Research Power Inc.

Building a foundation for strengthened public health governance

Building a more coordinated approach to public health governance required understanding the current state, promising practices, and opportunities for improvement.

Sector:
Health

Primary service:
Research & engagement

Client:
Public Health, New Brunswick Department of Health

Project:
Environmental Scan and Engagement on Public Health Governance

35+
Documents reviewed and summarized

15+
Public health leaders engaged

The situation:

The Public Health Branch of the New Brunswick Department of Health engaged RPI to support a review of the current state of public health governance in New Brunswick and identify leading practices from other jurisdictions. Public health in New Brunswick is delivered collaboratively by the Department of Health, other government departments, and the province's two Regional Health Authorities. Public health leaders recognized an opportunity to strengthen coordination and develop a more unified, system-wide approach to improving population health outcomes. To support future planning and decision-making, the Branch required an objective assessment of the current state, promising practices for public health governance, and practical considerations for implementation in New Brunswick.

Complexities

- Coordinating perspectives across government and regional health authority partners
- Reviewing and aligning a large number of public health legislation, policy, and operational documents
- Assessing governance models from other jurisdictions and their applicability to New Brunswick
- Balancing evidence, best practices, and local operational realities

The approach:

RPI worked closely with the Public Health Branch through a **phased research and engagement process** designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of current public health governance and opportunities for strengthening. The work combined **document review, jurisdictional research, key informant interviews, and engagement** with public health leaders to develop recommendations that were grounded in both evidence and operational realities. The work involved:

- Reviewing about 30 public health documents including legislation, policies, funding agreements, program frameworks, and operational guidelines.
- Completing a focused literature review of best practices in public health system governance and organization.
- Conducting an environmental scan of public health frameworks and standards across Canadian and international jurisdictions.
- Interviewing key informants from other jurisdictions to capture practical implementation considerations and lessons learned.
- Facilitating engagement with public health leaders to build awareness of the New Brunswick current state and best practices from other jurisdictions, and identify planning considerations and potential next steps for implementation in New Brunswick.
- Compiling information from the current state, environmental scan, interviews, and engagement into reports to inform next steps.

The impact:

This project provided the Public Health Branch and its partners with a shared understanding of New Brunswick's current public health governance environment and promising practices from other jurisdictions. The work established an evidence-informed foundation for future planning by identifying strengths, opportunities, and key implementation considerations relevant to the New Brunswick context. It also supported alignment among public health leaders regarding potential approaches to strengthening governance and coordination across the public health system.

"RPI provided a thoughtful and objective assessment of our public health governance environment. Their ability to synthesize evidence, explore leading practices, and facilitate meaningful discussions helped establish a strong foundation for future planning."

Laura Brennan, Director, Well-being, Legislation and Standards, Department of Health

The project team:



Clare Levin
Partner



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Consultant



Stephanie Heath
Strategic Advisor

About RPI

RPI helps organizations find and identify insights to support decision-making and drive evidence-backed change. The RPI team brings extensive experience in the areas of health, accessibility, education, community services, and other public sector services.

Organizations come to RPI for support when:

- They need credible evidence to support decision-making, especially around funding or program/policy change
- They need help setting direction, planning for, and navigating complex policy, implementation, and system-level changes
- They need support hearing and making sense of diverse perspectives to inform implementation and next steps

Reach out to talk about how RPI can help you.

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