

Strategic Plan 2016/17 - 2020/21

BC Observatory for Population & Public Health



Partners:



BC Centre for Disease Control
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority



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Contact:

This report can be found at: www.bccdc.ca/observatory

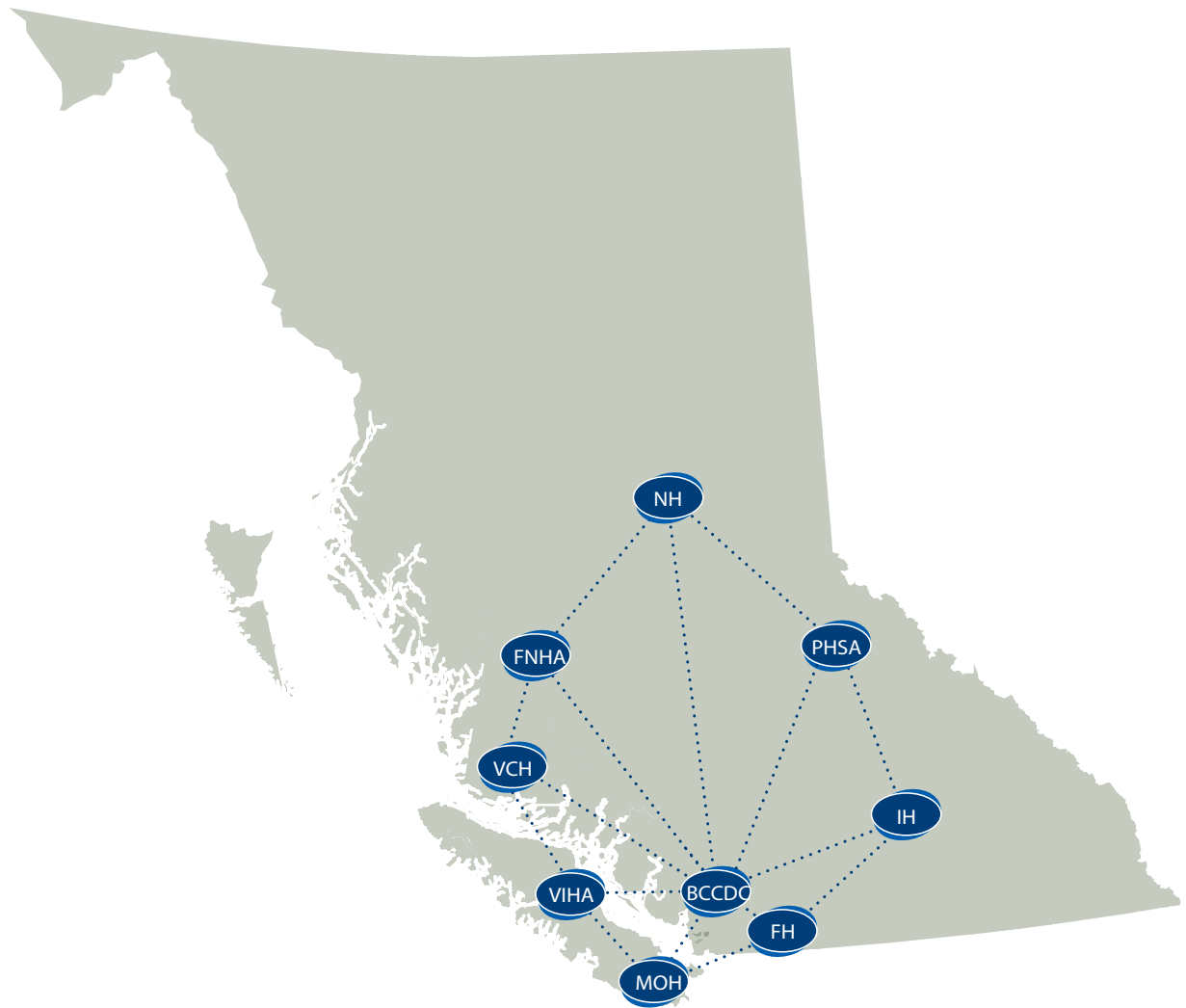
BC Observatory for Population & Public Health
BC Centre for Disease Control
655 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 4R4
observatory@bccdc.ca



About the Observatory

The BC Observatory for Population and Public Health (BCOPPH or Observatory) was established in response to a recommendation of the Population and Public Health Surveillance Plan for British Columbia (BC). It is a partnership between the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), BC Ministry of Health (MOH), BC Provincial Health Officer (PHO), First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Fraser Health Authority (FHA), Interior Health Authority (IHA), Island Health Authority (VIHA), Northern Health Authority (NHA), Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCH).

Partner network for the BC Observatory for Population and Public Health



Purpose

The Observatory's initial focus is to provide collaborative leadership in the development of provincial and regional surveillance capacity with respect to non-communicable diseases and injuries, risk and protective factors, and environmental health. This includes support to the PHO and Chief Medical Health Officers in regional health authorities to systematically report on their populations' health status, as required by the *Public Health Act*. Over the longer term, the intention is to integrate these activities with the existing communicable disease surveillance system.

The Observatory will provide ongoing support to provincial and regional surveillance programs, enhance provincial capacity and coordination, and provide partner organizations with an opportunity to set collaborative priorities and develop joint work plans. Surveillance information produced by the Observatory will be used for policy development, program planning and evaluation, and decision making to enable growth of vibrant British Columbia communities.

Staff & resources

The Observatory staff include core resources situated at the BCCDC (the hub) and epidemiology resources within the regional health authorities (the spokes). Currently, the hub consists of the Observatory Director and Administrative Assistant, and the spokes consist of four Regional Epidemiologists. The hub is expected to eventually include a project manager, a knowledge translation specialist, and additional data management and analytic support including computer scientists, epidemiologists and biostatisticians.

The Observatory is more than just its staff. In addition to the recruitment of the Observatory's employees, the Operations Committee was established and has begun its work. The Committee is tasked with developing the annual work plan for the Observatory as well as providing necessary content, operational, and strategic support to Observatory's implementation activities. Membership includes senior epidemiology and operations representatives from each partner. In addition, Public Health Executive Committee (PHEC) provides strategic direction and approves annual work plans and strategic plans. Members of PHEC include senior executive public health leaders in BC's Ministry of Health and Health Authorities.

Target audiences

The target audiences for the Observatory products are provincial, regional, and local public health staff who perform surveillance, program planning, and policy making functions, among others. Ultimately, the Observatory will become more public facing, providing access to data to help support regional health authorities, local and provincial governments, communities, non-governmental organizations, academia, and the general public.

Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning was carried out in consultation with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer (Ministry of Health), senior public health leaders from Health Authorities, members of the Operations Committee, and Regional Observatory Epidemiologists. The planning built upon already agreed-to Observatory key functions and guiding principles outlined in the Surveillance Plan for BC: Implementation Strategy document (published in May 2015), as well as discussions previously held by the group.

A strategic planning forum was held on September 7th, 2016 at the BCCDC. All participants (listed below) engaged in discussion about what success would look like in five years and what actions are necessary to turn that vision into reality. The meeting was structured into four parts:

1. The group updated and confirmed the Observatory's vision, mission, key functions and guiding principles and ensured alignment with the BC Guiding Framework for Public Health.
2. Participants developed a more detailed vision what success looks like five years from now.
3. Small group discussions took place to describe what activities the partners need to stop, start, and continue doing in order to achieve the vision.
4. Outstanding questions were identified to be addressed in the near future.

Following the forum, all participants received a meeting summary document, which they were invited to review. Subsequently to receiving participant feedback and conducting follow-up conversations, all the notes were reviewed and organized by key emerging themes. Six themes were identified: data, methods, surveillance products, capacity building, research, and partnerships. These themes were formed into strategic goals and incorporated into a strategic plan.

Participants and contributors

Dr. Sandra Allison (NH)	Tricia Hollyer (PHSA)	Dr. Ashraf Mohammed (FNHA)
Dr. Trevor Corneil (IH)	Trish Hunt (PHSA)	Mike Pennock (MOH)
Dr. Patty Daly (VCH)	Dr. Perry Kendall (PHO)	Dr. Drona Rasali (BCCDC)
Gillian Frost (IH)	Ross Kenny (VCH)	Dr. Melanie Rusch (VIHA)
Dr. Reka Gustafson (VCH)	Dr. Arlene King (FH)	Dr. Jat Sandhu (VCH)
Kari Harder (NH)	Anthony Leamon (BCOPPH)	Dr. Kate Smolina (BCOPPH)
Brent Harris (BCOPPH)	Dr. Victoria Lee (FH)	Dr. Richard Stanwick (VIHA)
Colleen Hart (PHSA)	Laura MacDougall (BCCDC)	Dr. Mark Tyndall (BCCDC)
Dr. Bonnie Henry (PHO)	Dr. Shannon McDonald (FNHA)	

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BC Observatory for Population & Public Health

Vision

Accurate, timely and actionable health intelligence about population well-being and its determinants to enable growth of vibrant British Columbia communities in which all people achieve their optimal health.

Mission

Through collaborative and coordinated partnerships in population and public health surveillance practice, we support regional health authorities and local and provincial governments in promoting, improving and protecting the health and well-being of British Columbians.

We support this vision & mission through excellence in our work, leadership, partnership, innovation and using population health data for action.

Values

- Respect
- Service orientation
- Transparency
- Efficiency
- Trust
- Collaboration



Guiding principles

- Engage in shared governance and decision making by all partners.
- Ensure that responsibility for specific tasks lies with the most appropriate organization based on jurisdictional authority.
- Work together across multiple levels – local, regional, provincial, and national – to increase access to data required for decision-making.
- Share access to integrated, automated information systems.
- Respect First Nations Health Information Governance for data relating to Indigenous Peoples.
- Adopt common data standards, privacy protocols, data quality and analytic methodologies.
- Incorporate a multiple illness view during analyses to appropriately account for and capture comorbidities.
- Focus on population health and health equity, being inclusive of Aboriginal health.
- Take into account Indigenous Peoples' view of health and wellness.
- Consider the burden of disease and critical threats to health and safety in the decision-making process.
- Embrace a “surveillance for action” orientation to ensure that data collection is for the purposes of public health action.
- Utilize assessment and surveillance information for planning and decision making at all levels.
- Prioritize activities based on established priority-setting criteria.
- Ensure community engagement drives local priorities and action.
- Employ evidence-based practice, evaluation and continuous quality improvement.
- Continuously improve through identification and acting on lessons learned.
- Be open to creativity and innovation.
- Respond to public health emergency situations in a timely manner.

Key functions

The key functions outlined below represent an aspirational list of what a fully established and operational Observatory would be able to do. As it develops over the next five years, the Observatory will begin to perform some of these functions, while building capacity to eventually take on all of them.

1. Generate population health situation analyses, surveillance and intelligence

- Manage data acquisition, linkage & access to meet common needs for the surveillance community.
- Collect relevant data and establish data governance and quality assurance.
- Conduct data analysis and interpret results.
- Develop and maintain an integrated database of common sets of indicators for monitoring population health status & wellbeing, their determinants, health inequities & environmental health.
- Provide surge capacity in times of public health emergencies or as needed by the partners.

2. Translate, disseminate and share knowledge and information

- Develop training and education support activities for health analysts and other professionals (e.g. community of practice) to foster a culture of rigorously maintained health intelligence.
- Develop and maintain a web-based technology for the dissemination of indicators for monitoring health status and wellbeing, their determinants, and health inequalities.
- Disseminate public health information to external stakeholders and the public.

3. Work together with local and regional partners to support evidence-based decision-making

- Work in partnership to identify and prioritize gaps in data on population health and wellness, information and resources.
- Strengthen relationships between provincial and regional surveillance partners.
- Collaborate with non-health sector partners (e.g. local governments, non-governmental organizations, and academia).
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of population health interventions.

4. Collaborate with provincial, national and international partners

- Work with other jurisdictions to share best practices and advance population health surveillance.
- Learn from and collaborate with other Observatories and relevant organizations.
- Seek opportunities to collaborate with federal and provincial partners (e.g., Public Health Agency of Canada) to enhance surveillance capacity.

Goals, objectives and outcomes

Objectives			Outcomes	
Y1 (2016/17)	Y2 (2017/18)	Y3 (2018/19)	Y4 (2019/20)	Y5 (2020/21)
Goal 1. Establish a secure data platform equally accessible to all partners				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate access to key datasets in a timely manner through Population Data BC as interim solution Establish an easy-to-use, secure, and sustainable platform for data sharing among all partners 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand access to more datasets, including First Nations, and those outside of the health sector Expand access to more partners and stakeholders as appropriate Begin collection of more local-level risk and protective factor data 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A linked master file of all relevant datasets Integrated platform for communicable and chronic diseases
Goal 2. Develop a robust methodology hub				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a hub for storing and organizing methods and analytic approaches Standardize definitions for common health indicators and other metrics as appropriate Implement a search function and make the hub user-friendly 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand access to the hub to Community of Practice members & consider making it available publicly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive methodological hub; the go-to in the province for standardized surveillance tools and approaches Regular updates with innovative methods and latest developments in the field 	
Goal 3. Ensure that surveillance products are relevant and actionable				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and plan first surveillance products based on provincial and regional need Train staff in turning data into intelligence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or two pilot projects with health authorities completed, including user testing prior to release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the impact of public health actions taken to inform any necessary changes Validate the value add to the end users Establish standard procedures for developing a new surveillance product 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely, informative and actionable surveillance products regularly used by stakeholders
Goal 4. Build capacity to work in a flexible and nimble way				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage internal knowledge and resources for the most efficient way to conduct work Facilitate more communication and collaboration across partners 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that staff have a broad epidemiological skillset to work on different areas of focus Optimize most appropriate mix and number of staff to meet functional demands 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated and/or integrated practice among partners (i.e., no more work silos)

Objectives			Outcomes	
Y1 (2016/17)	Y2 (2017/18)	Y3 (2018/19)	Y4 (2019/20)	Y5 (2020/21)
Goal 5. Enable needs-based applied public health research				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage academics as technical advisors on Observatory projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and participate in funding opportunities for service-oriented research questions driven by the needs of the public health providers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with research centres around BC on applied public health research questions 	
Goal 6. Build a strong partnership with local, regional and provincial stakeholders				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential partnership opportunities with key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strong and comprehensive public website with easy-to-access and easy-to-use health surveillance products Become a placement site for practicum students and public health officers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for sharing of best practices and data-driven successes Formal linkages with similar and relevant organizations 	

Next steps

Over the next five years, the Observatory partnership will work towards its strategic goals by integrating the identified objectives into its annual work plans. Progress towards the strategic goals and the overall vision will be re-evaluated on an annual basis.