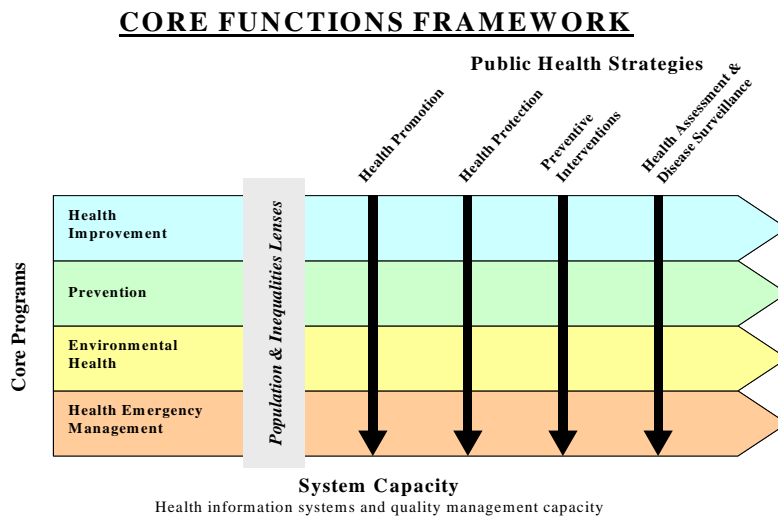


Background—Public Health Core Program Project

In March of 2005, the Ministry of Health published a resource document titled “A Framework for Core Functions in Public Health.” The paper provides a very detailed overview context for this initiative including the primary drivers and the need for core functions in public health, descriptions of the core programs and public health strategies and a summary of the implementation plans. The development of this resource document including the identification of the core programs was the first step in this process to strengthen and improve public health services in British Columbia.

The public health renewal process is conceptually based on the Core Functions Framework:



The framework was prepared in consultation with representatives of health authorities and experts in the field of public health. The purpose of the framework is to define and describe the core public health activities needed for a comprehensive public health system that will positively impact population health. It provides a tool for Health Authorities to strengthen their public health infrastructure by reviewing their existing programming with those defined by the core model programs included in this framework.

The implementation of the Core Functions Framework, comprised of 21 core programs, is a joint multi-year initiative supported by both the Ministry of Health and all of the health authorities. The process involves:

- ✓ Active involvement of all parties in the development of core program evidence papers and model programs through participation on provincial working groups and the Core Program Provincial Steering Committee.
- ✓ Assessment by each health authority of its current programs and services compared to the approved evidence-based core model programs.
- ✓ Development of performance improvement plans for each of the core model programs to address identified gaps.
- ✓ Implementation of the performance improvement plans.

It is anticipated that this process will result in greater consistency of public health services across the Province, increased capacity and quality of public health services and improved health of the population.

Fraser Health's Public Health Core Program Project

Fraser Health's Public Health Core Program Project was created to support, focus and engage the organization in this important initiative. The project is guided by a senior level steering committee led by the Executive Director of Health Promotion and Prevention and includes the Chief Medical Health Officer, the Regional Director of Health Protection, and Directors of the operational areas involved in the delivery of the programs and services included in the 21 Core Programs. The Steering Committee is actively involved in reviewing the gap assessments and the individual performance improvement plans for each of the 21 core programs. Performance improvement plans, are reviewed and approved by operational management and the Steering Committee, then forwarded to the Fraser Health Executive for their approval before being publicly released.

Each year, certain core programs are identified for review. Using the core model program definitions, a gap assessment is completed and a companion performance improvement plan developed. In 2006/2007 there were 4 core programs identified for review. These programs included:

- ✓ Food Security
- ✓ Health Emergency Management
- ✓ Food Safety
- ✓ Air Quality

Performance improvement plans, based on a thorough gap analysis of current practices, have been prepared for all 4 of these core programs. These performance improvement plans include strategies that align with the overall objective of this renewal project: to strengthen and improve public health services in British Columbia.

The implementation of these performance improvement plans is key to the renewal of Fraser Health's public health services. Each plan contains detailed goals with clearly defined deliverables. The Steering Committee will monitor the progress of performance improvements. They will receive quarterly updates from management responsible for each core program performance improvement plan implementation and the Chair of the Steering Committee will provide a biannual progress report to the Executive Sponsors. Fraser Health will also provide a public annual progress update at the end of each fiscal year.

Over the next few years, all of the remaining core programs will go through a similar process. Fraser Health will continue to actively support this renewal of the public health system and will continue to support this important population health initiative.¹

¹ For more information about this important initiative, please contact Diane Miller, Executive Director, Health Promotion and Prevention Services (Diane.Miller@fraserhealth.ca) or Tim Shum, Regional Director, Health Protection (Tim.Shum@fraserhealth.ca).