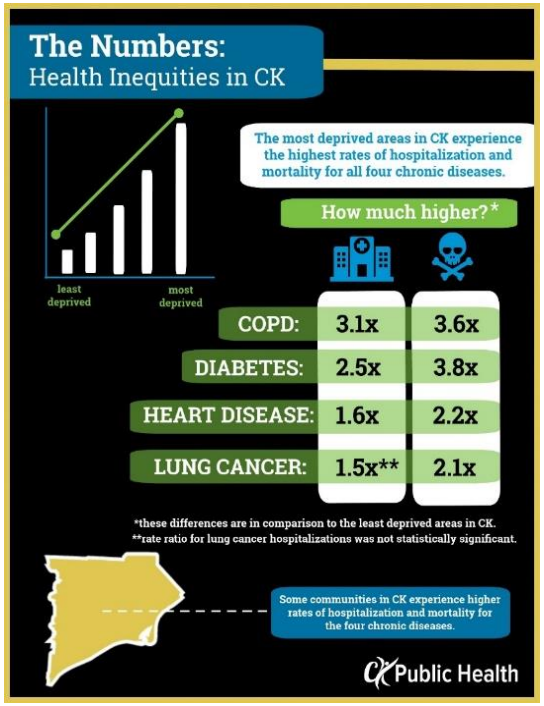
Social Attitudes and Health Differences in Chatham-Kent

Webinar Resource
November 4, 2020

Health Equity Data Analysis (HEDA)



The areas in CK described as most materially deprived, also experienced the worst chronic disease related outcomes.

Purpose: to learn more about what health differences (inequities) exist in Chatham-Kent and why they exist.

Why are some people in CK more likely to get sick than others?

We know from the literature that some people are more likely to get sick than others because…

Differences in living and working conditions

Not everyone can afford to buy nutritious food, transportation, safe and quality housing, medical supplies and equipment and dental care

Discrimination, racism and stigma

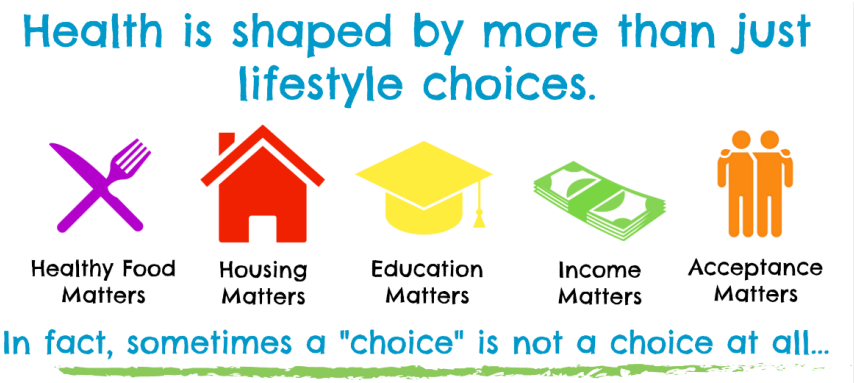
These are barriers that prevent some people from going to or using services to support their health and wellbeing

Policies and practices at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government that influence:

How much income we get through employment, family benefits, or social assistance, the quality and availability of housing and child care, the kinds of services and recreational opportunities we have access to and what happens when we lose our jobs

All of these factors affect people's ability to prevent, manage, and/or treat chronic diseases.

Social Attitudes Survey



Purpose: to better understand what our community thinks about social and health differences in our community.

Two main themes in Chatham-Kent:

In CK, many residents believe that health is a choice. But is health really a choice?

- Research shows that 60% of someone's health depends on where they live, learn, work, play and age.

Assuming everyone can just choose to be healthy leads to stereotyping, stigma and isolation, making health differences between groups of people worse.

In CK, many people believe that people who want to make it can if they are willing to work hard.

Focusing on individual responsibility, instead of what is best for everyone, creates bigger differences in health between people who have the resources for health and those who do not.

Areas for Action

As an individual, you can:

- Reflect on our own knowledge and awareness of the social determinants of health and how these influence our daily lives.
- Consider our own attitudes and how they contribute to our community's social culture and how that impacts the lives of our neighbours.
- Be empathetic when thinking about people's ability to choose, understanding that not everyone has the same options to choose from.
- Be understanding. We don't know what people in front of us are dealing with. We know, though, that often people who are struggling have experiences of trauma. We have an opportunity to reframe our thinking to see people as resilient, who have strengths and skills to offer.

Areas for Action

As an employer, organization or municipality, you can:

Look at existing priorities, policies and practices to see if re-direction or re-allocation of resources can be made to address key areas that influence health and well-being, such as housing, transportation, child care and employment security.

Consider equity and inclusion in all decisions around resources, planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and services, with special action towards gender and race equity. This can be accomplished by implementing an Equity and Inclusion Toolkit.

Work towards reconciliation by initiating efforts to work towards the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report. We can start by acknowledging the resilience of Indigenous communities who have found ways to thrive despite ongoing experiences of Colonization but we have work to do to ensure our services are trauma informed, anti-oppressive and culturally appropriate and safe.

Work intentionally to address systemic racism. Intentional action will help to ensure that discrimination, systemic oppression and stigma are not barriers for people who are seeking services that support their health and well-being.

Areas for Action

As an employer, organization or municipality, you can:

Advocate to government for a Basic Income Guarantee as a means to address the income gap

Provide safe, secure, living wage employment by ensuring working conditions that provide a living wage with safe, equitable employment conditions and opportunities, particularly in low-income precarious employment whose employees are especially vulnerable, such as women, workers who are racialized, and youth.

We need to work together towards reducing unfair health differences in CK.