

# Canada's Vision and Approach to Migration Health: a Population Health Perspective

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# Our Population

- Canada's population is over 31.6 million people
- 1.17 million people (4%) are Aboriginal Peoples:
  - First Nations (60%), Métis (33%), Inuit (4%) and Other (3%)
- 6.2 million people (20%) are Immigrants
- Canada's population growth (1997-2005) is attributable to:
  - 3 million births, 2 million deaths and over 2 million new immigrants
- Most Canadians live in urban settings - over 80% reside in towns and cities



## Policy and Legal Framework

- Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)
- Canada Health Act
- Public Health Agency Act



## Access to Health

- Canada's universal health insurance system:
  - Administered by Provinces and Territories
- Interim Federal Health Program:
  - Temporary health insurance for refugees, protected persons, refugee claimants and their dependents



# There is more to health than good health care...

*"While health care focuses mainly on treating individuals, public health targets entire population...promoting physical and mental health as intricately connected to the environment and society we live in."*

(CPHO's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada, 2008)



# Good health is not equally shared in our society...

- **Genetic** and **biological** factors, **choices** made or by chance
  - Differences in **key factors** that influence our health:
    - Income
    - Employment and working conditions
    - Food security
    - Health behaviours
    - Early childhood development
    - Education and literacy
    - Social support and connectedness
    - Access to health care
    - Environment and housing
- ☞ Socio-economic determinants **interact to influence health**
- ☞☞ The structure of society **influences health** through the distribution of public goods and resources



# The Face of Health and Social Inequalities (1)

(CPHO's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada, 2008)

- **Poverty:**
  - 11% of the Canadian population lives in poverty
  - higher for certain populations (recent immigrants at 19%)
- **Education:**
  - 42% of those aged 16-65 perform below the literacy levels considered the minimum necessary to succeed in today's economy and society
  - Sub-optimal levels are higher in certain groups, such as our immigrants
- **Employment:**
  - Recent immigrants have a higher rate of unemployment (11.5%) although they are more likely to hold a university degree



# The Face of Health and Social Inequalities (2)

(CPHO's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada, 2008)

- **Food security:**
  - Households with children, particularly those with young children, just don't have enough food
- **Environment and housing:**
  - Overcrowding can impact the physical and mental health, including risk of respiratory infections (e.g.: tuberculosis)
- **Accessing health resources:**
  - Immigrant women experience more difficulty accessing resources needed to stay healthy than Canadian-born women
    - language difficulties, lack of cultural sensitivities among health-care providers; lack of social support and time constraints among lower income immigrant families



# A Commitment to Change

Health is influenced  
by the type of society we choose



# Moving Forward

- **Fostering collective will and leadership**
- **Reducing child poverty**
  - Some of the greatest returns on investment are those targeted to the early years
- **Strengthening communities**
  - Communities are where all sectors and players can easily converge to establish local priorities and develop shared strategies for addressing health inequalities



*"Health inequalities are fundamentally societal inequalities that we can overcome through public policy, and individual and collective action."*

*Dr. David Butler-Jones*  
*Chief Public Health Officer of Canada*



For more information and/or to obtain a copy of the  
*CPHO's Report on the State of Public Health in  
Canada, 2008*  
or the *Report-at-a-Glance*  
please visit:

<http://www.publichealth.gc.ca>



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