

LET'S

MAKE HEALTH MATTER



THE ISSUES

INCOME

Income is the biggest determinant of a person's health and quality of life. Those living on low income have higher rates of both chronic and infectious diseases, mental illness, and are more likely to die early than those who are better off financially.

HOUSING

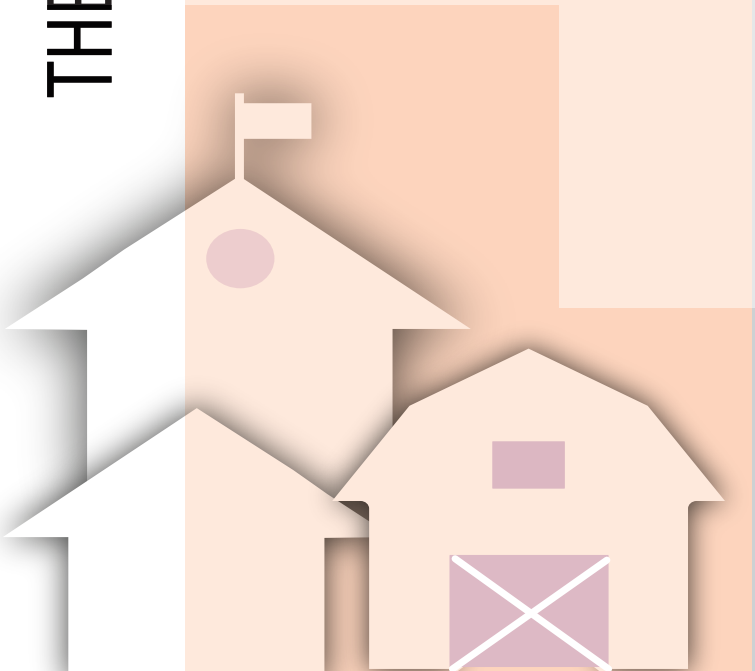
Shelter is a basic need for optimal health. Being homeless or living in unaffordable, inadequate or unsafe housing can lead to increased illness, poor mental health and premature death.

THE ACTIONS



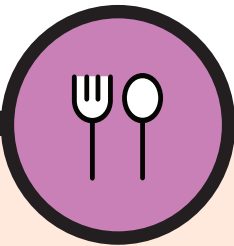
- Advocate for annual increases to the minimum wage at the rate of inflation.
- Support economic development strategies that will attract full-time jobs that pay an adequate wage.

- Adopt a Housing First approach to provide supportive housing for vulnerable, chronically homeless individuals and families.
- Invest in revitalization, integration and better planning of low income neighbourhoods.



FOOD INSECURITY

About 1 in 8 Simcoe Muskoka households experience some level of food insecurity. When faced with a limited income, food becomes a flexible expense often resulting in a less healthy diet and increased risk of poorer physical and mental health and social isolation. Having an adequate income can reduce food insecurity for individuals and families.



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

A built environment designed to meet the daily needs of all people supports human health and quality of life. Healthy community design includes providing a range of housing and convenient access to jobs, local services, and public service facilities. It also encourages the use of active and public transportation and provides public spaces, parkland and access to local and healthy food.



CLIMATE CHANGE

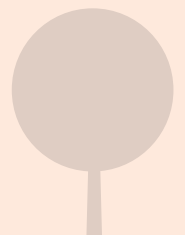
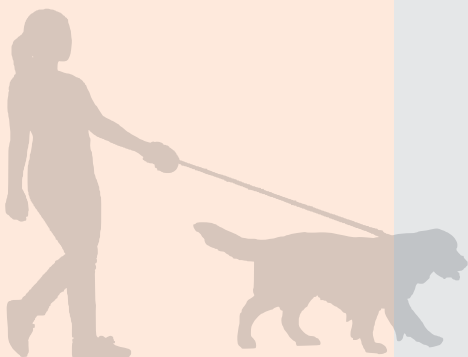
The changing climate is expected to result in increases in respiratory, heat-related and foodborne illnesses, weather-related injuries, vector-borne disease, and UV-related skin cancers. While everyone feels the effects of climate change, factors such as age, gender, health status and access to resources makes some people more vulnerable to climate change effects.



- Consider municipal policies that can result in more money for food, such as living wage, entrepreneurship opportunities, and infrastructure for active and public transportation.
- Advocate for provincial and federal policies that can mean more money for food, such as social assistance rates that match real living costs and are indexed to inflation, and a basic income guarantee.

- Build inclusive neighbourhoods with a range of affordable housing options, planned and designed to increase resident safety, connectedness and well-being.
- Design communities using a complete streets approach, which increases access to active transportation infrastructure, decreases environmental impacts, and supports community health and well-being.

- Create climate-related adaptation strategies to enhance community resiliency to climate change.
- Protect and enhance green-space as a strategy to support both climate change mitigation and adaptation.



ALCOHOL

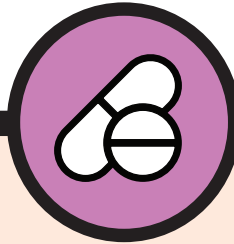
Drinking alcohol can cause injuries and a broad range of chronic diseases and social harms. Increased access and availability of alcohol leads to greater consumption, resulting in more harm to society, including increased crime and related policing costs.



- **Update your local alcohol policy.**
- **Establish additional policy levers such as zoning, by-laws and licensing that limit accessibility to alcohol and restrict alcohol marketing.**

OPIOIDS

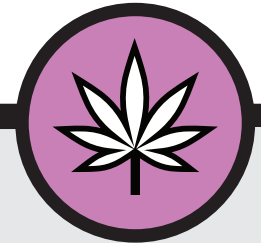
The misuse of prescription and illicit opioids can have devastating health and social effects on individuals, families and communities. The rate of opioid-related deaths in Simcoe Muskoka increased by 70 per cent from 2016 to 2017 and has been significantly higher than the provincial rate in recent years.



- **Support the implementation of the Simcoe Muskoka Opioid Strategy Action Plan.**
- **Engage with community partners regarding the feasibility of supervised consumption sites in Simcoe Muskoka.**

CANNABIS

Recreational use of cannabis is being legalized, but it is not without health and social risks. Possible risks include impacts on adolescent brain development, fetal development, and the respiratory system, drug dependence and drug-impaired driving. The appropriate location of cannabis retail outlets will ensure a focus on the health and safety of all residents, particularly youth.



- **Limit the number of cannabis retail outlets and hours of operation, and be informed about cannabis advertising and promotion regulations.**
- **Consider the proximity of cannabis retail outlets in relation to youth-serving facilities including schools, parks and recreational centres, and locations where alcohol is sold.**





Let's Make Health Matter

Decisions made by our municipal governments impact all aspects of our lives. Many of these decisions play an important role in promoting and protecting our health.

Active communities, a clean environment and ensuring health for everyone are important considerations in municipal decisions. Working with municipalities to achieve these outcomes is a key role of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.

We encourage local governments to take action toward implementing programs and policies that will reduce preventable illness and death and improve overall health in Simcoe and Muskoka.

What the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit does for you

At the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit we are champions of health for all. Guided by provincial standards and funded by the province and municipalities, we work with people, agencies, municipalities, school boards, health care partners and communities to promote well-being, prevent disease and injury, and protect health.

We are part of a broader public health system that makes vital contributions to the health of our people and communities. Investing in public health programs and services results in a clear return on investment, which saves the health care system millions of dollars a year. For example, every \$1 invested in tobacco prevention programs saves up to \$20 in future health care costs. Every \$1 invested in adding fluoride to drinking water saves \$38 in dental care. And every \$1 spent on measles, mumps and rubella immunization of children saves \$16 in health care costs.

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit works every day to keep you and your family healthy. We do this through offering a wide range of programs and services, including:

Health protection – safe food inspection, safe water monitoring, rabies education and investigation, health hazard prevention and management, emergency management and response, enforce Smoke-Free Ontario Act, address environmental issues.

Healthy living – injury prevention, substance misuse prevention, active living, healthy eating, healthy schools, sun safety, tobacco-free living.

Parenting, children and family health – prenatal classes and counselling, breastfeeding, Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, Triple P positive parenting program, child development and screening, dental screening for children, and preventive services and treatment for eligible children and adults on publicly funded dental programs.

Infectious diseases control and immunization – school immunization programs, vaccine and clinics, infectious diseases surveillance and monitoring, infection prevention and control, sexual health counseling and clinics.

Health equity – work with partners to address social factors such as income, housing and education that can have strong impacts on our health.

Population health assessment – collect, analyze and report on data and other information for planning purposes.

For more information, visit our website at www.smdhu.org or contact Health Connection at 1-877-721-7520.

