

## Community Engagement:

Educating, advocating, and campaigning to earn the community's endorsement and adherence to a health policy takes a considerable amount of effort. Once you have defined what "community" means to you and what health policies you want to work on, it is easier to align necessary activities and identify the stakeholders that needs to be engaged. Stakeholders are "individuals, communities, political entities or organizations that have a vested interest in the outcomes of the initiative. They are either affected by, or can have an effect on, the project. Anyone whose interests may be positively or negatively impacted by the project or anyone that may exert influence over the project or its results is considered a project stakeholder" (Canada's Local Health Integration Network, 2011)<sup>i</sup>. Part of setting the stage for a successful health policy is making sure all significant key players and legislative champions are actively engaged in the policy-making process.

"The purpose of community engagement is to inform, educate, consult, involve and empower stakeholders in both health care or health service planning and decision making processes to improve the health care system."

—[LHIN, 2011](#)

## Engaging Traditional and Cultural Leaders:

### Understanding Culture, Social Organization, and Leadership to Enhance Engagement

—[The Community Tool Box](#)<sup>ii</sup>

- You understand that culture affects the social organization and leadership structure of groups.
- You have learned about each group's social organization and have found the structural points for bringing the groups together.
- You have met with ethnic and cultural group leaders, discussed with group members their culture and heritage, and gathered information on the various cultural groups.
- You have determined how various institutions (e.g., churches, families) function in the different cultural groups.
- You understand the importance of building on existing cultural traditions in a group in order to engage the members in your effort.

### Additional recommended readings:

- [Community Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit](#) (by Local Health Integration Network Ontario, 2011)
  - Pgs. 5-23: Definition of community engagement and the core principles involved; Provides worksheets and templates to assist in planning Community Engagement activities; community engagement planning worksheets (for Small and Big Projects)
- [The Manchester Community Engagement Toolkit](#) (by Manchester City Council)
  - Pgs. 19-26: Provides guidelines on how to engage specific groups in the community, relevant to the youth, the older people, gender equality, LGBT, etc.
  - Pgs. 47-64: Information based around the community engagement processes of informing, researching, consulting, involving, devolving decision-making and supporting community action; sets out core skills used in community engagement, such as planning, facilitation and communication.
- [Understanding Culture, Social Organization, and Leadership to Enhance Engagement](#) (by The Community Tool Box, 2013)
  - An online resource that contains 46 Chapters providing useful, step-by-step guidance in community-building skills.

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<sup>i</sup> Ontario Local Health Integration Network. *LHIN Community Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit*. Feb 2011. Web. 22 Nov 2013.

<sup>ii</sup> Community Toolbox. *Cultural Competence in a Multicultural World*. University of Kansas Work Group for Community Health and Development, 2013. Web. 1 Aug 2013.