

# Designing ACTIVE COMMUNITIES



Built Environment and Health:  
The Role of Community Health Professionals  
Advisor on Tap: Kim Bergeron  
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# Welcome to CHNET-Works! Fireside Chats



Hosted by:

University of Ottawa – Community Health Research Unit



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## Before We Start..... Housekeeping Items.....



### **Agenda: 1:00 – 2:00 PM EST** (and open until 2:15 PM)

- ✓ Welcome, brief intro, presentation, questions/answers, discussions, wrap up

### **Trouble shooting your audio and visual connections:**

- ✓ Keep your Fireside Chat information and PowerPoint presentation available
- ✓ If your telephone line is disconnected or 'bad' – hang up and call back
- ✓ Use the Power point presentation if Bridgit link is not working for you



### **Teleconference etiquette:**

- ✓ Mute function on please - \*6
- ✓ Don't put us on 'hold'



### **Follow up:**

- ✓ Feedback - help our research and future Fireside Chats
- ✓ RSVP 'challenges' and 'great interests for future 'chats' on this topic!



# Learning Objectives

- To increase our understanding of the role of health professionals to support the development of Built Environments that promote physical activity.
- To expand our knowledge on this topic by sharing our collective experiences.



# Questions Posted



What has been or could be the role for Public Health?



What are some of the enablers/challenges?



What are some urban growth strategies and policy options for promoting walkable communities?



Do you have local success stories?



How are health professionals discussing the issue?



# HKPR's Journey

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPR) has been working to reduce chronic disease by changing the environment.

This is our story.

What we have done.

What we are doing.



# HKPR District Health Unit

- 160 staff members working in five different offices, serving over 170,000 residents of Haliburton and Northumberland Counties and City of Kawartha Lakes. Most of the area is rural.
- Is comprised of diverse and highly skilled professionals. These professions include registered dietitians, public health nurses, health promoters, public food workers, environmental health inspectors, epidemiologists, hygienists, dental assistants and administration.



# HKPR District Health Unit



- The Ministry of Health outlines the mandatory health programs and services guidelines. These standards provide the framework for public health programs and services targeted at prevention of disease, health promotion and health protection.
- The Chronic Disease Prevention Team consists of 20 staff members
- Access to internal Communication and Epidemiology Departments.



# Health for Life Community Partnership

## Mission:

To foster health for life through a network of community partners and local steering committees.

## Vision:

We envision communities where people have the knowledge and ability to choose healthy lifestyles where they work, live and play.





What role do Health Care Professionals have in Community Design to promote physical activity?

Specifically,

What role do Chronic Disease Prevention staff at Public Health Units have in Community Design?



# Searching for Evidence



E-journal databases of Business-ABI/INFORM Global and Proquest Journals was searched for full-text articles using the search words of



“public health and built environment and physical activity”.



The abstracts were reviewed and sorted to determine if they were primary research or secondary research.

Seven articles were reviewed for findings.

Five observational research studies were appraised.





# Who's "talking"?



Many disciplines are publishing on this topic:

American Journal of :

Public Health

Health Promotion

Preventive Medicine

Medicine



Journal of the American Planning Association

Journal of Physical Activity and Health

Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics





# Findings from Articles

Public health had an earlier role with the built environment:  
“historically, concerns about public health have strongly influenced urban planning” (Perdue et al., 2003, p.557).

1850's	Terrible sanitation
1879	Sanitation survey completed. Forerunner to modern planning research.
Early 20 <sup>th</sup> century	Rural living viewed as “clean living”
1920's	Zoning ordinances began. Divide between mixed land use
Middle of 20 <sup>th</sup> century	Public health methods brought sanitary and infectious disease under control.
1930's-1940's	Urban planning begin's and public health's role shifts.





Public health interest shifts from the built environment and focuses on issues of environmental health and communicable disease control.

“though public health officials may have been the first urban planners, by the 1930’s others had taken over the field, creating new areas of expertise- environmental science, traffic engineering, building safety and urban planning” (Perdue et al., 2003, p.558).



# Stakeholders Identified by the Evidence



Architects

University Professors



Planners

Law enforcement officers



Policymakers

Economists

Social Scientists

Social Marketers (Real estate Agents)



Traffic Engineers

Food Producers, industries and consumer associations such as Farmer's Markets and grocery store chains



Developers

# Connection between the built environment and Health



Injury prevention



Exposure to environmental toxins



Violence and crime reduction



Physical activity

Nutrition



Social Determinants of Health

# What Public Health Brings to the Planning Table

- Empirical and epidemiological expertise.
- Expertise in human behavioural interventions.
- Voice that consistently asks  
“Will this encourage or discourage healthy behaviours?”

“Government has an obligation carefully to consider the population’s health in it’s policies and that public health should have an important role in the development of policies about land use and the built environment” (Perdue et al., 2003, p.563).





# Our Challenge

“The challenge is to understand the interrelationship between the built environment and human behavior and then to develop models that can predict the environmental conditions under which humans will be more physically active.” (Handy et al., 2002, p.72).

“The available evidence lends itself to the argument that a combination of urban design, land use patterns, and transportation systems that promotes walking and bicycling will help create active, healthier, and more livable communities”

(Handy, et al., 2002, p.73).



# Increase our Knowledge about the Dimensions of the Built Environment

## Dimensions of the Built Environment

1. Density and intensity of development
2. Land use mix
3. Street connectivity
4. Street scale
5. Aesthetic qualities
6. Regional structure

(Handy et al., 2002).



# Role of Public Health



## Educate government officials on:

- The health benefits of encouraging physical activity with an eye to street design.
- The evidence of the association between land use and health.
- Their role to ensure that private development at least takes into account the benefits and burdens of their designs.
- The benefits of reviewing street grid patterns to ensure that they lead somewhere and designed with active living in mind.
- Link between land use decisions and social determinants of health.

# Role of Public Health

## To Promote:

- The benefits of walking.
- Increase of pedestrian orient of the built environment through mixed land use, have pathways lead someplace and have communities model good design to make walking or biking more attractive. Therefore, reducing the physical and psychological barriers.
- Addressing health disparities through the built environment.



# Urban Planning and Public Health Framework



“A joint urban planning and public health framework can help in the solution of useful indicators of the built environment to monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of proposed projects, programs and policies in reaching other stated goals” (Northridge & Sclar, 2003, p.119).



# Goals of a Joint Framework

- Move towards mixed land use vs. segregated land use
- Long term sustainability vs. short-term expediency
- Mass transportation and walking vs. automobile dependency
- Urban redevelopment vs. urban removal
- A viable, functioning public sector vs. an unregulated market and vested interests.

(Northridge & Sclar, 2003, p.119).



# Impact Smart Growth

## Communities can improve public health by:

- Ensuring all residents have access to affordable healthy food choices, especially fruits and vegetables.
- Ensuring community and architectural design features such as adequate street and building lighting, building design that promote “eyes on the street” and careful consideration of layout of the neighborhood (Perdue et al., 2004).
- Addressing transportation issues (Linton, 2003; Heath et al., 2006).





# What Else Can We Do?



## Provide Input:

Land use decisions need to be informed by input from health agencies.



## Provide Consulting Services:

More consulting is needed with health agencies.



## Develop Effective Partnerships:

With other community stakeholders.





# Findings From Critical Appraisal

(Bergeron, 2006).



## Advocate:

Mixed land use, accessibility, food sources close to home and change in public consciousness.



## Research:

To increase the understanding of physical activity, obesity and morbidity by including urban form in research studies.



## Develop Alliances:

With Community Stakeholders.





# What has HKPR District Health Unit Been Doing?



# 2002- Building Healthy Communities Brochure



Developed brochure for community members, decision makers and community partners to increase their awareness of what makes a community healthy.

<http://www.healthforlifeonline.ca/pdf/HealthyCommunitiesBrochure.pdf>

# 2003- Active Transportation Workshop

## Making a Difference: From Advocacy to Action

This workshop highlighted physical activity and active transportation issues within our communities. It was designed to assist participants to promote healthy change in their communities.

Municipal Accessibility Committee Members, NGO's, Workplace Representatives, Municipal Parks and Recreation Staff and Cycling Club Members.





# 2004- Began 1<sup>st</sup> Research Study

## Purpose:

To identify environmental supports that have been identified by the best practice literature as being important for healthy living, are present/lacking for the residents in Northumberland County, and recommendations for priority areas for action.

30 recommendations were made.





# 2004-Child Poverty Campaign



Developed a Child Poverty Social Marketing Campaign to increase public awareness of the link between physical activity, healthy eating and child poverty in order to lead to policy development/change to create healthier communities for all.



Target Population: Male Decision Makers



<http://www.healthforlifeonline.ca/pdf/ChildPovertyBrochure.pdf>





# 2004-CIA Committee Began



## Haliburton : A Community In Action Committee

Explores the development and implementation of an Active Transportation Plan for the Village of Haliburton.



Research Methods Include:

- » Survey's
- » Focus Groups
- » Observational Studies
- » 'walk-ability' assessments



<http://www.haliburtoncooperative.on.ca/ulinks/ciapage.html>





## 2005- 2<sup>nd</sup> Research Study Conducted



Qualitative research study in the Counties of Northumberland and City of Kawartha Lakes to assist with the development of a social marketing campaign that would encourage and advocate for active living.



Marketing Document developed highlighting findings

<http://www.hkpr.on.ca/uploadedFiles/ActiveCommunitiesReport.pdf>





# 2006- Results of Study Released



Held a “Think Tank” session with elected officials, planners, developers and community partners to release the results of the study and to explore through “Round Table” discussion on topics such as the Gas Tax, Planning for Rural Communities and Planning.



1<sup>st</sup> Time Working Together



# 2006-3<sup>rd</sup> Research Study

## Designing Active Communities Together: Public Health, Municipalities and Universities

- 1) To document how one municipality works to increase physical activity by their planning decisions.
- 2) To gather data from 80 residents living within this municipality to document how the built environment and the planning decisions have or have not enhanced physical activity behaviours within their subdivision.
- 3) To develop a tool and protocol for municipal staff, specifically planners.
- 4) To share the results of this project with local, regional and provincial stakeholders.

Partnership between Health Unit, Queen's University and Municipality of Cobourg.





## 2006- Built Environment Logic Model



- The Physical Activity Team is working on developing a logic model on the role of public health and the built environment.



- This will become part of the Healthy Living Strategy.



- Municipal Briefings are also being developed.
- Municipal Park Survey Tool and Reports.



# Contact Information

Kim Bergeron, MHST  
Chronic Disease Prevention Coordinator

HKPR District Health Unit

Port Hope, Ontario

L1A 3Z5

[kbergeron@hkpr.on.ca](mailto:kbergeron@hkpr.on.ca)

905-885-9100 ex 264



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