

Ontario Public Health Standards Foundational Standard

Ontario Public Health
Standards 2008

The Ontario Public Health Standards are published as the guidelines for the provision of mandatory health programs and services by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, pursuant to Section 7 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7.



FOUNDATIONAL STANDARD

Public health programs and services that are informed by evidence are the foundation for effective public health practice. Evidence-informed practice is responsive to the needs and emerging issues of the health unit and uses the best available evidence to address them. Population health assessment, surveillance, research, and program evaluation generate evidence that contributes to the public health knowledge base and ultimately improves public health programs and services.

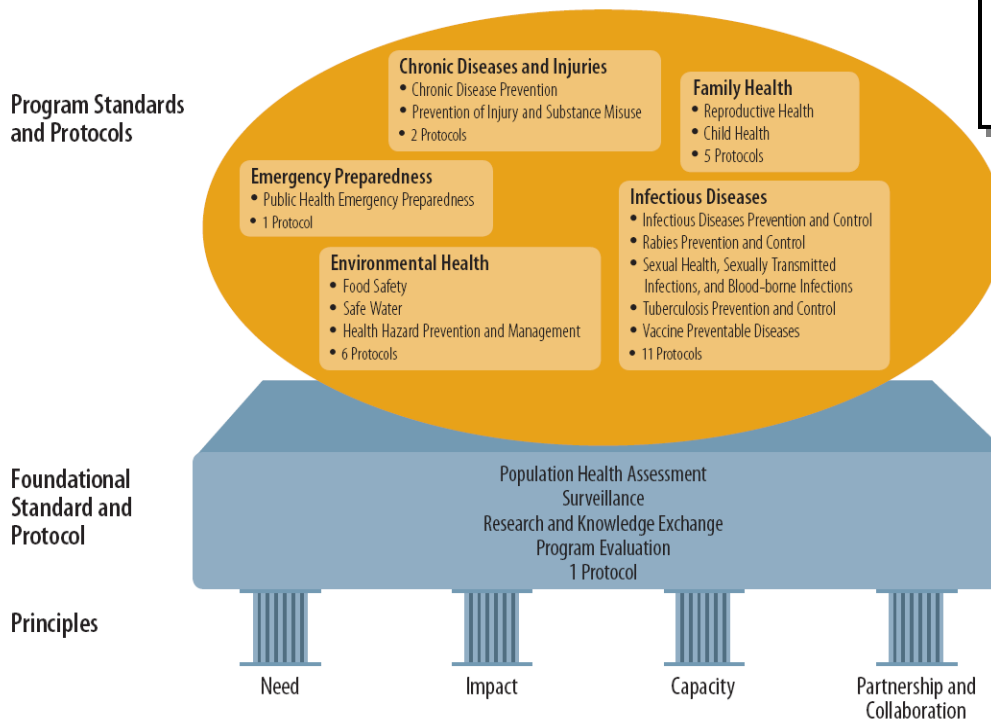
POPULATION HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Population health assessment includes measuring, monitoring, and reporting on the status of a population's health, including determinants of health and health inequities. Population health assessment provides the information necessary to understand the health of populations through the collaborative development and ongoing maintenance of population health profiles, identification of challenges and opportunities, and monitoring of the health impacts of public health practice.

SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance is the systematic and ongoing collection, collation, and analysis of health-related information that is communicated in a timely manner to all who need to know, so that action can be taken. Surveillance contributes to effective public health program planning, delivery, and management. Dissemination of surveillance analyses may take the form of reports, advisories, healthy public policy recommendations, alerts, or warnings. Surveillance has historically been associated with infectious diseases and vaccination programs, but its importance has become increasingly recognized for environmental health issues, child health, reproductive health, chronic disease prevention, and injury prevention.

Figure 1: Ontario Public Health Standards: Relationship between the Principles, the Foundational Standard, and the Program Standards



RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Exploring an issue or investigating a question is accomplished through research – the organized and purposeful collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. Research may involve the primary collection of new data or the analysis or synthesis of existing data and research findings. Knowledge exchange is collaborative problem-solving among public health practitioners, researchers, and decision-makers, which takes place through linkage and exchange. It results in mutual learning through the process of planning, producing, disseminating, and applying existing or new research in decision-making.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Program evaluation is the systematic gathering, analysis, and reporting of data about a program to assist in decision-making. It includes quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches. Program evaluation produces the information needed to support the establishment of new programs and services (needs assessment); assess whether evidence-informed programs are carried out with the necessary reach, intensity, and duration (process evaluation); or document the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and services (outcome evaluation).