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THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM AND THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1

DEFINING THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

1.1.1

CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

- Documenting the public health problematic in an ongoing manner.
 - Literature review and data collection
 - (surveillance data, grey and scientific literature, etc.)
 - Strategic and scientific scanning
 - Field experience (partners, CISSS/CIUSSS, etc.)
- Updating of data and literature
- Critical synthesis



- Is the literature review complete and up-to-date?
- Has the most recent data been used?
 - Are data sources credible and recognized by peers?
- What are the key concepts, the logic model, the indicators?
- What are the main research findings?

1.1.2

DEFINING THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

- Identifying the health problem and demonstrating why it constitutes a public health problem, while focusing on social inequalities in health (SIH).
 - Epidemiological reality linked to a health determinant
 - Relative significance (intensity, extent, severity, disparities, comparison, etc.)
 - Public health objective(s) enabling the identified problem to be solved
 - Solution(s) enabling the public health objective to be achieved
 - Legal mandates of the DRSP associated with the problem

- Why does the health problem constitute a public health problem?
 - With which health determinant is it associated?
 - Are other determinants involved?
 - What is the impact on SIHs?
 - Is it a problem associated with illness, disability or mortality?
 - Can it be prevented?
 - Which populations are affected?
 - How big a problem is it for Montréal? How does Montréal compare with the rest of Québec or with other major cities?
 - Does the DRSP have the legal mandates and levers needed to intervene in relation to the problem?

CHECKLIST

TAKING ACTION TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICIES

This approach aims to correctly position the public health issue in its political environment, assess the relevance and feasibility of undertaking an intervention, establish consensus regarding the most appropriate ways to intervene, and ensure the consistency of the message.

Each of the **three steps** includes a brief description of the elements to be considered, as well as questions to guide decisions about how to direct action.

1.2.1

STRATEGIC SCANNING

Actively scan the political, economic and social environment to keep abreast of emerging issues, anticipate developments and provide appropriate information in a timely manner.

- Media scan
- Political scan (regional, national, federal)
- Scientific scan
- Opinion, polls
- Reports from advisory bodies (e.g.: CNESST, Protecteur du citoyen, Auditor General, BAPE, consulting firms, etc.)



- How does the media cover the problem?
- Where does public opinion stand? Are any polls available?
- Will a bill that could have an impact on the identified public health problem or one of its determinants be on an upcoming government agenda?
- Is a public policy related to the public health problem or one of its determinants currently under review?

1.2.2

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Identify the different political contexts likely to influence the evolution of the public health problem.

- Governments and political institutions at the various levels involved
- Laws and regulations, policies, orientations and action plans
- Public policy development cycle
- Budget allocation mechanisms
- Consultation mechanisms
- Experiences in other comparable jurisdictions (other public health organizations, cities, regions, provinces, countries)

- Which levels of government are concerned by the problem or by one of its determinants?
- What laws or regulations govern it? What stage of the public policy process is currently underway? (1. Agenda setting; 2. formulation; 3. decision making; 4. implementation; 5. evaluation)
- Do other jurisdictions face a similar problem? If so, what are their levers for action? What can we learn from these experiences?

1.2.3

MAPPING THE ACTORS

Identify and characterize the main actors concerned by the public health issue, in order to position the organization in its ecosystem and thus form a judgement as to the most appropriate interventions based on the position of the other stakeholders.

- Identify: subject area (youth, occupational health, etc.), sector (community, institutional, philanthropic, etc.), decision making levels (local, regional, national, etc.)
- Characterize: power dynamics and relationships (roles and responsibilities, potential to be influenced, strengths, weaknesses, levers, etc.) and focus on the relationships between the actors involved
- Describe the different positions held with respect to the problem

- Which strategic partners are affected by the problem, and which could become so?
- What are the positions of the various stakeholders with regard to the problem raised?
- What relationships do the various actors have with each other?

1.2.4

ANALYZING THE CONTENT OF THE TARGETED PUBLIC POLICY

Analyze, where appropriate, the content of the public policy whose change is desired.

- The analysis can be carried out prior to the adoption of a public policy, in order to inform the actors concerned
- The analysis can also be carried out when the public policy is already in effect, in order to assess its various parameters with a view to improvement, renewal, etc.

- Does the public policy enable achievement of the public health objective?
- Has the public policy produced unintended effects (positive or negative)?
- Has the public policy proven to be equitable (avoiding inequalities among different groups)?
- What are the benefits for the government or other actors?
- Does the policy comply with existing legislation? Can it be applied using the resources available?
- Is it acceptable to all the actors concerned, including the target population (from the definition of the problem to its adoption, implementation and accountability mechanisms)?

2.1 ANALYZING THE RELEVANCE

2.1.1	2.1.2	2.1.3	2.1.4	2.1.5	2.1.6
<p>STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF THE OPPORTUNITY</p>	<p>THE ORGANIZATION'S POSITION AND LEGITIMACY</p>	<p>LEVEL OF PRIORITY</p>	<p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE</p>	<p>ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCING OPTIONS AND CHOICE OF STRATEGY</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS AND POTENTIAL FOR ACHIEVEMENT</p>
<p>Identify the opportunity and demonstrate that the context is favourable to an influencing intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the opportunity (current events, partner request, public consultation, unpublished PH data, etc.) • Describe the content of the targeted public policy and its stage of development • Identify the actors involved and the positions of the various stakeholders in this specific context • Demonstrate that the analysis of the public health problem is complete (rigorous, up-to-date data) • Demonstrate that the influencing intervention is justified by the significance of the public health issues linked to the public policy 	<p>Present the DRSP's position with respect to the problem and the targeted public health objective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a brief overview of the organization's historical positioning on the issue Present the positioning of other public health institutions (local, regional, national, international) that support the organization's intervention • Identify the DRSP's legal mandates that relate to the public health problem, as well as the levers it has for addressing the problem. • Demonstrate that the organization has the legitimacy to intervene with respect to the public health problem 	<p>Determine the level of priority the organization wishes to assign to the problem (high, medium, low) based on the opportunity, and also on the priorities established during strategic planning and in the PARI.</p>	<p>Describe the organization's strategic objectives that relate to the public health problem. <i>The strategic objective differs from the public health objective, and focuses on the policy change sought by the intervention</i> (e.g., influencing the adoption of amendments to a bill concerning the labeling of alcohol products, drawing the attention of another ministry to the lack of available data on a specific issue).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the public health objective will be achieved by means of the strategic objective. This is the desired benefit of taking a position 	<p>Propose and compare potential influencing strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the various potential influencing strategies (supporting, mobilizing, collaborating, influencing, proposing alone or with others, prompting discussion by partners/the media, etc.) • List the risks and benefits associated with each option • Explain why a public policy influencing intervention is the most appropriate option. Evaluate other options. • Clarify the relationship between the options, the strategic objective and the opportunity • Select an influencing strategy based on the strategic objective being pursued • Specify the appropriate means to use based on the influencing strategy (notice, position paper, press release, sharing of new data and best practices, letter, etc.) • Specify the target public, governing body or audience 	<p>Specify the recommendations related to the targeted public health objective, and determine their potential to be achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the main messages to be delivered • Identify recommendations aimed at resolving the public health problem and link them to the main messages • Develop recommendations that are explicit, realistic and applicable • Evaluate their potential to be achieved by means of the levers available to the targeted audience
<p>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What constitutes the opportunity? Are the literature and data sufficiently solid to support intervention with complete credibility? • Is the public health problem significant enough in this specific context to justify an influencing intervention? • Is the DRSP's intervention justified, given the positions of other stakeholders and the context? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has the organization produced in the past that relates to the public health problem? • Does the organization have a clear position regarding the public health problem in this specific context? • What are the legal mandates of the DRSP that relate to the problem? By virtue of which mandate can the DRSP intervene? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this public health issue included in the PARI? Does the PARI include influencing actions targeting this determinant? • Is this a management priority? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the strategic objective enable the organization to provide a solution to the public health problem? What is the desired change? • What is the expected benefit of taking a position? Who are we trying to influence, and to what end? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the potential influencing strategies? Is intervention at the public policy level the most effective option? • Should a position be taken publicly, or can it play out behind the scenes? • What does the DRSP have to say that hasn't already been said? • Toward which actors should our efforts be directed? • Do we wish to address decision makers directly or indirectly (through other actors)? Do we wish to gauge/mobilize the support of other organizations? • Do we want other organizations to speak out publicly on the subject? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the organization recommend as a solution to the public health problem identified? • Do the recommendations have a concrete potential of being achieved?

2.2 ANALYZING THE FEASIBILITY

2.2.1

IMPACTS OF THE INTERVENTION

- Assess the potential impacts of the intervention (advantages, risks, benefits) for both the organization and for stakeholders. These impacts may relate to the focus of the intervention (e.g., a bill), to the mobilization of partners, to public opinion, or to the organization's credibility.
- Identify the risks associated with intervention (political co-optation, credibility, legal action, etc.) as well as the risks of not seizing the opportunity (negative health impacts, marginalization of public health expertise, etc.)
- Identify the concrete benefits expected if the strategic objective is achieved (e.g., amendment to a bill) and the (negative) consequences if the same objective is not achieved
- When necessary, identify ethical issues related to the intervention and call on CIUSSS ethicists



- What are the desired impacts of the intervention?
- What are the blind spots that could pose potential or actual risks to the organization?
- Are there any ethical issues associated with the proposed intervention?

2.2.2

RESOURCES

- Identify the internal resources required to successfully carry out the intervention (expertise, availability, governance, etc.). As required, identify the external resources needed.
 - Assess whether the volume of resources allocated is proportional to the potential for the strategic and public health objectives to be achieved
 - Assess the expertise required and the capacity to intervene (time, contacts, etc.)
 - Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various persons involved and, if necessary, who will govern the intervention
 - Identify the required collaborations

- Do we possess the required expertise or have the capacity to generate it?
- Are we able to successfully carry out the intervention?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of the professionals and the various teams well defined, as well as the procedures surrounding the intervention's progress?

2.2.3

TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES

- Establish a realistic timeline for implementation based on the availability of resources and the political agenda (Public consultation dates, national awareness day, etc.)
- Break down interventions into a few specific deliverables included in a work plan (completed and remaining steps)

- Do we know the dates or milestones that could mark our progress.

3.1.1

COMMUNICATIONS

- Identify communication challenges and objectives related to the various target audiences
- Implement a communication strategy for before, during and after a position is taken
- Define the message you want to disseminate. Identify the two or three most important messages to strategically convey

3.1.2

FOLLOW-UP

Enable the influencing strategy to be sustained beyond a single intervention.

- Carry out an internal debriefing on the influencing intervention
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention
- Follow up with relevant stakeholders
- Follow up on the implementation of recommendations



- Did the intervention have the desired impact?
- Has the public health objective been achieved, or have we advanced or regressed?
- Was the strategic objective realistic?
- Are there any other steps to take?
- What can be learned from this intervention?

If the chosen influencing strategy requires you to write an argumentative text, the reference framework suggests a few guidelines for structuring the text and the argumentation.