

Public Health Systems Governance: Better Understanding and Acting on Governance to Strengthen Public Health Systems in Canada

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Objective and Research Questions

What are the realistic opportunities for strengthening, improving, or transforming existing public health governance in Canada?

- What **elements and attributes** are needed to support the intersection of key areas of public health governance, considering aspects such as policy and practice infrastructure, the social, cultural, political and economic context, and variations across jurisdictions?
- What are examples of **successful public health governance initiatives, models, or systems** (i) within or outside of Canada and (ii) within or outside of the health system?
- Given the overarching goal of achieving **equity in health** and wellbeing for populations, how can public health governance explicitly integrate equity?

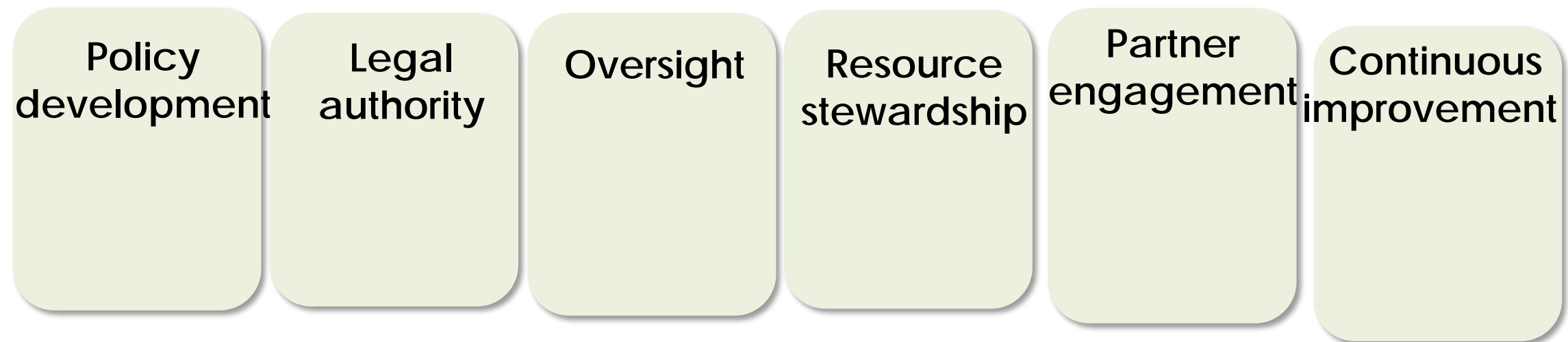
Key Features of Public Health Governance

“The attempts of governments and other actors to steer communities, whole countries or even groups of countries in the **pursuit of health as integral to well-being through both whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches...**”



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Six governance functions (Carlson et al. 2015)



Good Governance

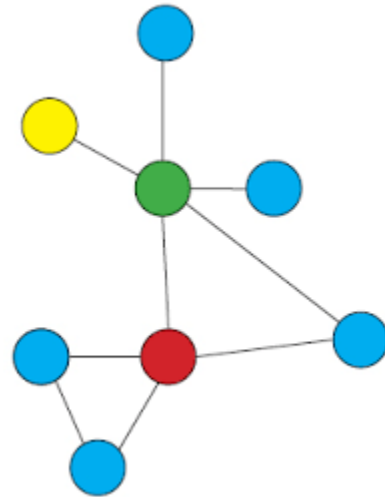
- Principles: equity-driven, anti-colonial approach, diverse and inclusive membership; transparent and accountable deliberation and decision-making
- Resilience
- Competent leadership
- Capacities – for e.g. structural capacity

Governance models



What is being governed?

- Governance (**for** public health)
- Governance (public health **working with other sectors**)



Roles of Governance

Values management

(influenced by political, social, and organizational contexts)

Relationships management

- Information sharing
- Cooperation
- Coordination
- Integration



Sheikh et al, 2020; Sriram et al, 2020; Solar & Irwin, 2007

Selected Results

- No one preferred approach to or model for public health governance
- Complexity of public health and many actors involved challenge governance
- Lack of a *systems approach* to public health in Canada
- Limited evidence base available on the effectiveness of governance models for public health

Recommended Actions (1)

- Pan-canadian **equity-driven** strategy, **including objectives and priorities**, and expert panel (*oversight*)
- Innovation fund on public health systems strengthening (*resource stewardship*)
- Develop a separate Act for Health and Wellbeing (or Public Health Act) (*legal authority*)

Recommended Actions (2)

- Strengthen governance mechanisms for intersectoral action (*policy development*)
- Engage in formal or informal engagement processes or bodies that regularly report on and assess different societal threats (*partnership engagement*)

Recommended Actions (3)

- Establish and resource a national public health systems and services research agenda, which includes a focus on governance of public health (*continuous improvement*):
 - For e.g. assess the effectiveness of different governance structures for public health on health and/or health equity outcomes)

Dalla Lana
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Thank you