



Healthy Rural Communities

Seminar Guide

www.ruralhealthycommunities.ca

The Project team would like to thank and recognize the hard work of many individuals who helped make the Healthy Rural Communities Seminar Guide a possibility.

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Introduction

The purpose of this seminar is to build the knowledge of students, and soon-to-be-practicing professionals, about existing strategies and approaches for creating healthy rural communities.

The seminar highlights the Healthy Rural Communities Toolkit (Toolkit) as a key resource. The seminar has been created with a focus for students in planning, public health and engineering, as those professions have a direct role in creating healthy rural communities, but the seminar is not restricted to those professions, and students in other fields (such as geography and environmental science) are also encouraged to learn about the importance of healthy communities. The purpose of the Toolkit is to increase a user's knowledge, regardless of his or her geographic location, about the challenges and opportunities existing in rural communities from the perspective of planners and public-health officials. The Toolkit provides case examples that may be used as models of expansion as well as innovative strategies that may be altered to fit diverse communities. Lastly, the Toolkit provides users with links and resources, such as public-health units, that may offer support when users are in professional practice.

The seminar uses a slide deck based on the Toolkit to provide both a broad view of healthy rural communities and specific action items that can address the needs and opportunities existing in small and rural environments. The seminar will be most effective if your students have read the Toolkit prior to the classroom session. This will ensure that they are knowledgeable about the topics that will be discussed and will be better able to discuss how their future practice could utilize the actions and recommendations provided in the Toolkit.

What you will find in this document:

- + Seminar objectives
- + An introduction to using the slide deck
- + A guide to the slide deck by section
- + Supporting resources

Seminar Objective

The objective of this seminar is to increase student knowledge and understanding of:

- + The unique features, challenges and opportunities that exist in small and rural communities;
- + The role their future profession plays in creating healthy rural communities; and
- + Strategies and approaches for creating healthy rural communities.

Timeframe

The seminar as outlined will take approximately two hours to deliver. The time required is somewhat flexible. Suggestions for adapting the content for shorter or longer timeframes are included in the slide-deck guide.

How to use the slide deck...

Because the slide deck is based on the Healthy Rural Communities Toolkit, it is important that students have a copy of the Toolkit for reference during the seminar. A PDF of the Toolkit can be found on the Healthy Rural Communities website. The Toolkit will expand on topics introduced in the slide deck.

There are 44 slides in the deck, allowing you to customize the slides to your teaching style and area of focus. Using all of the slides, the agenda for the class includes:

- | | |
|--|---|
| + Warm up | + Public health, engineering and planning |
| + Why focus on healthy rural communities? | + Project overview |
| + Sustainability | + 12 action items |
| + Trends, critical events and scenarios | + 10 key things to do |
| + The built environment's impact on health | |

This seminar was created to be interactive, and opportunities for student participation are integrated into the slide deck. We encourage you to add and remove slides/information to tailor the content to suit your focus or location. For example, the fun quiz from Slides 15 to 27 can be modified with questions that better reflect the location of your school or the content of your course.

Guide to the Slide Deck

The following guide breaks down the slide deck by section. Toolkit section descriptions include the slide numbers, purpose of the slides, key content, activity descriptions, optional questions to facilitate conversation and the associated pages in the Toolkit.

Slide Number: 1 – 3

Purpose: To provide a brief introduction.

Key content: The 'with thanks' slide highlights funding opportunities and those involved in the project.

Page of the Toolkit: Page 2

Slide Number: 4

Purpose: To give students the opportunity to participate and actively begin to understand what is meant by "rural" and the importance of healthy rural communities. Two sample activities are provided that may be done with your students. Each activity should take between 10 and 15 minutes. It is recommended that only one activity be utilized for this section in class to ensure that adequate time is allocated to the rest of the seminar.

Activity 1

This activity will be done prior to the lecture so that students will start thinking about rural issues. For this activity, students are asked to analyze a relevant newspaper from a nearby rural community. Instruct them to take a look at the challenges and current issues the area faces and choose one article that is of high interest to them. Have them answer the following questions about the selected article:

1. Why did you find the topic of the article interesting?
2. What are two things you learned about the community?
3. How is the issue covered in the article similar or different in comparison to an urban environment?

Instruct students to take brief notes about their article and make sure to bring them to class. In small groups, have students discuss the issues and their responses to the questions above.

Activity 2

The purpose of this activity is to look at communities through a rural lens to better understand the issues covered in the seminar. For this activity, you will need a piece of chart paper and markers. Separate students into small discussion groups and ask them to discuss this question: When you think of "Rural community," what are some words that come to mind (for example, the services they provide, stereotypes, facts and so on)? After a few minutes, have the groups share their words and list them on the chart paper, and then discuss as a large group why they chose those words in relation to rural communities.

Activity 3

This activity will require you to bring sticky notes, or paper and tape, and perhaps some extra writing utensils to class. Have students write down how they believe their future career may impact rural health outcomes. Have the students stick or tape these pieces of paper to a board in the class, and then have the students choose a piece of paper that does not belong to them.

Have each student read aloud what was written on their paper. The student will then have to give the class a quick synopsis of the steps that they would take to achieve what the other student has written down in the context of that career path. This activity allows students to explore unique aspects of their career while also putting them on the spot in considering the uniqueness of dealing with rural issues in whatever path they may be on.

Slide Number: 5

Purpose: To have students reflect on the information provided in the Toolkit. This slide also aims to have students consider the relationships between the built environment and health outcomes through diverse professions, such as planning, public health and engineering.

Key content:

1. How communities are planned, built, serviced and resourced impacts the health of residents.
2. It is important to have an understanding of the rural perspective, because small and rural communities have needs that are uniquely different from those of their urban counterparts. Solutions that work in cities and larger urban centres may not apply in smaller settings. For example, rural communities differ from urban ones in areas such as transportation, tax base and health-related measures.

Discussion/questions: Why should we as (planners/engineers/public-health professionals) have an understanding of how to create healthy rural communities?

Pages of the Toolkit: Pages 6 – 8

Slide Number: 6 – 7

Purpose: Introduces the concept that rural communities are diverse and multifaceted and that health is impacted in multiple ways.

Key content: (Example) The first row on Slide 6 illustrates various types of development that could occur in rural communities. The second picture (the farm) could illustrate zoning-use conflicts that could potentially negatively impact the quality of life of those in the immediate vicinity. However, the farm also provides employment and contributes to economic development.

Discussion/questions: What do these pictures say about healthy rural communities? How do these photos represent rural communities and how they can impact health?

Slide Number: 8

Purpose: To highlight three principles that are key to health and well-being in rural communities: quality of life, sustainability and creativity.

Key content:

1. Sustainability is meeting the needs of today without compromising the needs of future generations. For a rural community, sustainability ensures that development:
 - a. Is economically feasible;
 - b. Reduces or prevents environmental degradation and encourages stewardship; and
 - c. Promotes equality and fairness.
2. Quality of life and creativity are important components of sustainability.
 - a. Quality of life: There are many actions in rural communities that contribute to economic development and therefore to the improved well-being, health and quality of life of

their citizens. Some of these actions are taken with regard to community design, land-use planning, active transportation and community engagement.

- b. Creativity: Trying out new ideas, challenging the norm and valuing the creativity and cultural assets in your community.

Discussion/questions: The creative economy is made up of many workers, including senior management, health professionals and professionals in art, culture, business and financials. What are some examples of the creative economy in a community?

Pages of the Toolkit: Page 15

Slide Number: 9

Purpose: There are critical events that change the trend line, and these events may be different in rural communities or may have a different outcome when compared to urban communities.

Key content: The trend line may be positively or negatively impacted when a critical event occurs. For example, the decreasing population trends in certain communities may be positively impacted if a critical event, such as the arrival of a large employer, were to happen in the community.

Discussion/questions: What trends currently influence communities, especially rural communities? What other types of critical events would impact a community, and would the impact be positive or negative? How could some of these trend lines have a greater or lesser impact on rural communities?

Slide Number: 10

Purpose: To provoke discussion and inspire thought regarding the relationship between the built environment and health impacts.

Key content:

1. Physical environment (including both built and natural environment) is a key determinant of health outcomes. Some of the ways the built environment impacts health are listed on this slide. This is a good opportunity to discuss with students how their future professions could have an effect on the built environment and on each of these health impacts.
2. Access to medical care is a critical component of health outcomes in both urban and rural contexts, but where we live, work and play is equally important. The quality of our schools and education, the affordability and stability of our housing, our access to stable, fair-paying jobs and the safety of our neighbourhoods keep us healthy and prevent potential negative health outcomes from the start.
3. Ensuring that professionals support health through their field (whether it be planning, health or engineering) is important because “health is a fundamental resource to the individual, to the community and to society as a whole and must be supported by soundly investing in living conditions that create, maintain and protect health” (2010 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontario, 2011). Health is about more than just hospitals and doctors. The communities in which we live, learn, work and play can make it harder or easier to make healthy choices and have healthy options.

Discussion/questions: What comes to mind when you hear the word “health?” What are the similarities and differences between the built environments of rural communities and urban centres that have the potential to impact health outcomes? How do you see your future profession playing a role in creating healthier built environments?

Slide Number: 11 – 13

Purpose: To provide a brief orientation to public health. To illustrate the connection with engineering and planning through the example of active transportation. To provide an overview of the purpose of the project.

Key content:

1. Public Health Mandate. Public health work in Ontario is directed by Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability (2018). The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has also developed two new guidelines (2018) relating to the built environment: the Chronic Disease Prevention Guideline and the Healthy Environments and Climate Change Guideline. Public-health professionals work in many disciplines, ranging from clinical service delivery and education to policy development. All of this is done with a focus on prevention, upstream interventions and societal factors that influence health. In public health, the patient is the population. This metaphor shifts the focus from “caring for individuals” to “improving the health of an entire population.” Public health is also directed to work with municipalities.
2. The five core public-health functions include: Assessment and surveillance, health promotion and policy development, health protection, disease prevention and emergency preparedness.
3. Engineering: Collaborative Work and supporting documents (Healthy Communities and Planning for Active Transportation, Public Health and Environmental Assessments).
4. “Rural planning is the practice of planning for rural areas, with a focus on rural issues and from a rural perspective (implying an appreciation for the rural community, its needs and aspirations)” (Caldwell, 2011).

Discussion/questions: There are many professions that play a role in creating healthier communities. Increasingly, there are documents and guidelines being created that recognize a need for the integration of many disciplines to create healthier communities. Based on what we have discussed so far, how could you integrate your knowledge to create healthier rural communities?

Slide Number: 14 – 15

Purpose: Showcase that there are many planning tools involved in rural land use and the built environment. Municipalities need to ensure that planning decisions enhance and protect the health and well-being of their citizens. Please see the bar graph with a comparison of health outcomes in rural communities and urban centres, which shows the health disparities between rural and urban residents.

Key content:

1. Provincial Plans: In addition to the Provincial Policy Statement (2014), there are several provincial plans that address specific issues affecting rural communities in specific areas of Ontario.
2. Official Plans: These provide direction for development over a minimum twenty-year period while taking into consideration a wide range of social, economic and environmental conditions that are important in building a healthy, safe and sustainable community.
3. Special Purposes/Functional Plans: These often deal with specific topics, such as cycling and pedestrian movement (active transportation), recreation (recreation, parks and open-space plans) or food systems (food and agriculture strategies).

4. Zoning: Land-use zoning's relevance to public health lies in the origin of zoning as an instrument to promote public health, safety and well-being.
5. Site Plan Control Agreements: Site plan control provides a process for approving plans or drawings associated with development.
6. Community Improvement Plans: These can help municipalities address challenges, providing a means for planning and financing development activities that efficiently use, reuse and restore lands, buildings and infrastructure.

Discussion/questions: How does one develop an understanding of the intricacies involved in creating healthy communities, both urban and rural? Can you provide an example of a complexity or complication that might arise when addressing health in your field (for example, perhaps the logistics and concepts are not up-to-date regarding healthy communities)?

Pages of the Toolkit: Pages 8 – 9 & 21 – 22

Slide Number: 16 – 28

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to get students thinking about issues through a rural lens. It provides an opportunity to engage students as they share their responses and to elicit feedback to get a better understanding of issues related to healthy rural communities.

Content: Note that this is where you may wish to substitute quiz questions that are more relevant to your program and setting.

Discussion/questions: Did any answers surprise you? What about it surprised you?

Slide Number: 29

Purpose: To give students an overview of why and how the Toolkit was created. This also goes over the project in its entirety.

Key content:

1. A Locally Driven Collaborative Project funded by Public Health Ontario.
2. Rural communities are home to approximately one in five Ontario residents. These residents experience unique environments and lived experiences that contribute to specific and often negative health outcomes. These health outcomes call for concerted action and responsive public policy. This Toolkit offers a number of planning and development strategies that can help rural communities create a healthier community and, in turn, a healthier population.
3. Public Health Ontario funded the development of this Toolkit with input from the staffs of numerous municipalities and health units from across the province.
4. The Toolkit is intended for use in rural communities. Municipalities, including staffs, health-unit staffs and elected officials, are the intended audience, although the Toolkit will also help other interested community members advocate for healthier communities and populations. Overall, this Toolkit is meant for those who are interested in how the built environment and local development impact health.

Pages of the Toolkit: Page 6

Slide Number: 30 – 33

Purpose: To broadly define rural planning and provide students with a project diagram to better explain how the Toolkit was prepared. Provides an orientation to the contents of the Toolkit.

Key content:

1. Slide 30 illustrates the interconnectedness of the disciplines that contribute to rural health outcomes. It also contains information on the backgrounds of the professionals who were involved in the making of the Toolkit.
2. There are case studies in a range of action areas that document innovative success stories from rural communities across Ontario.

Pages of the Toolkit: Pages 11 – 12

Slide Number: 34 – 41

Purpose: Explore the following 13 action items were identified for implementation in rural municipalities. These were derived from surveys, key informant interviews and focus-group discussions with municipal planners and public-health professionals.

- | | |
|--|--|
| + Community Design and Land Use Planning | + Agriculture |
| + Active Transportation | + Cultural Strategies and Revitalization |
| + Community Engagement and Capacity Building | + Access to Local Food |
| + Water Quality | + Nature |
| + Air Quality | + Safe and Affordable Housing |
| + Tourism | + Climate Change |
| + Planning for Special Age Groups | |

Key content:

1. Each section has components explaining the “why,” the key points from the research and the recommendations. There is a section for each of the 13 action items.
2. The action items are not expected to be addressed by a single profession. Collaboration among professions to address these actions items is crucial!
3. Videos on the Healthy Rural Communities website demonstrate how some communities are working to address specific action items that they have identified as an issue or initiative that best suits the needs of their community.

Discussion/questions: What action items do you believe are most pertinent to your field? What are some potential solutions that address those action items? It is important to keep in mind that these action items may also be present in urban communities, just as in rural ones. However, rural communities face different barriers, so different solutions must be considered.

Pages of the Toolkit: Pages 26 – 45

Slide Number: 42 – 43

Purpose: These “10 Key Things to Do” may be considered ‘lessons learned’ from the case-study communities. They represent broad strategies that can be applied by any stakeholders who are working toward developing healthy community initiatives.

Key content: The 10 Key Things could help to facilitate healthy rural communities. Their use will vary by community, stakeholders, barriers and strengths within the community.

Discussion/questions: How could your profession be a champion regarding one or more of the Key Things to Do?

Pages of the Toolkit: Pages 24 – 25

Extra Resources

This seminar was created to use the Healthy Rural Communities Toolkit as a resource for providing students with information about how their future professions can improve rural community health. There are many more excellent resources available beyond this seminar and Toolkit. Additional resources are listed below for those who are interested in learning more about specific topics. This list is not exhaustive; you may want to add resources that you are aware of pertaining to healthy rural communities and your program/curriculum (planning, public health, engineering etc.).

Optional Follow-Up Activities

Follow-Up Activity 1

Have students interview someone who is working in their field in a small/rural community to further discuss challenges/issues/opportunities from their personal perspective. You may wish to have students write a small reflection about this interview to share with the rest of the class.

Follow-Up Activity 2

Have students do an in-depth review of the literature on a specific area of interest from the action items highlighted in the Toolkit. Ask students to come up with a comprehensive action plan on that action item based on their literature review. Perhaps have students present their action plan to the rest of the class.

Follow-Up Activity 3

Invite a local public-health practitioner to visit your class to discuss rural issues/challenges/opportunities as well as any relevant case studies they may have.

Resources

Healthy Rural Communities Toolkit - <https://www.ruralhealthycommunities.ca/toolkit>

Citizen's Guides to Land-Use Planning - <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/>

The Tales That Bind: A Narrative Model of Living and Helping in Rural Communities, by Randall, Clews & Furlong (2015). Toronto: University of Toronto.

The Urbanite's Guide to the Countryside: Southern Ontario Edition, by Caldwell, Thomson & Auld (2006). Printed in Canada.

Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability (2018) http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/default.aspx

Public Health and Planning 101 (online course with certificate).
<http://www.opha.on.ca/What-We-Do/Projects/Built-Environment.aspx>

Greenspace and Ecohealth Toolkit, by Ontario Trillium Foundation, EcoHealth Ontario, Forests Ontario & Ontario (2017).
http://www.ecohealth-ontario.ca/files/FO_8.5x11_EH_TOOLKIT_nocrops_FA.pdf

Two Way Street: Public Health and Transportation Working Together on Active Transportation: Findings from a stakeholder consultation, by the Built Environment Working Group, Ontario Public Health Association (2016).

[http://www.opha.on.ca/getmedia/01e4f418-8ab1-43c0-aa17-054afd96b11a/OPHA-White-Paper-Summary-Transportation-and-Health-\(March-30-2016\)-Fin.pdf.aspx](http://www.opha.on.ca/getmedia/01e4f418-8ab1-43c0-aa17-054afd96b11a/OPHA-White-Paper-Summary-Transportation-and-Health-(March-30-2016)-Fin.pdf.aspx)

Public Health and Environmental Assessments, by the Built Environment Workgroup, Ontario Public Health Association (nd).

<http://www.opha.on.ca/getmedia/621adf7e-529d-4ecd-9006-54d9708d7079/Survey-Report-Public-Health's-Engagement-in-Environmental-Assessments.pdf.aspx>

The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2017: Designing Healthy Living, by the Government of Canada (2017).

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-public-health-canada/2017-designing-healthy-living/2017-designing-healthy-living-eng.pdf>

Healthy Communities, Sustainable Communities. Refer to this website for a number of Calls to Action prepared by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, including active transportation, age-friendly communities, food systems and the public realm.

<http://ontarioplanners.ca/Policy/Healthy-Communities-bull-Sustainable-Communities>

Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning, Health. Provincial Health Services Authority, BC.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/professional-resources/healthy-built-environment-linkages-toolkit>

Health, Not Health Care – Changing the Conversation, by Ontario Government (2011).

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/cmoh_10/cmoh_10.pdf

A New Way to Talk About the Social Determinants of Health, by E. Carger, D. Western & the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2010).

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2010/01/a-new-way-to-talk-about-the-social-determinants-of-health.html>

Greenspace and Ecohealth Toolkit [draft], by EcoHealth Ontario (2017). [http://www.opha.on.ca/getmedia/9f643709-045e-4a53-a485-eb9f0897ff5/Draft-Ecohealth-Policy-Toolkit-\(Revised-January-13-17\).pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf](http://www.opha.on.ca/getmedia/9f643709-045e-4a53-a485-eb9f0897ff5/Draft-Ecohealth-Policy-Toolkit-(Revised-January-13-17).pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf)

(Revised-January-13-17).pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf

For a list of all public-health units in Ontario: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

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