

Public Health and Planning 101: An Education Module for Public Health and Planning Professionals in Ontario

The Public Health and Planning 101 project team conducted interviews with four key and influential organizations in the Public Health and Planning sector, including two provincial ministries, a non-governmental organization, and a provincial association, between March and April of 2012. The purpose of the interviews was to identify opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate on/guide the development and dissemination of a Public Health and Planning 101 education module.

Members of each organization were asked to identify challenges public health and planning professionals working to collaborate on the built environment commonly faced. They identified the following as challenges:

- **Misalignment of mandates** and the broad nature of each in planning and public health
- **Differences in working environments** and roles in each profession
- **A lack of common language and processes** between public health and planning
- **Minimal integrated decision-making** between public health and planning departments in municipalities
- **Lack of understanding** of both disciplines and their interdependence at the level of the elected municipal officials

The interviews also sought to identify opportunities to improve the working relationship between public health and planning. The following opportunities were identified:

- **Provide training**, discussions, learning opportunities to elected municipal officials
- Public health should **share its knowledge** about how to reach a broad audience with key messaging
- The link between public health and municipalities needs to be leveraged to enhance the focus on a health built environment through planning initiatives.

Interviewees also identified that successful collaboration between public health and planning professionals had occurred on projects such as the *Healthy Peel by Design* and *Age-friendly Rural Canada* in regions/communities such as Simcoe County, Collingwood, Carleton Place Huron County, Niagara Region and Hamilton.

Further, interviewees identified the use of a combination of the following, as the best options for knowledge translation, exchange and collaboration:

- Face-to-face meetings, particularly at the outset of coalition building
- Webinars
- Workshops
- Online, self-guided learning
- Conferences, specifically public health presenting at planning conferences and vice versa.

As the development of the education module progresses into the next few phases, the project team will continue to work with the agencies in difference capacities.