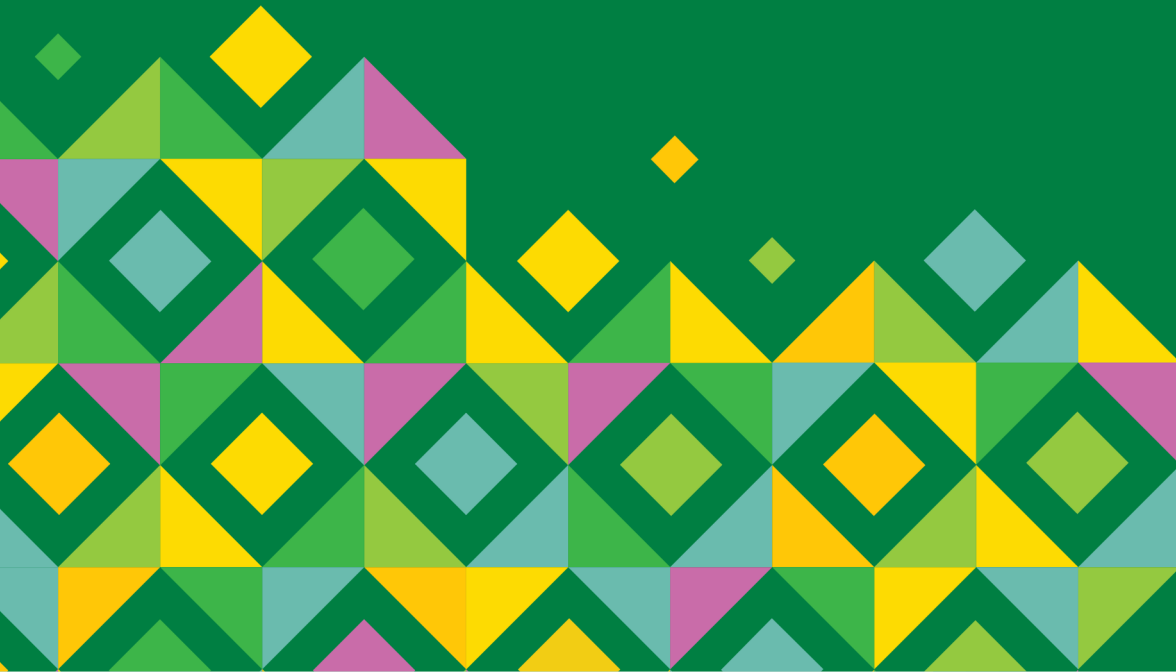




UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA



CENTRE FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
ANNUAL REPORT TO COMMUNITIES 2024-2025

Advancing Healthier Communities: Impact with Purpose

July 2025

CENTRE FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The University of Alberta, its buildings, labs and research stations are primarily located on the territory of the N hiyaw (Cree), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), M tis, Nakoda (Stoney), Dene, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and Anishinaabe (Ojibway/Saulteaux), lands that are now known as part of Treaties 6, 7 and 8 and homeland of the M tis. The University of Alberta respects the sovereignty, lands, histories, languages, knowledge systems and cultures of all First Nations, M tis and Inuit nations.



Centre for Healthy Communities

Scientific Director Message

Impact with purpose comes in many forms. Some impact happens quickly, with changes a person can see happening right before their eyes. Other impact takes time, with quiet, behind-the-scenes steps that lead to deep, meaningful shifts in practice or policy. The Centre for Healthy Communities in the School of Public Health connects and collaborates with diverse groups to work on challenges, where change will have a positive impact on people's lives.

Our 2024-2025 annual report offers highlights of some key activities that reflect our impact across our three strategic goals: research development, engagement, and knowledge-to-action.

This year's annual report also profiles our innovative work to support water reuse as a climate adaptation strategy. As a critical issue faced by communities across Alberta and Canada, the water reuse work is building on expertise in our Healthy Environments Research Thematic Area, and integrating knowledge from our other four thematic areas as well.

This year was also about renewal and building a sustainable, impactful future for the Centre for Healthy Communities. We look forward to launching our 2025-2030 strategic plan in the Fall of 2025. This refreshed strategic plan charts a transformative course that will amplify our collaborations in cross-disciplinary research and capacity building, strengthening evidence generation to continue to inform policy and practice that promotes healthy communities.

In all of this, we at the Centre for Healthy Communities strive to work in a good way with communities, recognizing the historical and continuing harms of settler colonialism. We support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action and are committed to fostering respectful relationships and working partnership on initiatives that contribute to reconciliation.

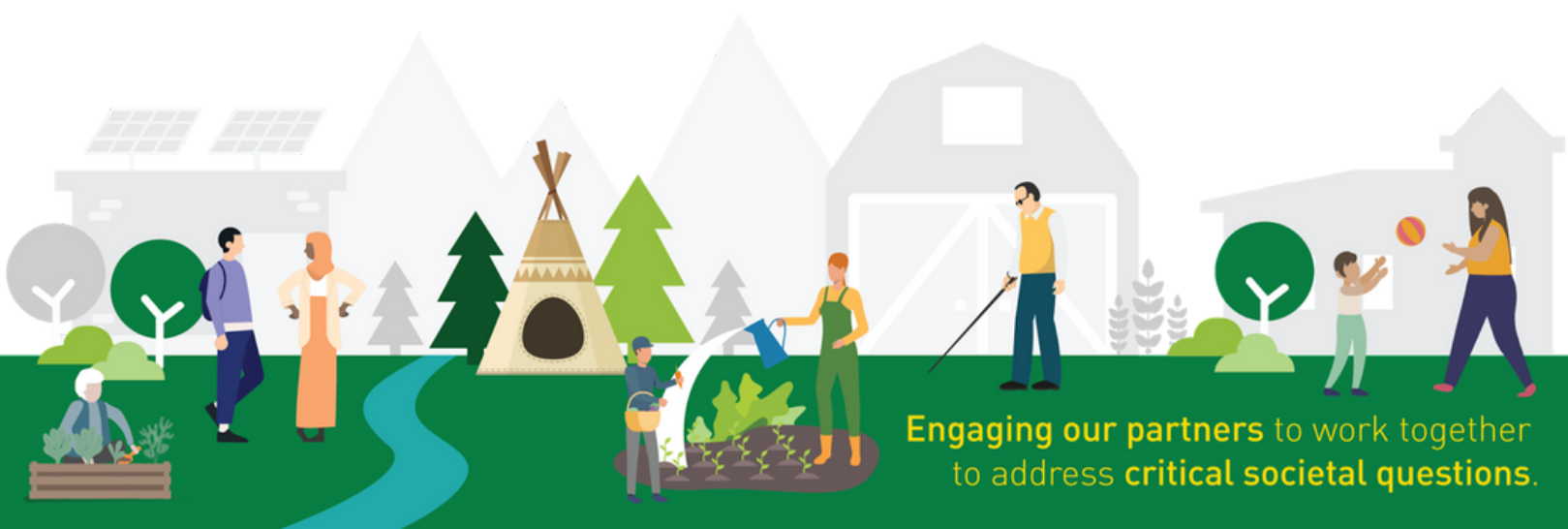
Candace Nykiforuk, PhD, CE

Scientific Director, Centre for Healthy Communities

Canada Research Chair in Community Environments and Public Policy for Well-Being

Professor, School of Public Health

University of Alberta



**Engaging our partners to work together
to address critical societal questions.**

This Year in the Spotlight: Advancing Water Reuse through Connections and Partnerships

Water reuse is an important strategy for climate resiliency and adaptation. Urban and rural municipalities across Alberta and Canada can employ water reuse strategies to help address water shortages and drought. In October 2024, the Centre for Healthy Communities' annual Innovation Forum brought people together from across the many sectors implicated in water reuse and municipal climate resiliency.

After an opening from Dr. Hughie Jones (Director, Wakâ Mne Science & Culture Initiative) and Bernice Alexis (ANSN Elder & Knowledge Holder), Innovation Forum participants learned from the latest research and best practices in this space, shared their own knowledge and experiences, and discussed how to collectively take action. Following the Innovation Forum, the Centre for Healthy Communities launched a Water Reuse Community of Practice focused on continuing to advance water reuse initiatives in response to the impacts of climate change.

The Centre for Healthy Communities (CHC) has been privileged to be included in Dr. Norman Neumann's (CHC Scientist) ongoing water reuse activities and to be part of leading the conversation on water reuse. This work would not be possible without the support of Dr. Simon Otto (CHC Healthy Environments Research Thematic Area Lead and CHC Scientist) and Dr. Patrick Hanington (CHC Scientist). In addition, Paris Prince (Master of Science student) and Md Kurshed Alam (Master of Arts in Community Engagement student) were instrumental in the exploration of various aspects of the social dimensions to water reuse.

"Adopting water reuse as a strategy to deal with water insecurity is a decision that society has to make. To do this, we need to engage society in the conversation. The Centre for Healthy Communities has played a vital role in creating the necessary space for these discussions, and providing the leadership to sustain this dialogue among community members."

Dr. Norman Neumann

Scientist, Centre for Healthy Communities

Professor, School of Public Health, University of Alberta

The Centre for Healthy Communities is leading the way for social transformation and systems change by connecting passionate people with bright ideas to advance sustainable actions for water reuse in communities.

This is Impact with Purpose.

2024 Innovation Forum: Water Reuse and Climate Resiliency in Municipalities: An Engaged Event to Share Insights and Experiences, Generate Ideas for Action, and Network

*Hosted in Partnership with:
Alberta Innovates, Alberta Municipalities, and the City of Calgary*

Highlights from the 2024 Innovation Forum were captured by a graphic recorder and are available through three posters that followed the structure of the day. The event was also featured in a recent Alberta Innovates Making Waves article. Throughout the day, over 65 participants were engaged from a variety of sectors related to water reuse (e.g., municipal and provincial government, non-governmental organizations, post-secondary, industry, health, environment).

- 100% of post-event evaluation respondents rated their overall experience as excellent or good.
- 73% of post-event evaluation respondents planned to follow-up with new connections made at the Innovation Forum. Of those, 36% intended to connect with 1-2 people, and 45% planned to reach out to 3 or more people.

The Innovation Forum is one of the Centre for Healthy Communities’ signature knowledge-to-action mobilization events. It is aligned with our ethos of working with intersectoral partners to address the complex issues that impact community health, wellbeing, and sustainability. Each year we explore a new and timely topic related to healthy communities.

“I would like to express my appreciation for the initiative led by the Centre for Healthy Communities. I view it as a significant milestone toward establishing a future Water Reuse Community of Practice within Alberta. This proactive approach is inspiring, and I believe it will play a crucial role in fostering sustainable water practices across the province.”

2024 Innovation Forum, Participant Comment

Water Reuse Community of Practice

Collaboration, connection-building, and sharing scientific and practice-based knowledge are central to all aspects of the Centre for Healthy Communities. Building on the momentum from the 2024 Innovation Forum, the newly launched Water Reuse Community of Practice is providing opportunities for practitioners and researchers to share learnings, refine best practices, and sustain dialogue as they continue to navigate the complexity of this topic.

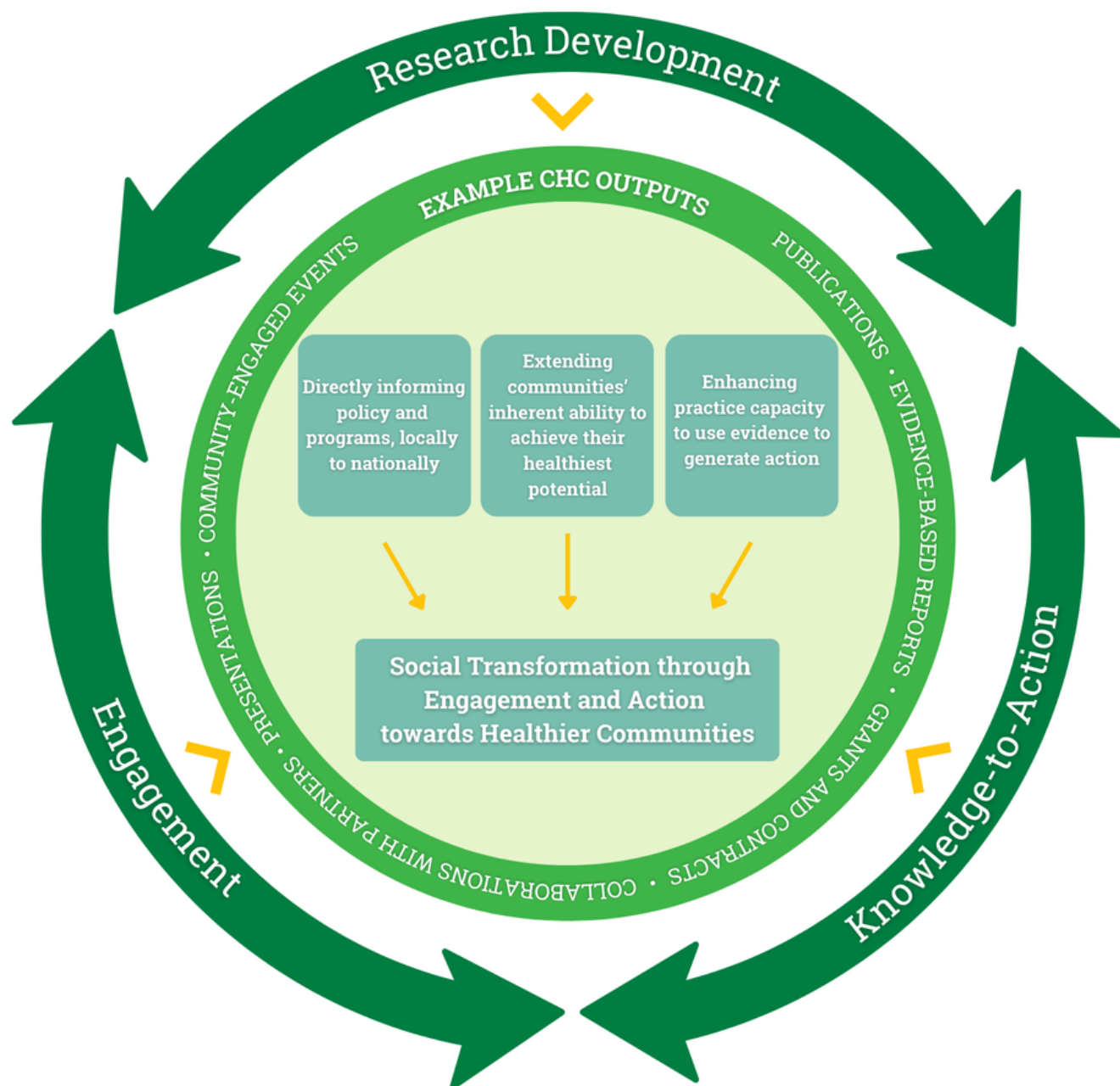
Contributing to the transformation of the water reuse landscape by fostering connections among people to strengthen coordinated actions.

This is Impact with Purpose.



Engagement, Knowledge-to-Action, and Research Development Highlights

Every year, the Centre for Healthy Communities engages people on important and timely healthy community topics. As represented in the image below, these opportunities come through the cyclical and interdependent processes of connecting with partners and communities, developing and conducting new and innovative research, and sharing of knowledge and lived and living experiences to foster positive change. The outputs of this cyclical process lay the foundation for social transformation through our work towards healthier communities for all.



This is Impact with Purpose.

Informing Policy and Practice

Over the past year, the Centre for Healthy Communities' team has worked closely with partners to help address their questions and inform practice and policy that directly impacts the health and wellbeing of communities. Some examples include:

Interventions to Reduce Sedentary Behaviour among Office-based Workers

Partner:
Cancer Prevention and Screening Innovation (CPSI), Alberta Health Services

"Engaging the Centre for Healthy Communities team to conduct a rapid review of published interventions designed to reduce sedentary behaviour in the workplace was a very positive and valuable experience for CPSI. In requesting this review, our hope was to understand both design and effectiveness of interventions to reduce sedentary behaviour during working hours. We needed a synthesis of published evidence to inform our development of a tailored intervention for desk-based workers in Alberta. The resulting rapid review report did not disappoint. Findings were presented in a way that allowed our team to quickly understand how to prioritize multiple intervention components with strong evidence of effectiveness. Additionally, we quickly identified the value of a multi-level approach and could easily determine how to combine selected intervention components targeting individual, interpersonal, environmental, and organizational factors. We also valued the collaborative and inclusive approach that the CHC took, involving our team in all decisions along the way, to ensure that the final product aligned with our needs and expectations. We look forward to continuing to work with this talented team in the future."

Dr. Ann Toohey

**Senior Scientist - Community, Individuals & Family, Workplaces
CPSI, Provincial Population and Public Health
Alberta Health Services**

Development of Evidence-Informed Recommendations for Municipal Supports of Vulnerable Populations during Extreme Weather Events

Partner:
*Community Services,
City of Edmonton*

"Our team at the City of Edmonton have been thrilled to partner with the Centre for Healthy Communities, who completed a policy scan and exploratory literature review. The results of this work are being used to inform the review of the City of Edmonton's Policy C620 - Supporting Vulnerable People During Extreme Weather Conditions, which outlines the City of Edmonton's response and support for vulnerable populations during extreme weather events. We have been impressed with the quality of their work, their professionalism, and the thoughtfulness that they have brought to the project."

Jared Abbott

City of Edmonton Policy C620 Review Project Lead

Highlights of the Centre for Healthy Communities' 2024-2025 engagement and knowledge-to-action activities:

- 8 commissioned evidence-based reports to inform policy and practice
- 45 meetings with community partners to share knowledge, learn from different experiences, and build relationships
- 52 Scientists and Affiliates
- 775 Stay-in-the-Know network members

New and Innovative Research:

The extreme weather collaboration with the City of Edmonton continued with a successful Canadian Institutes of Health Research Catalyst Grant (Funding Period: 2025-2026), co-led by the Centre for Healthy Communities and partners at the City of Edmonton. This new funding will support further investigation on this topic and the co-creation of recommendations for municipalities.

Watch for results of this research to be shared over the coming year.

Publication Profile:

Results from a rapid review, completed in partnership with Alberta Health Services (2023-2024), about what interventions are effective to prevent youth from initiating vaping are now available in BMJ Open.

The products developed from these activities are now informing policy and programs locally, provincially, and nationally.

This is Impact with Purpose.

Research Partnerships that Transform Communities

The Centre for Healthy Communities undertakes leading-edge, collaborative research to advance collectively-identified priorities towards healthy communities. Core to this work is learning from and bringing together practice and policy professionals, researchers, and trainees from a range of sectors.

For example, the Centre for Healthy Communities continues to work with practice and research collaborators across Canada to develop new projects targeting knowledge gaps on how to improve financial wellbeing in different settings and among populations at-risk for financial hardship. We also respond to and engage with interest-holders throughout Alberta to co-develop and collaborate on projects addressing various emerging issues that impact the health and wellbeing of communities.

“As a new PhD student, I have appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the financial wellbeing website project as part of my training. The hands-on experience and chance to learn from CHC mentors and fellow students alike in a supportive team environment has enhanced my skill set, and broadened my understanding of how to bring effective knowledge translation to life. I can see many ways to apply what I am learning to bring evidence to action in my own work as it progresses.”

Alissa Messner

School of Public Health PhD Student

New Research Product Coming Soon:

Watch for the soft launch of our Financial Wellbeing website, which will increase awareness and utilization of our evidence-based Financial Wellbeing Framework and Guidebook¹. Over the coming year, we will work with a national advisory group to refine and validate the website. We look forward to officially launching in the Fall of 2026, as part of our 2026 Innovation Forum, which will focus on the topic of financial wellbeing.

Highlights of research development activities for 2024-2025:

- 3 peer-reviewed publications
- 1 evidence-based tool for practice
- 10 active research grants
- 5 active service contracts

The Centre for Healthy Communities work – whether it is through engagement activities like the Innovation Forum, knowledge-to-action activities like partnered projects, or through research activities like innovative grants – leads to positive, transformational change. In all of these activities we work and engage with a variety of partners to generate and share public health evidence that supports action on critical societal issues facing communities.

This is Impact with Purpose.

¹ Both the current research and previous research that supported the development of the Financial Wellbeing Framework and Guidebook received funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.



Expressing Our Gratitude

Everything we do at the Centre for Healthy Communities happens by design, and with purpose. Our impact, which has shaped practice and policy locally and nationally, rests on the tremendous contributions of our amazing staff, the dedicated involvement of our Executive Committee and broader Scientist and Affiliate members, and the wisdom of our Practice and Scientific Advisory Committee. Our collective efforts have made the Centre for Healthy Communities a purposeful leader in advancing healthier communities for all.

Centre for Healthy Communities
School of Public Health, College of Health Sciences

3-035 Edmonton Clinic Health Academy
11405-87 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6G 1C9
healthy.communities@ualberta.ca

uab.ca/chc