area of concentration of Healthier Cities/Communities at the DLSPH encompasses education, research, knowledge translation, and service activities focused on informing, designing and evaluating solutions for complex urban problems impacting population health.

We seek to consolidate and build on considerable initiatives already underway at University of Toronto and with existing and additional partners on healthy communities locally, provincially, nationally and internationally. Students are integral to this initiative.

Given rapid urbanization around the world and our location in one of Canada's largest and most diverse cities, our focus on urban/suburban health equity will bridge to related work on rural-urban linkages and rural community health, in the far north, in aboriginal communities, and in the global South.

Our **values** and skills include Human Rights, Equity and Social Justice; Participation and Partnerships; Sustainability; Innovation and Leadership.

In addition to penetrating analyses of pressing problems, this initiative will be solutions-focused, meaning we go beyond describing health inequities and determinants to undertake research that generates evidence useful for intervening to improve health, recognizing both proximal and 'upstream' macrosocial drivers of health inequity, as well as promising levers of change, and attending to issues of theory, practice and context, meaningful stakeholder & community participation, and the social relations of knowledge production and consumption.

Given the broad potential scope of 'healthier cities & communities', a **constellation model** approach to catalyzing collaboration and new initiatives provides a flexible structure for people to coalesce around key issues of mutual interest in a way that is driven by the interests, priorities and energy of participating members, and has been used successfully by several national networks and groups.

This **Symposium was an opening conversation** with you about how this initiative will be shaped and framed as we move forward, to build on the best of what we have to offer, to work together with a common vision, and be responsive to your needs and the pressing burning questions of our time as it relates to building healthier cities & communities

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