

# Child and Youth Health Network

of the Capital Region of British Columbia

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## Final Report – July 2018

This report describes the Child and Youth Health Network of the Capital Region of BC (C&YHN) with an overview of its achievements and lessons learned. This report is intended to inform groups undertaking similar collaborative work.

Since 2013, the Child and Youth Health Network has:

- ✓ brought leaders from across community groups, organizations and systems that work with children and youth together to explore a multi-sectoral approach to addressing issues;
- ✓ engaged a broad cross-section of community, with over 200 members involved in C&YHN events;
- ✓ obtained financial support from a number of community and government funders;
- ✓ created a Measures of Connectedness report, in collaboration with experts in the field of child and youth development, and
- ✓ launched four projects that promoted youth connectedness to family, peers, community and school.

## Description of the C&YHN

**Background:** Formed in 2013, the Child and Youth Health Network (C&YHN) came together as a multi-stakeholder collaborative composed of community organizations, municipal and provincial representatives, the Capital Regional District, and Island Health. The C&YHN emerged out of extensive discussion and consultations with service delivery organizations, health practitioners, front-line staff working with children and youth, systems leaders, parents, children and youth who voiced the critical need for a comprehensive approach to the health and well-being of children and youth. Coming together as a large multi-sectoral initiative, the C&YHN aimed to work differently together to improve health outcomes.

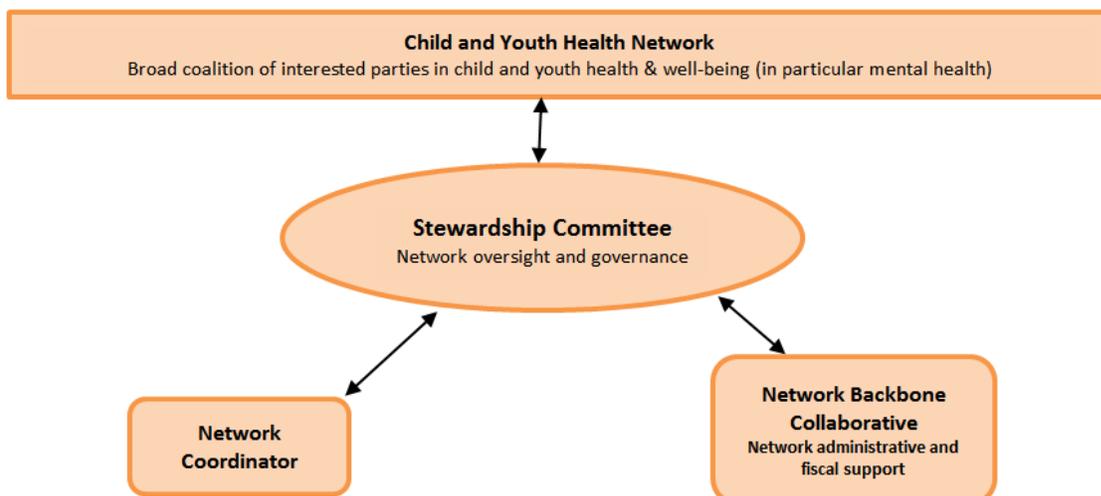
The accomplishments of the C&YHN are many: hosted large network education and planning sessions; developed the measures of connectedness; literature reviews that provided relevant information to our community; brought together groups that haven't traditionally connected; identified a strong community need for connectedness; and unleashed our community's commitment and desire to do better together for children and youth. However, over time it became increasingly evident that for a multi-stakeholder network to be successful, a commitment of coordination resources is necessary.

A consensus decision was made at a C&YHN planning meeting March 18, 2018 to wrap up the work of the C&YHN, and to produce a final report on successes and lessons learned, with recommendations for those who undertake similar collaborative efforts in the future.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the passionate and dedicated participants in the Child and Youth Health Network. We have come to appreciate the commitment of our community to work together differently to improve the health outcomes for children and youth.

**CYHN Vision:** Communities supporting healthy kids growing into healthy adults raising healthy kids

### Structure:



## Lessons Learned and Recommendations

1. **Funding** (with grateful acknowledgement of the funders who participated and contributed to the C&YHN)

### Recommendations:

- That a multi-sectoral network be core funded with a commitment for multi-year funding
- That adequate and consistent coordination be in place to oversee and ensure collaboration and coordination

### Rationale:

The amount of coordination and strategic relationship building needed for a successful network requires a consistent coordinator position. Responses from C&YHN participants indicated a strong appreciation for the network model and that work could not be sustained by a small committee with limited coordination. In addition, embedding coordination within an organization that has infrastructure such as admin support, meeting and work spaces enables consistent coordination.

2. **Active participation of policy and program stakeholders**

### Recommendations:

- Establish commitment and active participation from senior decision makers
- Ensure strong cross-ministerial engagement from all levels of government, including 13 municipalities in Greater Victoria, and community agencies

### Rationale:

Active participation of decision-maker's increases integration at the planning level with those in a position to influence systems, policies and practices and ensures the Network is aligned with other initiatives.

3. **Ensure inclusion of diverse community members**

### Recommendation:

- Prioritize engagement of individuals and groups who reflect the diversity of the community
- Ensure dedicated and expert coordination to ensure purposeful engagement

### Rationale:

A strategy to involve underrepresented groups, including marginalized populations, as well as Indigenous leaders, requires consistent and expert coordination. Engaging and building relationships with these communities requires time, consistency and commitment.

4. **Broad Mandate Vs Local Action**

### Recommendation:

- Be aware of the tension between the need for process-oriented broad vision and planning while also undertaking local actions and "quick wins"
- Be aware that funding priorities can influence direction and scope which can result in losing focus and engagement of participants

### Rationale:

While C&YHN had a broad mandate and strategic plan the focus areas could not be fully developed once project funding was prioritized over planning.

## 5. Create Alignment

### **Recommendation:**

- **A Network ought to strengthen collaborations in the community by bringing initiatives together and providing an overarching network for diverse initiatives**

### **Rationale:**

The C&YHN emerged from a strong desire to work differently together. The work of the C&YHN confirmed that the region is rich in sector collaborations, however there were missed opportunities for inter-sectoral work that could increase the effectiveness of initiatives. The C&YHN was effective in creating connections and alignment between diverse groups that all aimed in some way to improve children's health in the region.

## THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS!



### **List of Appendices:**

1. Accomplishments and processes of the CYHN
2. Measures of connectedness Index Graphic
3. Feb 2017 State of the Project Overview Document
4. Research paper – Promoting youth connectedness in schools, families, amongst peers and in communities
5. Research paper - Connectedness – the strategy to address anxiety and depression in youth
6. Research paper – Investing in Connectedness
7. October, 2017 Child and Youth Health Network newsletter
8. Proposal for Indigenous Engagement Coordinator
9. Catherine Schissel – Final Planning Report
10. BCHC Youth Friendly Engagement and Evaluation Approaches
11. BCHC Document Synthesis, Insights and Recommendations
12. June 2018 Wrap-up Newsletter
13. Power Point presentation in lieu of presenting domain projects at CYHN June gathering