

How Knowledge Flows Between Public Health and Local Government

A presentation as part of:
Creating Healthy Public Policy – Navigating the Public Policy Pathway
A PlanH Webinar

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sur les politiques publiques et la santé

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Support public health actors in their efforts to develop and promote healthy public policies

Our projects

- Analyzing Public Policies
- Climate Change
- Health in All Policies
- Health Inequalities
- Health Impact Assessment
- Knowledge Sharing
- Population Mental Health and Wellness
- Public Health Ethics
- Public Health Infrastructure



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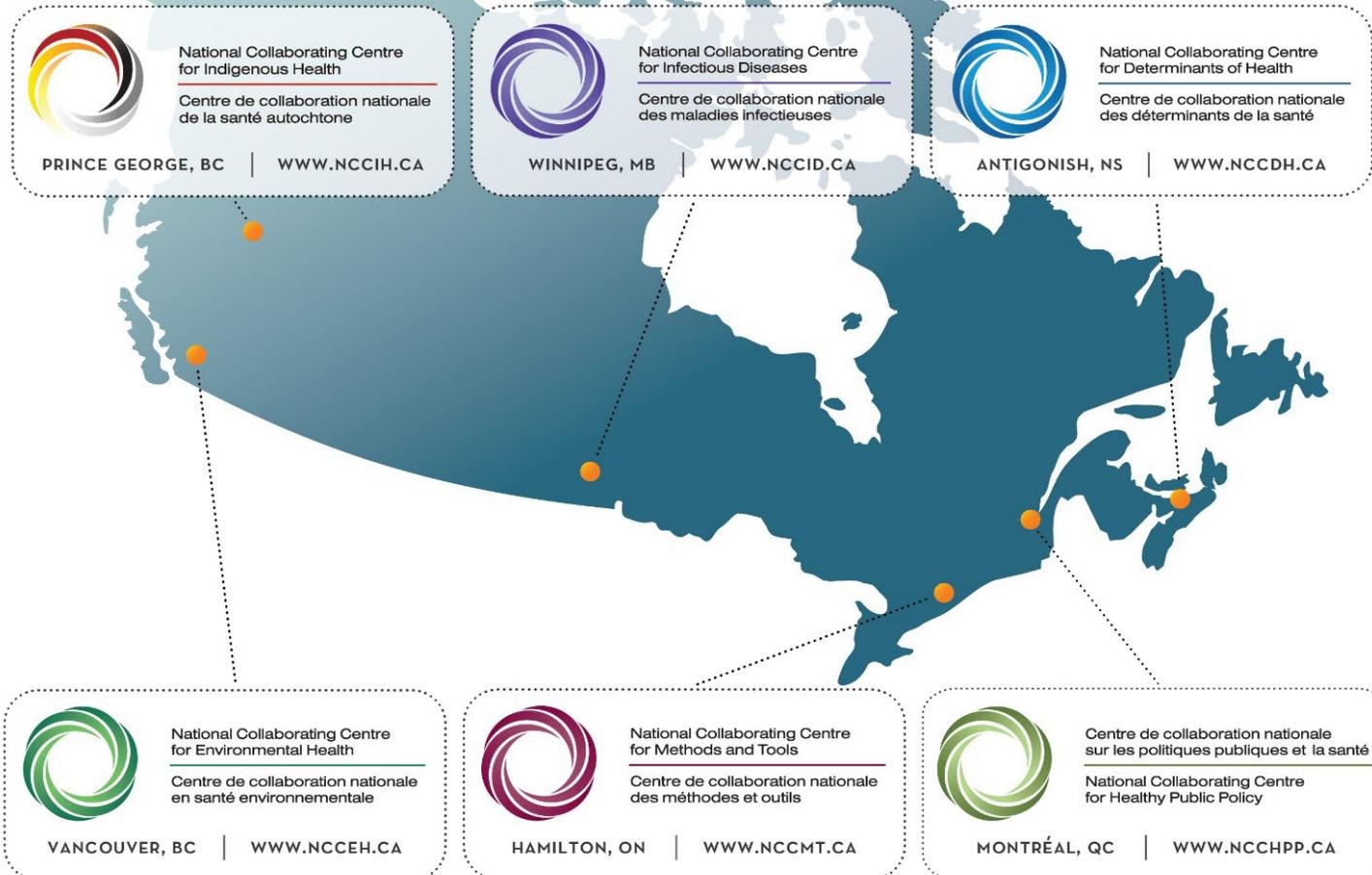
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Land Acknowledgment



We acknowledge that we are on an age-old Indigenous territory, a place of meeting and diplomacy between peoples and the site of the signing of the Great Peace treaty.

We thank the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) nation for their hospitality on this unceded territory.

What is healthy public policy?

“Healthy public policy improves the conditions under which people live:

secure, safe, adequate and sustainable livelihoods, lifestyles, and environments,

including, housing, education, nutrition, information exchange, child care, transportation, and necessary community and personal social and health services.”

(Milio, 2001)

**Departments
commonly found in local government:**

Fire protection

Public works

Planning Social development

Housing Recreation and culture

Economic development

Municipal police Transportation

Environment



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Public Health, meet Local Government

- Overlap does not equal collaboration
- Inputs in the policy process by diverse actors
- Added value of input by public health actors:



Public policy  Healthy public policy

Consideration of health and wellness impacts

Enhanced consideration of equity

⇒ How does this conversation happen?



Three points of entry

How does knowledge-sharing happen?

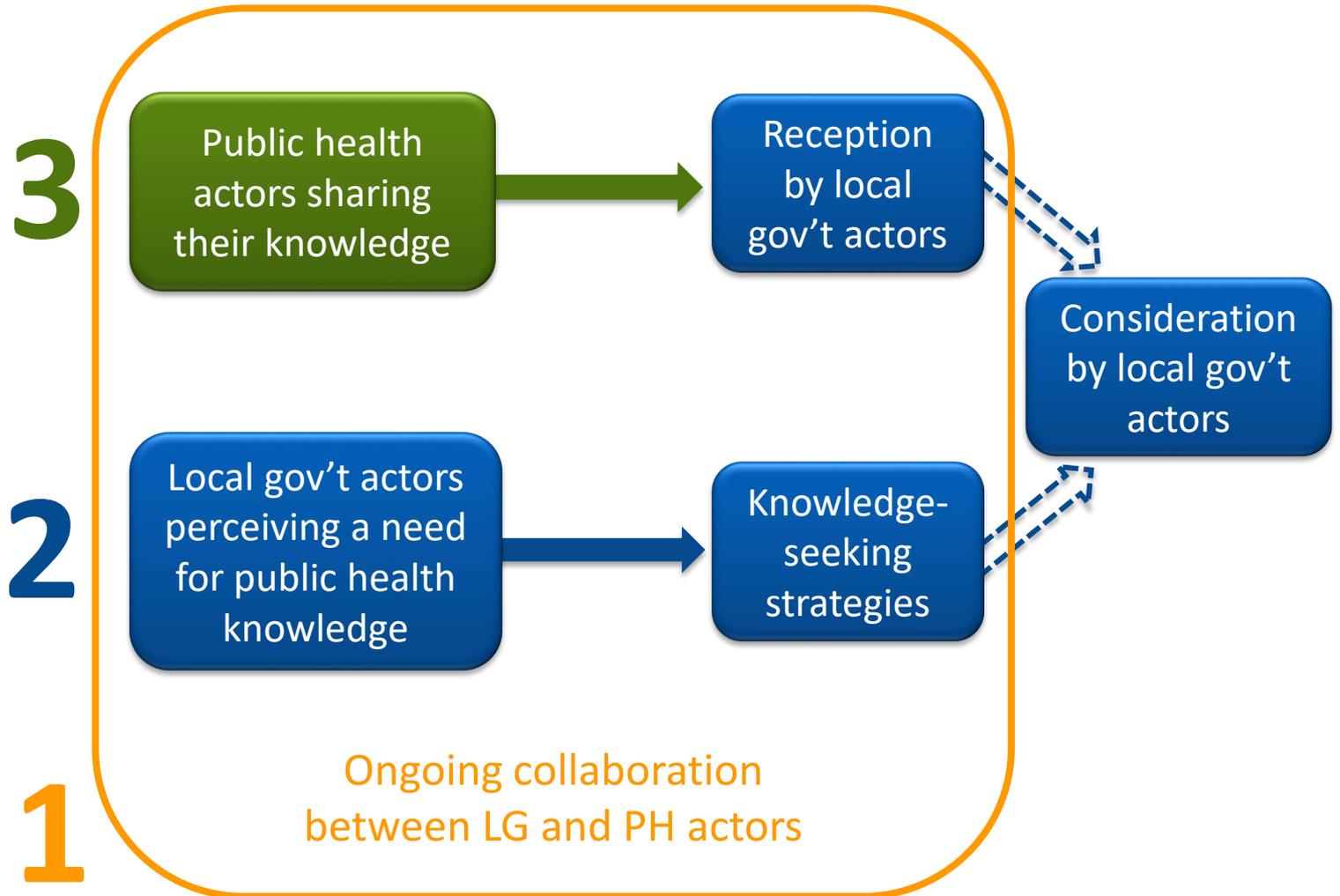
- Producer-push
- User-pull
- Exchange

(Lavis et al., 2003)

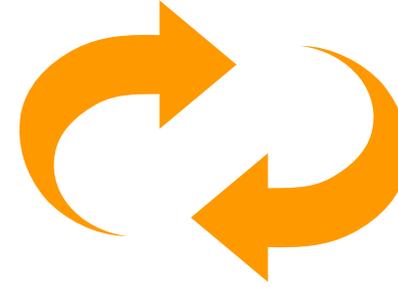


Framework adapted for policy development

(Morestin, 2015)



1. Ongoing collaboration



- Sustained relationships
- Takes time (years) to establish, but worth it: mutual understanding, trust
⇒ Knowledge-sharing is timely and relevant
- Collaboration may be informal or formalized
- Time horizon of formal collaboration:

Temporary

E.g.: grant



Longer term

E.g.: MOU

(Morestin, 2019, 2020)



2. Initiative by local government actors

Local gov't actors
perceiving a need
for public health
knowledge

Expectations with regard to PH knowledge:

- Well-established expertise
- Detailed knowledge of the local population (demographics, etc.)
- Evidence about effective interventions: *“Bring the proof to the table”*
- New ideas on how to approach certain problems
- Credibility / *“Convincing power”*

(Morestin, 2020)



2. Initiative by local government actors

Obstacles:

- Lack of resources (including HR and time)
- Not familiar with PH resources / tools
- Not familiar with PH issues
- Not familiar with PH actors

More used to working with private consultants

⇒ Accessibility of PH resources and people

(Lefebvre et al., 2022; Morestin, 2019; St-Louis, 2020)



3. Initiative by public health actors

- Most frequent scenario
- What for?

Put problems and/or solutions on the policy agenda

or

Tweak solutions under review to make them healthier

- Adding to the policy agenda vs. helping address it



Public health
actors sharing
their knowledge



(Morestin, 2017)



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3. Initiative by public health actors

What makes knowledge relevant to LG actors?

- Concrete, specific recommendations
- Local data
- Data/solutions from similar municipalities

Consideration of rural vs. urban

- Relevance also is about timeliness

(Morestin, 2019, 2020; St-Louis, 2020)



3. Initiative by public health actors... and/or allies

- Community organizations, experts from other sectors, citizens groups, local business community, etc.
- Stronger together
- Complementarity of roles

Often, PH is on the periphery

(Bendaoud, 2020; Clavier et al., 2022; de Leeuw, 2020)



A final word on equity

Who proposes policy options? Who participates in their development?

PH actors: do not neglect “bottom-up sources of knowledge” (Pamuk, 2022)

Added value of working with allies, e.g., community organizations

LG actors, be aware of:

- Who you invite to sit at the table
- How to enable participation in public hearings

⇒ Expertise of community organizations in mobilizing “hard-to-reach” populations

(Canadian Urban Institute, 2022; Hagan, 2019; PlanH, 2019)



“Usually the populations we don’t reach are the populations that have multiple jobs... so that they can’t come out; people with language barriers; sometimes sort of either the young or the elderly” (LG staff member)

“Most of these events that were held – they were all white people like me” (NGO representative)

(in Hagan, 2019)

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