

Impact Report

2018-2019

31

publications

18,575

people reached

244

media mentions

8

op-eds in the
Toronto Star

circulation: **3,186,000** daily readers

4

events

- > Mental Health and Cities Summit
- > Under Pressure: 5 Ideas for Housing Now
- > Wilkinson & Pickett on Inequality
- > Supports for Success: Presentation of Research Findings

860

attendees



Audience at Under Pressure: 5 Ideas for Housing Now. Photo credit: Sean DeCory



Participants at "Youth Success Data, Knowledge Exchange" listen to a presentation about the Supports for Success project. Photo credit: Stephanie Elliott

48

committees,
panels, networks
and tables

addressing issues including:

- > Health Equity
- > Housing
- > Civic Engagement
- > Social Inclusion, Race & Diversity
- > Data & Research
- > Transportation
- > Health Systems
- > Healthy Cities
- > Employment & Inequality

59

presentations

on topics including:

- > Employment & Income Inequality
- > Healthy Cities
- > Health Systems
- > Community Education
- > Social Inclusion, Race & Diversity
- > Seniors
- > Housing
- > Civic Engagement



5,163

people reached
through e-newsletters



12,844

people reached
through blog articles



157,383

web page views



50,841

website visitors



521,200

impressions
on Twitter



7,505

average monthly
impressions on
Facebook

Advance population health and reduce health inequities by driving change on the social determinants of health through applied research, effective policy solutions, knowledge mobilization, and innovation.

From surviving to thriving

Older adults face higher risk of chronic disease, and experience increased social isolation. In our report, *Thriving in the City: A Framework for Income and Health in Retirement*, we bring health and well-being to the forefront of the discussion around the needs of older adults. This framework outlines what goods, resources and services older Ontarians need to live a healthy life in retirement. By factoring in physical, mental and social health dimensions, we redefine the minimums to help ensure that older adults do not only survive, but thrive.

Newcomer health isn't one-size-fits-all

Immigrants to Canada tend to arrive healthier than people who are born in Canada, but over time, their health deteriorates. What is it about Canada that makes newcomers unhealthy? That is what we sought to find out in our paper, *Primary care utilization trajectories for immigrants and refugees in Ontario*. We studied primary care use by immigrants and refugees within a ten-year period and found that newcomers' experiences in Canada depend on many factors such as family support, resources upon arrival and access to health information. Our study outlines strategies for providing accessible care options that meet the diverse needs of newcomers. With 46 per cent of people in the GTA identifying as immigrants, a one-size-fits-all approach leaves some of our most vulnerable at risk.



Addressing health inequities in a changing climate

The coming decades will bring higher temperatures, stronger storms, and new patterns of air pollution. Along with this comes increases in heat-related illness; injuries and accidents from severe storms; and respiratory illness from worsening air quality. Our think piece, *Cities, Climate Change, & Health Equity*, explores how the social determinants of health influence the way that communities experience climate change. By highlighting the intersections between social and environmental dimensions, we explore policy considerations for one of the most significant public health threats of this century.

Pharmacare for all

One quarter of Ontarians do not have medication insurance, leaving some unable to take medications as prescribed – or at all. The result is poor health and increased need for healthcare services. Our paper, *Finding the Way Forward: Equitable Access to Pharmacare in Ontario*, examines the complex array of publicly-funded drug coverage programs and maps the affordability and access gaps they create. These gaps most often negatively affect vulnerable groups including women, people with low-incomes and newcomers. Co-authored by Toronto Public Health, our paper provides recommendations for a system that prioritizes health for all Ontarians.

Turning the key on supportive housing

In our summary report, *Seeking Supportive Housing: Characteristics, Needs and Outcomes of Applicants to The Access Point*, we examine data from Toronto's coordinated access system to determine what criteria makes supportive housing applicants more likely to be housed sooner. We consider mental health and addiction issues, housing preferences, support needs, wait times and more. We also map the implications – ranging from strategic investments to operational changes – of these findings for supportive housing providers, funders and policy makers.

Mental Health & Cities Summit drives change

Politicians, academics, community and clinicians came together at the Mental Health & Cities Summit hosted by Mayor John Tory to identify and drive areas for change. The highlight of the event was the mayoral panel featuring mayors from Mississauga, Vancouver, Windsor, Kitchener and St. John's where they discussed challenges and opportunities from their respective cities. Attendees produced a set of recommendations to advance a national conversation about urban mental health and the pressure it is putting on municipal residents, services and budgets. The event was co-presented by Wellesley Institute, CAMH, CivicAction, the Downtown Yonge BIA and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.



Red Sky dance troupe opening the Mental Health & Cities Summit with traditional dance. Photo credit: Nina Acco-Weston

Under pressure: Addressing Toronto's housing crisis

Rents are at an all-time high, newcomers and young people can't afford to live in the city, and people who need subsidized and supportive housing are being left in the cold. From affordability and precarious housing to homelessness across the region – housing is a critical issue that requires a government response. On National Housing Day, we hosted *Under Pressure: 5 Ideas for Housing Now*, where over 200 attendees unpacked these issues. In a panel discussion, housing experts with a range of experiences tackled these issues head-on and shared their top idea for what the city, province or federal government should do right now to address the housing crisis. The event was co-presented by Wellesley Co-operative Housing Federation and Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association.

Partnerships with community and sector organizations make all our work stronger. This year, we were happy to support research initiated by our partners to produce research that is crucial to advancing health equity and building a better Toronto, including:

Life in the GTA: A Window on Well-being

Produced in partnership with the YMCA GTA, this report is a detailed portrait of well-being in the GTA. This report shows that there are important variations in well-being at the neighbourhood level across the GTA – with the City of Toronto having the lowest scores. We provide perspectives on well-being at the local neighbourhood level and can be used to better understand how place-based services can support well-being.

The Toronto Social Capital Study

Positive social relationships are a key component of wellbeing, and people who report more and stronger social relationships also tend to report better health. This benchmarking report assesses the city's social capital levels – and is the first study of its kind in Canada.

This report was created in partnership with many organizations, including Toronto Foundation, TAS Design Build, Community Foundations of Canada/Canadian Heritage, United Way Greater Toronto, MLSE Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation; with the research being conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research.

Photos by Fatin Chowdhury



Acknowledgment of Traditional Land

We would like to acknowledge this sacred land on which Wellesley Institute operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory.

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Wellesley Institute works in research and policy to improve health and health equity in the GTA through action on the social determinants of health.