

QI Power Hour with
Megan Vanstone &
Emiliana Bomfim

Building a healthier future: How Saskatchewan is shaping the next generation of health research





Land Acknowledgement



Let's chat

Please share your questions, comments, and ideas in the chat during today's session.

| Past sessions

Using Community Paramedicine to advance out-of-hospital care in Saskatchewan

Speaker: Erika Stebbings, Jenna Mujer, and Sherri Julé

From policy to proven practice: Optimizing nursing roles

Speakers: Dr. Sandra Lauck

saskhealthquality.ca/training-webinars/qi-power-hour-webinars



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| Introducing



Megan Vanstone

Scientific Director

Healthy Future Sask








Emiliana Bomfim

Provincial Manager

Healthy Future Sask

| Today We'll Discuss:

-  What is Healthy Future Sask?
-  The Legacy We're Building Together
-  Where Quality Improvement and Discovery Meet
-  What This Means for Our Health System
-  How You Can Get Involved

What is Healthy Future Sask?

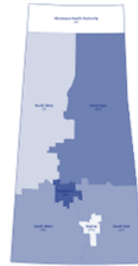
SaskCancer.ca

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What is Healthy Future Sask (HFS)?

The Saskatchewan-based cohort of Canada's **largest population health research platform**, called Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow's Health (CanPath)

Looking to **understand how genetics, behaviour, family health history, and environment** contribute to the development of cancer and other chronic diseases



Data from SK residents =
insights for SK-specific
care needs



Broad inclusion criteria =
any SK resident between
the age of 30 and 74 with
a SK health card can
participate



50 years of follow-up =
opportunity to gain
comprehensive
understanding of health
and associated outcomes






The burden of chronic disease in Canada is *growing*...

1 in 2

Canadians will die
from cancer or a
chronic disease*



-  1 in 2 Canadians will be diagnosed with **cancer**
-  1 in 12 Canadians live with diagnosed **heart disease**
-  1 in 10 Canadians live with **asthma or COPD**

CanPath is a partnership between leading health institutes **from coast to coast**



Hosted by:



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

In partnership with:



National Funder:

CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP
AGAINST CANCER



PARTENARIAT CANADIEN
CONTRE LE CANCER

Regional cohorts:



Hosted by:



Regional Funders:



Healthy Future Sask aligns with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency's research vision:

To foster research across the continuum of cancer care that addresses the unique and diverse needs of our population; generates innovative and implementable solutions that improve cancer outcomes; and strengthens the delivery of cancer services across Saskatchewan.

But the alignment goes beyond the SCA – Healthy Future Sask aligns with our partners' visions as well:



Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan



Optimal health and health care for everyone



Healthy People, Healthy Communities



Our HFS TEAM



Megan Vanstone

Scientific Director for Healthy Future Sask



Emiliana Bomfim

Provincial Manager



Funmi Abe

Business Analyst



Carla Woitas

Research Associate



Joy Yaneza

Technical Assistant



Jodi Beatty

Administrative Assistant



Maya Vu

Research Consultant



Austin Hammond

Biobank Specialist



Comms Specialist

Communications



Application Analyst

IMS



2 Technical Assistants

Study Clinic



2 Nurses

Study Clinic

Project Timeline

April 2020

Phase I: Planning & Pilot

- Stakeholder engagement
- SOP development
- IT systems & software development
- Regulatory approvals
- Pilot implementation & evaluation

April 2023

Phase II: Recruitment & Collection

- Recruit approx. 7,300 SK residents
- Complete initial questionnaire and biosample collection
- Secure financial support for Phase III



April 2027

Phase III: Maintenance & Use

- Follow-up of cohort for up to 50 years
- Enrichment of biobank resources
- Facilitation of research access to project data and biological samples

The Legacy We're Building Together

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Collectively, CanPath is following the health of over 330,000 adult Canadians



Data Can Be Accessed at the Provincial (Cohort-Specific) or National (Pooled) Level

Data Available at the End of Phase II



Questionnaire Data

- Demographics
- Family characteristics
- Education level
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Current health status and medical history
- Prescribed medication
- Family health history
- Lifestyle
- Ethnic background
- Languages
- Working status
- Household income
- Anthropometric measurements



Biological Samples

- Blood
- Saliva



Physical Measures

- Grip strength
- Blood pressure
- Body fat composition

Data Available in Phase III



Long-term Follow Up



Genomics



Data Linkage



Where Saskatchewan Stands Out

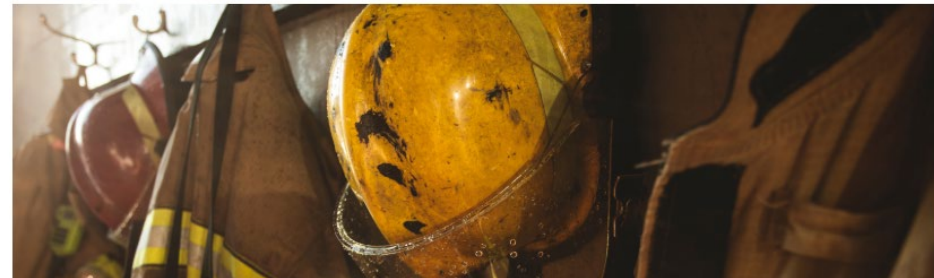
Our partnership with Saskatoon Fire to **increase representation of firefighters in our cohort** is garnering national attention and setting us apart from other provincial cohorts

News

Building the foundation: Canadian firefighters powering the future of cancer research

Posted June 26, 2025

News & Events



Read more here:



Where Quality Improvement and Discovery Meet

healthyfuturesask.ca

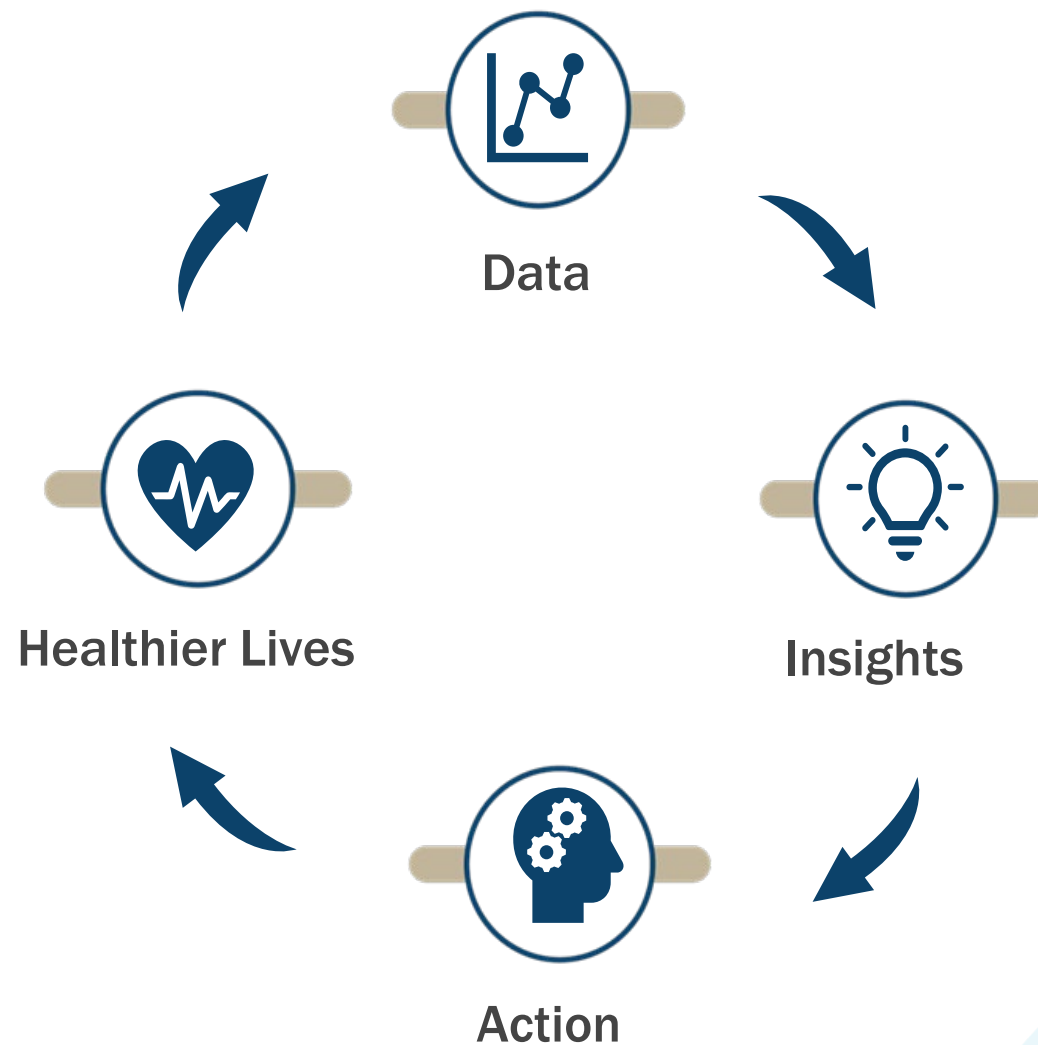
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Better services start with better insight

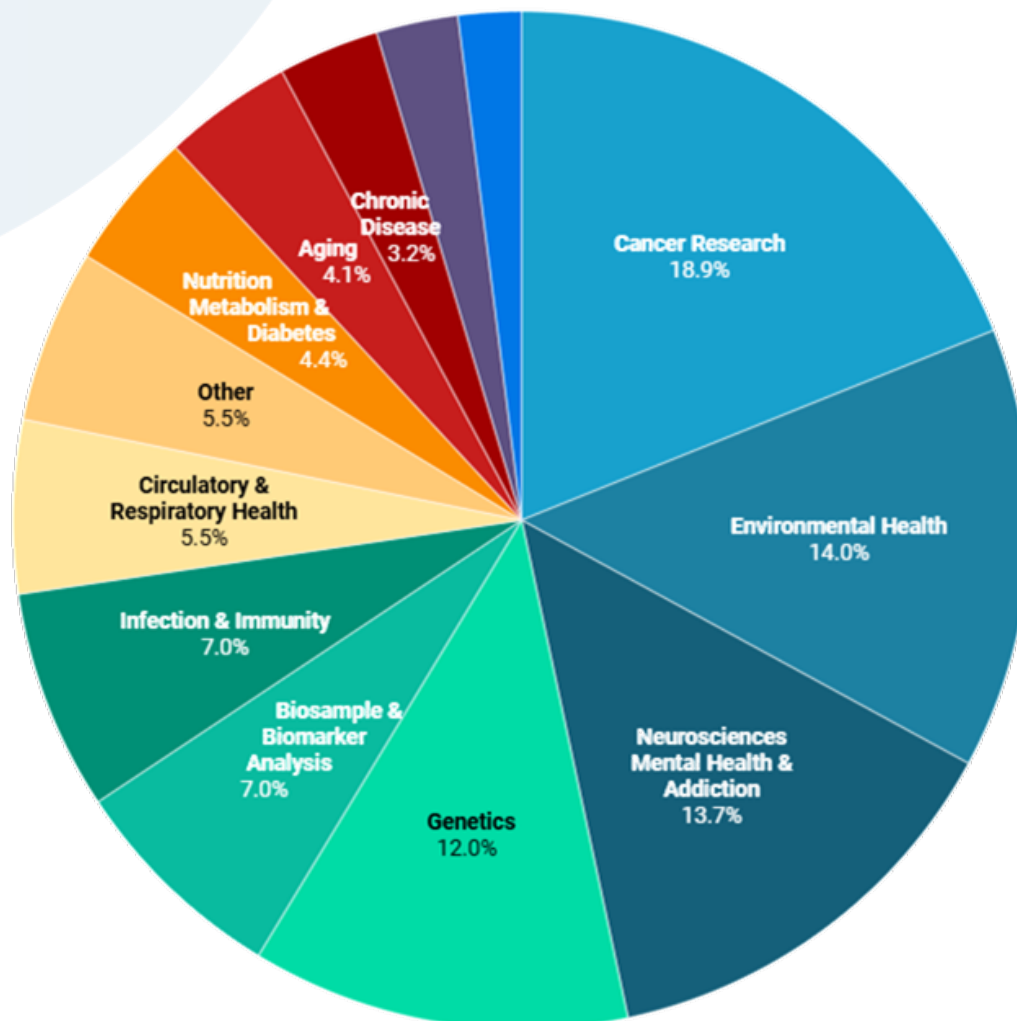
From data to insights, from insights to **change**, from **change** to better care — discovery is the first step on every pathway to improvement.

Discovery and Impact

Every data point helps illuminate the patient journey — not abstractly, but concretely, so we can **shorten the distance between insight and impact**. **Chronic disease is complicated** – the more information we have, the more we can learn



■ Cancer Research ■ Environmental Health ■ Neurosciences Mental Health & Addiction ■ Genetics ■ Biosample & Biomarker Analysis ■ Infection & Immunity ■ Circulatory & Respiratory Health ■ Other ■ Nutrition Metabolism & Diabetes ■ Aging ■ Chronic Disease ■ Population & Public Health ■ Musculoskeletal Health & Arthritis



Researchers are already finding ways to use CanPath data for a wide array of projects that further population health research in a number of areas

Spotlight studies

Every care pathway begins with discovery — and every discovery, when brought back to the system, has the power to make the next **person's journey smoother, safer, and more equitable.**



Urban Greenspace & Health

Using Ontario Health Study data linked with detailed Toronto greenspace metrics, researchers found that higher street-tree density is associated with better self-reported health and lower cardiometabolic risk — effects comparable to differences in income or age. Originally rooted in municipal planning, this evidence has proven internationally relevant.

 Cited in a [report by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency](#) and the [Chief Medical Officer for Wales' annual report](#)

FWCI: 5.17

[Nature Scientific Reports](#)



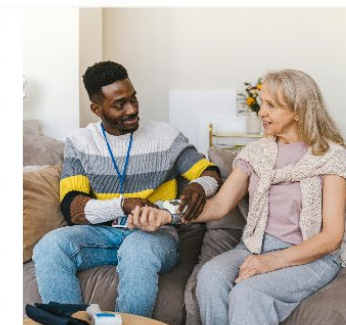
Biobank Governance

Using the BC Generations Project as a case study, researchers proposed participant-centred and adaptive governance models for biobanks. This study provides a framework for Canadian and international policymakers to enhance trust and ensure the sustainability of biobank operations.

 Cited in a [report from the European Commission's expert group](#), outlining the ethical, legal, and governance challenges of international biobank research

FWCI: 5.17

[Social Science & Medicine](#)



Subclinical Primary Aldosteronism & Heart Health

Data from CARTaGENE showed that even mild, hidden cases of primary aldosteronism — a hormone imbalance — can raise blood pressure, stiffen arteries, and change how the heart works. These findings support the development of new screening methods for heart disease and high blood pressure in everyday healthcare.


FWCI: 10.46

[Circulation](#)



COVID-19 Serology

National CanPath serology studies showed that by March 2023, ~76% of Canadians had detectable antibodies to SARS-CoV-2. These findings guided pandemic surveillance and regional resource allocation.

 Featured in [The Globe & Mail: "Feeling bad after a second COVID-19 vaccine dose? Here's why that should buy you some peace of mind"](#)

FWCI: 7.62

[CMAJ](#)

What This Means for Our Health System

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Currently, we only have access to information about our patients once they interact with the health system. Our existing health system data is limited. It doesn't tell us:

- ✗ What type of lifestyle patients led before their diagnosis
- ✗ What type of environment they lived in
- ✗ What other conditions, characteristics, or family history contributed to the development of their disease
- ✗ What specific socioeconomic conditions shaped their health
- ✗ Baseline biomarkers and metabolic information



By linking data from Healthy Future Sask with data available in our health system, we get a **complete picture** of the health of our patients and **opportunities for improvements** in prevention and care

Existing Data



New Data



Building a healthier future through evidence-informed policy

Municipal 



Provincial 



Federal 



International 



Building a healthier future through evidence-informed policy

➔ Municipal

At the municipal level, the City of Toronto's [Our Health, Our City report](#) cited CanPath-supported mental health research to highlight inequities affecting Indigenous and racialized populations. These findings were used to support recommendations for improved health equity and alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Building a healthier future through evidence-informed policy

Municipal 




➔ Provincial 



At the provincial level, CanPath environmental exposure data contributed to Nova Scotia's [*Manganese in Well Water Risk Map*](#). This evidence supported risk assessments and guided the development of water quality standards that protect public health.

Building a healthier future through evidence-informed policy

Municipal 



Provincial 



➔ Federal 



At the national level, CanPath data identified [cancer screening disparities](#), revealing uptake rates as low as 16.6% in some regions. These findings informed screening policies and guided targeted interventions designed to close critical gaps in access and improve early detection rates nationwide. CanPath findings have also helped shape [Health Canada's Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality - Lead](#).



Building a healthier future through evidence-informed policy

Municipal 



Provincial 



Federal 



➔ International 



To strengthen its ability to track and communicate its impact, CanPath has adopted [Overton](#), a policy citation tracking tool. This will enable more systematic monitoring of where and how CanPath data is influencing decisions across disciplines and jurisdictions.

How You Can Get Involved

healthyfuturesask.ca

If the importance of this population health resource resonates with you, **there are so many things you can do to help:**

Spread the word!

Websites and social links



<https://healthyfuturesask.ca/>
Website



[healthyfuturesask](#)
Instagram



[Healthy Future Sask](#)
Facebook



+1 833-701-0089
Mobile



info@healthyfuturesask.ca
Email

Become a participant



<https://healthyfuturesask.ca/participant/join>

Partner with us

Megan.Vanstone@saskcancer.ca
Emiliana.Bomfim@saskcancer.ca

Thank You!!

HFS exists because so many SK residents have chosen to give something deeply personal: **their time, their stories, their health information, and their biological samples**. This generosity has built the foundation for discoveries that are improving screening, prevention, treatment, and health equity in Canada and beyond. Every chart, every study, and every policy shift highlighted in this presentation is a direct reflection of our participants' trust and commitment. **THANK YOU to each and everyone of our participants**, together we're building a healthier tomorrow.

Thank you also to our funders!

This study is hosted by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and made possible with financial support from the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and Health Canada



| Questions?

Find out more at:

healthyfuturesask.ca



SaskCancer.ca



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