BUILDING PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP FOR HEALTH EQUITY: WHAT CONTRIBUTES?

METHOD
Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 public health leaders from across Canada using an appreciative inquiry method. Key informants identified factors or conditions that influenced effective public health leadership to address social determinants of health and health equity. Responses were analyzed and coded thematically using grounded theory method.

FINDINGS
Three overall themes of contributing factors emerged: organizational supports, bridging organizational activities with community actions, and professional competencies.

Organizational supports
- Explicit commitment from formal leaders
- Allocate budget to smaller agencies, research and staff
- Human resources, policies, and strategies that support health equity activities
- High-quality population level data on health equity and the social determinants of health
- Contribute to and adhere to external policies and standards on health equity

Bridging organizational activities with community action
- Participate in and acceptance of public health’s role in community action
- Partner and engage with health equity champions, community organizations, and agencies that share health equity values

Professional competencies
- Ensure essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to advocate for health equity

CONCLUSIONS
- Leadership capacity in Canada exists, but more can be done.
- Leadership competencies of public health professionals in the area of social determinants of health and health equity need to be expanded.
- Policy and theoretical frameworks are important to ensure financial and human resources to create energy and commitment for this work.
- Organizational and individual values drive a social justice agenda.
- Passion and moral belief motivate effective organizational and individual public health leadership for health equity.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED
This project contributed to the evidence base on public health leadership for health equity. The results will be used to identify and foster those factors in organizations that support effective leadership for health equity, provide examples of successful leadership activities, and describe the role of public health leadership in building community partnerships for action.

REFERENCES

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Download the key messages, summary and full document and find out more about our leadership initiatives at www.nccdh.ca. This information is also available in French at ccsdh.ca.