INTEGRATE EVIDENCE & APPLY EXPERTISE

Purpose:

The purpose of this stage is to provide an overview of how to integrate evidence and apply expertise as the final stage in PLAN. Use this stage guide as you complete the **Evidence Summary** tool.

After gathering information from various sources in the previous stages, it is time to bring all the information together and apply your public health expertise. Consider that some sources of information may be more heavily weighted over others. Before beginning this stage guide's steps, you may want to watch the following short video to understand the rationale and importance of this stage: "Evidence-Informed Decision Making: A guiding framework for public health."

The high level points from the information gathered in previous stages and steps can be summarized and synthesized using the **Evidence Summary** tool. The Evidence Summary tool is a report template to help summarize the gathered information. As new data and information becomes available, the tool can be updated. If data is limited or does not exist, be sure to note this in the Evidence Summary.

TOOLS

- *Evidence Summary*
- *Pre-Planning tool*
- *Population Health Assessment and Surveillance tool*
- *Environmental Scan*
- *Briefing Note*
- *Knowledge Exchange Plan*
- *SWOT Analysis/ PESTLE Analysis*
- *Stakeholder Analysis*
- *Applicability and Transferability Tool*

Step 1: Public health issue and situational assessment

Begin by reiterating what the public health issue is, which may be found within the **Pre-Planning** tool, and consider any mandated or organizational commitments. Next, outline the information gathered within the *Situational Assessment* stage guide. The information may have previously been organized within the **Population Health Assessment and Surveillance** tool and the **Environmental Scan** tool in the "Population Health Assessment and Surveillance" and "Community Assessment" sub-steps.

Step 2: Identify effective strategies

The information required to complete this step can be found in the *Identify Effective Strategies* stage guide. Highlight the recommendations for effective strategies based on information from the mandate review, environmental scan, and various literature review approaches. If a rapid review of reviews or a rapid review of reviews with expert opinion has been completed, the findings from the literature may already be in a report. If this is the case, you may choose to provide an executive summary of the report here, or include a link to the report. Consider the audience for the information when making the decision as to how the literature findings will be presented. All of the identified strategies will consider priority and target populations.

Step 3: Integration of evidence

At this point, it is time to highlight any consistent and/or conflicting evidence across the various sources of information within the evidence summary. With the integrated evidence, apply public health expertise to identify the interventions to be started, altered, or changed. The purpose of this step is to determine if the identified strategies "fit" with the program's clients, community, team, and/or MLHU.

Identify who will be involved in this step and consider expanding the group beyond those involved in gathering the evidence. This could include other members of the core team, community partners, and/or clients. Consider the identified core internal and external stakeholders recorded in the **Stakeholder Analysis** tool, within the *Situational Assessment* stage guide. For large-scale community issues, there may also be a need to consult the broader community on the proposed recommendations.

Once the core stakeholders have been identified, use their perspectives to work through the **SWOT Analysis/PESTLE Analysis, Applicability and Transferability** Tool or other tools to help to systematically assess the fit of the recommendations within the current context. Consider summarizing the findings from any of the tools or worksheets that were used to apply public health expertise to the integrated evidence.

Step 4: Draft the recommendations

After integrating the evidence from the *Situational Assessment* and *Identify Effective Strategies* stage guides, and applying your public health expertise, it is time to draft recommendations. The draft recommendations may include needing more information or having additional questions to ask. If the original plan does not involve drafting recommendations, this step may not be necessary.

Step 5: Capacity and resource considerations

Now that the draft recommendations have been summarized, consider the internal capacity and resources needed to implement the recommendations. At this time, management will likely be involved.
It is important to consider the financial, human, and material resources required and whether community partners are able to contribute resources. The resources required should be balanced against the level of need identified in the *Situational Assessment* and *Identify Effective Strategies* stage guides.

If the draft recommendations require a significant investment or disinvestment in resources, a PBMA submission may be required. At this stage, determine if there is support, in principle, to consider the recommendations for a PBMA investment or disinvestment. There may also be an opportunity to secure funding from other sources.

Considering the capacity and resources needed to achieve the outcomes will ensure resources are allocated to strategies/interventions that will have a positive impact on health outcomes in the community. This step is crucial to support evidence-informed decision-making as outlined in the Ontario Public Health Standards (Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care, 2018)

Step 6: Finalize the recommendations

Once all of the information has been considered, it is time to finalize the recommendations. To do this, review the recommendations with key stakeholders and seek management review and approval. Once the recommendations have been agreed upon, share then with all other appropriate stakeholders.

There are different ways to share these recommendations. To make sure the correct stakeholder group is being targeted with the appropriate message, it will be useful to complete the **Knowledge Exchange** tool. Once the audience for the recommendations has been determined, you can choose the appropriate messaging and how the information will be shared. The final recommendations may be in the form of an **Evidence Summary**, **Briefing note**, a report, infographic, poster, etc.

> *Tip*
>
> *Think of who will use this information and who it will be reported to. The information can be organized using the **Knowledge Exchange Plan** and may be in the format of an **Evidence Summary, Briefing Note,** report, presentation, among others.*

The Communications Team at MLHU is available to provide assistance with potential communication methods should the need be identified.

This is a key decision point for Management to determine the following:

Decision Point

- Continue the current program (status quo)
- Revise the current program
- Stop the program
- Start a new program

	***Integrate Evidence & Apply Expertise* Checklist**	
	Items relevant to staff are white with a dotted border	Items relevant to Program Manager are grey with a solid border
☐	Complete the **Evidence Summary**	
	☐	Outline the public health issue
	☐	Complete the situational assessment section including information from the Population Health Assessment and Surveillance and Community Assessment sections
	☐	Identify effective strategies including information about the mandate review, environmental scan, and literature review
	☐	Integrate the evidence and apply public health expertise
	☐	Draft the recommendations (if needed)
	☐	Consider the capacity and resources needed to achieve the identified outcomes
	☐	With management and appropriate stakeholders, finalize the recommendations
☐	Decision Point: This is a key decision point to determine the following: • Continue the current program (status quo) • Revise the current program • Stop the program • Start a new program	

References

Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care. (2018). Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability. Retrieved from http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/protocols_guidelines/Ontario_Public_Health_Standards_2018_en.pdf