

## Population Health: The New Agenda *Educational Video (Run Time: 15 minutes)*

### **About the Video**

Within our population, there are differences and variations in the health status of individuals and groups. *Health inequity* refers to those differences in health status that are deemed to be unfair or stemming from some form of injustice. Initiatives across the globe are highlighting the dramatic impact of social and economic conditions on health inequities. These conditions are often referred to as the social determinants of health and include factors such as income, education, gender, early child development and housing.

This video resource is an exploration of the differences in health status associated with factors such as income, education, early child development and neighbourhood. The video features commentary from Vancouver Coastal Health staff and stories from North Shore residents about how the social determinants of health impact their lives. DVD copies are available from [populationhealth@vch.ca](mailto:populationhealth@vch.ca) or the video is available for viewing or download at: [www.lemongrassmedia.net/lgm/videogallery/files/pophealth-the-new-agenda.html](http://www.lemongrassmedia.net/lgm/videogallery/files/pophealth-the-new-agenda.html)

### **Key Messages**

- On average, British Columbia has excellent health outcomes, but more detailed analyses reveal that health is not distributed equally.
- Measures such as life expectancy and chronic disease have a significant association with social and economic factors such as income and education. Further, the likelihood of risk behaviours (i.e., smoking, unhealthy eating, lack of physical activity) increases as you move down the socioeconomic gradient.
- This phenomenon does not only affect the lowest income groups. If you divide society into income divisions, each higher division has better health outcomes.
- These differences in health outcomes are highly related to the social determinants of health (i.e., housing, access to early childhood supports, recreation, income, etc). In fact, about half of the variations found among populations are attributable to socioeconomic conditions.
- The sustainability of our health care system depends on addressing the social determinants of health upstream in order to prevent/reduce health problems.

## **Discussion Questions**

Tackling health inequities requires widening our lens to bring into view the ways in which jobs, working conditions, education, housing, social inclusion and even political power influence individual and community health. One way to understand these influences is to begin asking new questions about public and population health strategies.

**Conventional question:** How can we promote healthy behavior and reduce the differences in the distribution of disease and illness?

- **Health equity question:** How can we influence conditions that make it difficult for people to live healthy lives (i.e., food security, land use and transportation policies, access to recreation)?
- **Health equity question:** How can we promote more equitable social and economic conditions that are known to improve population health outcomes?
- **Health equity question:** What kinds of community organizing and alliance building are necessary to protect communities?
- **Health equity question:** How can we better address the needs of vulnerable populations?

*Discussion Questions adapted from the “Unnatural Causes Action Toolkit” (Available at: [www.unnaturalcauses.org/download\\_toolkit.php](http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/download_toolkit.php)).*

## **Additional Resources**

### **Vancouver Coastal Health Population Health Website**

The website provides an overview of population health approaches and a full library of reports, initiatives and resources: [www.vch.ca/public\\_health/population\\_health/](http://www.vch.ca/public_health/population_health/)

### **Vancouver Coastal Health Population Health Framework**

Endorsed by Senior Leadership, the Framework identifies four strategic areas for population health initiatives: Leadership, Partnership, Advocacy and Policy Development.

Available: [www.vch.ca/media/Toward\\_A\\_Population\\_Health\\_Approach.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/media/Toward_A_Population_Health_Approach.pdf)

### **Vancouver Coastal Health - Population Health Report**

The purpose of this report is to facilitate an understanding of what determines the health of our populations through the presentation of population health data; to identify and describe current priority areas for VCH population health activities; and, to describe policy options for improving the health of our populations.

Available: [www.vch.ca/media/VCH\\_PopulationHealthReport.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/media/VCH_PopulationHealthReport.pdf)

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