

My Health, My Community:

Web-based Platform for Community Engagement on Health and Wellness

Mission:

To improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

Vision:

Communities of engaged individuals who provide a local level perspective on health and wellness.

Values:

Encouraging and supporting shared responsibility with the people we serve in their own care and in the improvement of our services, and fostering respectful collaboration among our communities.

Background:

Improving public health and wellbeing and developing sustainable services will be a key contribution to meeting the challenges to the public finances. It will require ambitious programmes to improve public health through strengthening local action, supporting self-efficacy and behavioural changes, promoting healthy choices and creating environments to support healthier lives.

Partnerships with local governments and community stakeholders are critical to creating the powerful coalitions we need to promote health and wellbeing. These coalitions can provide a community level population focus that will be able to shape community services and amenities to meet local needs, influence the wider social determinants of health and tackle health inequalities.

In order to appropriately develop, implement and evaluate local level programs and policies, an accurate understanding of community health status, needs and wellbeing is crucial. While national or provincial surveys may provide these data at larger geographical levels, and health service utilization statistics may illustrate one aspect of community health needs, there remains a clear gap in comprehensive, relevant and representative local level health and wellness information.

This initiative aims to develop an interactive web-based platform for the local level collection of data on health, lifestyle, environment and community characteristics. Using online tools to engage community members, participants will be encouraged to provide information about their health status and lifestyle choices, to establish a baseline and longitudinally to track over time. Individual responses will trigger real-time feedback to support their health needs including a tailored report highlighting relevant resources and summarizing community-level health statistics. As a result participants will have the tools to support their self-management to lead healthier lives, while data will inform planning decisions and impact policy development at a local level.

The scope of the online platform content will be flexible to meet changing needs and priorities that are identified and agreed by the Stakeholder Advisory Council. The online component will also be supplemented with strategic field surveys, such as the recently completed Healthy Richmond field pilot, to ensure representative community level data.

This initiative aligns with a number of current municipal and provincial health strategies. For example, the Richmond Community Wellness Strategy represents a partnership between local government, community organisations and health to encourage healthy living and community involvement in the City of Richmond. Additionally, Healthy Families BC is a provincial initiative aimed at improving the health status of residents of BC. Furthermore, it is increasingly evident that intersectoral collaboration on the built environment, community resources and workplace wellness are all areas of mutual interest. Therefore, information collected through this population based web platform will be instrumental in the further development and evaluation of initiatives across many sectors.