

# Healthy Families BC Communities

EVALUATION PROGRESS REPORT 2014/15



## HFBC-C Works Through Five Core Components:

### PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Enhancing partnerships between the health sector and local governments so they can develop evidence-based solutions.

### CAPACITY BUILDING



Providing stakeholders with knowledge exchange resources and opportunities that build capacity to create healthier communities.

### EXPERTISE & SUPPORT



Facilitating opportunities for leveraging the health sector's knowledge in chronic disease prevention along with the expertise of local governments in implementing policies and programs.

### TOOLS & RESOURCES



Developing tools and resources based on community needs so stakeholders can more effectively assess, plan, implement and evaluate healthy community actions.

### RECOGNITION & CELEBRATION



Raising awareness by providing opportunities for community recognition and celebration.

## Inspiring Action for Healthy Communities

Healthy Families BC Communities (HFBC-C), launched in 2011, is a key initiative of the Province's health promotion strategy. With a focus on fostering community wellness, it helps build stronger partnerships between the health sector and local governments, so that communities can support lifestyle behaviours that improve health and reduce chronic disease risk.

### Areas of Focus include:

Physical Activity • Healthy Eating • Reducing Tobacco Use  
Healthy Built Environments • Serving Priority Populations

*HFBC-C emphasizes collaboration, planning, and the implementation of policies and programs that inspire actions to help create healthy communities.*



## Evaluation

To assess the implementation, effectiveness and efficiency of HFBC-C, the initiative is being evaluated in a three-year cycle. This report highlights the evaluation work done in the second year of the cycle between April 2014 and March 2015 and progress since the beginning of the initiative.

The evaluation included a review of reports and administrative data from health authorities and other partners. Online surveys were completed by staff from the regional health authorities (190 respondents) and staff and elected officials from local governments (217 respondents).\*

*\* Results reflect the aggregate views of those who completed the surveys, and are not meant to reflect the overall views of health authorities or local governments. Since the proportion of total completions for each health authority region was not equal, caution should also be taken when interpreting data at the provincial level.*

## PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



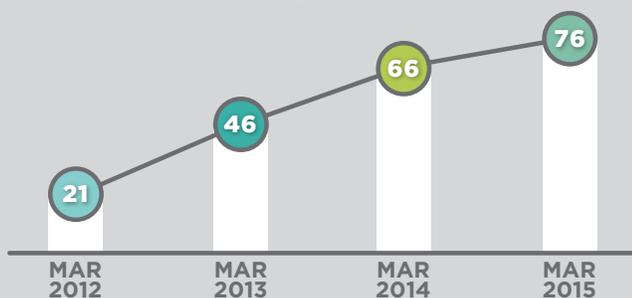
Health authorities across the province collaborate with local governments, First Nations and Aboriginal communities in their regions. HFBC-C builds on existing relationships and develops new ones with an emphasis on creating formal partnership agreements between health authorities and local governments. The BC Healthy Communities Society and the Union of BC Municipalities are actively engaged in supporting this aspect of the initiative.

Examples of partnership agreements include council resolutions, collaboration agreements or committee terms of reference.

A majority of survey respondents from health authorities, and approximately half from local governments felt that their partnerships had been strengthened in the last year, and that these partnerships had increased coordination of healthy community policies and actions.

Healthy Living Strategic Plans (HLSPs) between local governments and health authorities build on partnership agreements. They focus on periods of one to five years and document the collaborative planning and actions on agreed upon priorities.

### Number of Communities Implementing Healthy Living Strategic Plans



92 incorporated municipalities, four regional districts and two unincorporated municipalities have partnership agreements with health authorities.

Of the incorporated municipalities, partnership agreements are now in place with...

32% OF RURAL/REMOTE COMMUNITIES

68% OF LARGE COMMUNITIES

60% OF SMALL COMMUNITIES

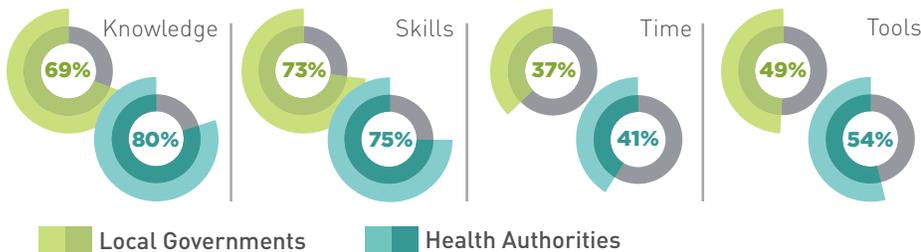
83% OF MEDIUM COMMUNITIES

## CAPACITY BUILDING



Health authorities and local governments require the knowledge, skills, tools and time to implement healthy community policies and actions. Through grants, training and resources, HFBC-C works to help build their organizational capacity.

### Existing Capacity to Support Building Healthier Communities



A majority of the health authority and local government survey respondents said they had the skills and knowledge to build healthier communities. Time availability is an issue, however: less than half felt they had enough of it.

### Skills and Resources Needed to Support Healthy Community Policies and Actions

#### Top 3 Needs of Health Authorities

- Additional tools and data
- Sharing of best practices and plans/policies among regions
- More time

#### Top 3 Needs of Local Governments

- Greater collaboration with all levels of government and health authorities
- Additional financial support to implement policies and practices
- More time

[The Healthy Communities Capacity Building Fund](#), implemented by the BC Healthy Communities Society's PlanH program, supports partnership development and collaborative action between local governments, health authorities and other community partners. Round 1 was announced in March 2013 with initial funding of \$200,000 for the year. This was later increased to \$275,000 due to the popularity of the program and the quality of the applications. A second round of funding of \$375,000 was launched November 2013.

#### Total Grants

YEAR 1 67 grants of up to \$5,000  
 YEAR 2 38 grants of up to \$5,000 (*Stream 1 - Learn and Connect*)  
 11 grants of up to \$20,000 (*Stream 2 - Innovate*)  
 = 116 awarded

### Learning Lab Leads to Partnership between Squamish and Vancouver Coastal Health

While municipalities aren't responsible for health care delivery, they do have a lead role in building healthy communities. Land use planning and policies shape how residents live. Housing, neighbourhood design, transportation networks, natural environments and food systems are all contributing factors in creating a healthy community.

Through 2014-15, with the help of a grant from PlanH Healthy Communities Capacity Building Fund, the District of Squamish and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) partnered on a Health Learning Lab to establish a platform for mutual learning and collaboration, and consider how built environments can contribute to the health of residents. They looked at ways to set health priorities, establish a local health baseline and create a health lens that officials can use when the District does its upcoming Official Community Plan review.

These discussions also paved the path for future partnership and priority projects. A collaboration agreement between the District of Squamish and VCH was officially endorsed in late 2015.

**PlanH** provides capacity building opportunities that support local governments and health authorities to learn, connect and innovate to create healthier communities. It is delivered by the BC Healthy Communities Society working in partnership with health authorities, the Union of BC Municipalities and the Ministry of Health. PlanH activities include workshops, webinars, action guides, grants and other supports. [The PlanH website](#) features a range of tools and resources. From April 2014-March 2015, there were 12,091 visitors to the site. More than 3/4 of local government survey respondents had used the site.

## EXPERTISE & SUPPORT



Health authority staff and the BC Healthy Communities Society, through its PlanH program, provide local governments with expertise they can apply in taking actions toward building healthier communities. They assist local governments through:

- Participating on regional planning committees
- Developing multi-stakeholder networks and working groups
- Facilitating partnerships with academic researchers and students
- Conducting community assessments and providing evaluation support

About 2/3 of local government respondents said they'd used health authority support to identify community partners, programs or services and to provide and interpret health data.

### More than half said supports and tools helped to:

- Assess and identify local assets and gaps towards building healthier communities
- Plan and implement policies and programs
- Enhance partnerships with health authorities and community partners

**94%** of local government respondents were aware of at least one support

**77%** were very satisfied or satisfied with the available supports

**85%** were very satisfied or satisfied with training and education workshops

### Workshops & Webinars

Between April 2014 and March 2015, there were 3,150 participants in 43 workshops or forums led or supported by health authorities or PlanH, in collaboration with community partners. Additionally, health authorities, with BC Healthy Communities Society and community partners, helped facilitate 15 webinars from April 2014-March 2015.

Topics included: food security, physical activity, age friendly communities, smoke free outdoor places, collaboration and partnership, and building relationships with northern First Nations communities.

### Top 3 Requested Supports

- Funding to continue programs
- Increased presence of health authority staff
- Additional medical staff and specialists\*  
*(while this was noted in survey results, it is not within scope of initiative or evaluation to address this specific request)*



### Training Program Feeds the Minds and Spirit of West Coast First Nations

Having identified the need for quality nutritional information to support individuals and communities in making healthy food choices, the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) partnered with Island Health to develop a Nutrition Train the Trainer Program for rural and remote Nuu-chah-nulth communities.

With a grant through Island Health's Aboriginal Health Initiative Program, NTC contracted a dietitian to work with council and health authority staff to develop a two-day curriculum based on the Nuu-chah-nulth concept of "hishuk ish tswalk" – meaning "all is connected." Hands-on activities encourage the eating of traditional foods and the development of food skills that support long-term food security. The program recognizes the links between cooking and sharing food and overall family and food system sustainability, as well as the importance of preserving culture and the wisdom of elders.

Participants are selected by the communities. These food champions train others and share what they've learned, so the program is sustainable on an ongoing basis. So far, 35 food champions from 11 communities have completed the training.

## TOOLS & RESOURCES



The Heathy Families BC Communities initiative provides a variety of tools and resources to identify health promotion opportunities and support collaborative action. These include action guides and toolkits, community health data resources, and other regional health authority resources.

Action guides and toolkits provide examples of best practices and ways governments can foster healthy communities through planning and consultation, bylaw and policy changes, and partnerships with community stakeholders.

PlanH has prepared action guides on the role of local governments in community health, tobacco reduction, healthy eating and food security, and social connectedness. Nearly 3,000 guides were distributed or downloaded from April 2014-March 2015.



**78%** of local government respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the available tools

### Most Used Tools

- BC Community Health Profiles
- PlanH website
- Action Guide: How do Local Governments Improve Health and Community Well-Being?

### Top Requested Additional Tools

- More community-specific data and reports
- Additional funding and grants
- Information on how to implement specific regional and community health projects



## Community Health Data Resources Support Collaborative Planning

In support of Healthy Families BC Communities, the Provincial Health Services Authority's Population and Public Health program, in collaboration with key stakeholders, developed the BC Community Health Profiles and the BC Community Health Atlas. These resources provide local data that health authorities and local governments can use in collaborative community health planning. The [BC Community Health Profiles](#) provide an introduction to community health data and present it at the lowest geographic level available. Profiles have been generated for 130 incorporated municipalities. For Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health, additional health and lifestyle data is available via [My Health My Community](#), a partnership between VCH, FH and the University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine's eHealth Strategy Office.

The [BC Community Health Atlas](#) is an online interactive mapping tool that displays indicators of population health by geographic area. It is a user-friendly platform for comparing data related to population health and demographics including developmental, socio-economic and environmental determinants of health. Health authorities and local governments can create customizable maps that display patterns in health indicators by local health area or by school district.

## RECOGNITION & CELEBRATION



The Ministry of Health, BC Healthy Communities Society, health authorities and local governments all play a role in celebrating the success in building healthier communities. Recognition encourages networking and sharing of best practices, and helps community members become aware of programs available to them and actions they can take.

The Healthy Families BC Communities initiative has a number of ways to recognize health authorities and local governments, including health authority publications, websites and social media, presentations and news releases.



**61%** of local government respondents said their government had been recognized for healthy community actions.

**They said the most common forms of recognition were:**

- News releases/media outlets
- Regional community forums
- Partner newsletters and social media posts



### Serving Growing Population of Seniors a Priority for Delta and Fraser Health

The Fraser Health (FH) region has the most seniors of any health authority – about 40% more than the two next largest health authorities. In the next 20 years, that number is expected to more than double, which also makes it the region with the fastest growing senior population.

Recognizing the importance of taking steps to improve the health and social well-being of its seniors, the Corporation of Delta has partnered with FH and other organizations on numerous initiatives to both identify and address seniors' specialized needs.

One such initiative was the organizing of two seniors' expos in the fall of 2014, thanks to a grant from the federal government's New Horizons program. About 800 seniors attended the events. They identified issues important to them, met with representatives from various organizations and talked with health professionals from FH, including a social worker, dietitian and diabetes program nurse.



### Revelstoke and Interior Health Use Grant to Create Community Action

Even though Revelstoke already ranks 6th best on BC's health index, the local government recognized a need to strengthen their partnership with the Interior Health Authority and community organizations.

As part of the HFBC-C initiative, Interior Health (IH) hired facilitators to collaborate with and support local governments. A grant from the PlanH Healthy Communities Capacity Building Fund presented further opportunity to improve community health, through a Healthy Community Project that included:

- Creation of the Revelstoke Healthy Community Project Photography Exhibit, which opened up dialogue about health issues
- Facilitation of a multisectoral stakeholder workshop to set community health priorities and prioritize actions
- Development of a Health Care Advisory Committee to promote partnership between the City of Revelstoke, IH and local organizations

The project helped build the City's capacity to address issues affecting its residents, and resulted in the development of the Healthy Community Scan & Action Plan.

# OUTCOMES

Since the Healthy Families BC Communities initiative began in 2011, a wide variety of supports and resources have been created to increase local actions towards healthier communities. Also, a substantial number of partnership agreements have been developed between regional health authorities and local governments. The more familiar survey respondents were with the HFBC-C initiative, the stronger they said the relationship was between their health authority and local government. They also felt there was greater coordination of healthy community policies and actions. More than half of respondents also felt collaboration with community partners had improved.



## Novel Program in North Encourages Valemout Villagers to Walk Their Way to Health

Valemout villagers are walking around the world—without ever leaving the community. The initiative, through which residents track their steps and distance, was created through a Partnering for Healthier Communities (P4HC) grant that the Valemout Healthier Communities Committee received from Northern Health (NH) in 2013.

Diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure had been identified as community health issues. The Valemout Healthier Communities Committee, as co-chaired by the Village of Valemout and NH, wanted a fun way for residents to set health goals and be more active. Participants receive water bottles and pedometers, and track their progress online. While participants plan their own walks, a trail previously built by the Village provides them a safe, accessible route.

Within its first year, ten percent of Valemout's population had enrolled, and participants travelled more than 48 million steps—the equivalent of 36,615 kilometers (about 3/4 of the distance around the world). Six participants were monitored for health improvements: in February 2014 five of them had lowered their blood sugar; four reported improved mental health; and the Valemout emergency department visits dropped to zero (from nine prior to the program).

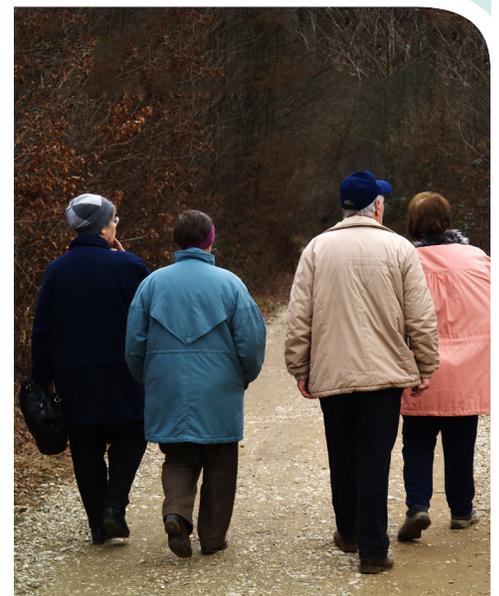
## Next Steps

This progress report summarizes the results of the midterm evaluation of HFBC-C. A final evaluation will be completed in 2016, and will involve:

- A second round of online surveys of health authorities and local governments
- Additional analysis through document reviews
- Focus group sessions held with local governments and health authorities, across all health regions

While it is difficult to link improved health outcomes directly to the HFBC-C initiative, as there are multiple factors involved, the final evaluation will also consider indicators regarding the behaviours that affect long-term health of populations.

The final evaluation report will be comprehensive, and will include new data collected in year three and draw comparisons to the first two years.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Healthy Families BC Communities evaluation was led by the Population & Public Health Program of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), and conducted by R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. Creation of this report was based on the findings from ongoing evaluation activities, with input from an Evaluation Advisory Committee with representatives from the Ministry of Health, Union of BC Municipalities, BC Healthy Communities Society, PHSA and the five regional health authorities.

Special thanks go to the staff from the health authorities, and the staff and elected officials of local governments, who completed the online surveys.

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