

McMaster Forum Citizen Partners for Evidence Synthesis

Partnering with citizens to shape evidence that informs health and social-system decisions

1 Who are the citizen partners?



Diverse group of 18-25 citizens from across Canada



Trained and supported to join research teams conducting evidence syntheses



Committed to working within tight timelines

2 What is an evidence synthesis?

Evidence syntheses bring together the best available research evidence to help decision-makers address pressing health- and social-system challenges.

Used by:



Federal/provincial/territorial governments



Health system leaders



Professional organizations



Researchers



Citizens



Some syntheses address topics of global relevance (global public goods). These are often more comprehensive and take longer to prepare. Either type of synthesis can be routinely updated, which we call a living evidence synthesis.

4 Why does citizen engagement matter?



Reflects outcomes that matter to citizens



Includes a citizen perspective when interpreting findings



Identifies knowledge gaps important to communities



Clearly communicates how evidence informs policymaking



Partnering with citizens to make evidence more relevant, inclusive, and useful

3 What questions do evidence syntheses address?

Evidence syntheses help decision-makers:



Understand problems and their causes



Identify options for addressing problems



Consider implementation challenges



Monitor progress and evaluate impacts



The findings can inform:



Policies



Guidelines



Healthcare recommendations



System improvements

5 How do we collaborate with our citizen partners?

There are many roles that citizen partners can play when they join an evidence synthesis team. These roles can depend on the timeline and the nature of the request.

- the Forum receives requests from research teams conducting different types of evidence syntheses
- the requests provide details on who has requested the evidence syntheses, why it is being done, and how the findings may be used
- citizen partners are matched with teams based on their interests, lived experiences, and availability
- many requests address specific questions to inform the decision-making process. In these situations, there can still be opportunities to provide insights that can be taken into account in framing the question or organizing the evidence identified.
- even in situations when it may not be feasible for citizen partners to shape the research question, they can still provide valuable input about areas where future research was needed. This can be very important for living evidence syntheses where future versions can include enhancements to what has already been done.

Impact of citizen engagement



Address real-world concerns



Reflect lived experiences



Highlight what matters most to communities



Improve future evidence and decision-making

Better evidence ➡ Better decisions ➡ Better health and social outcomes

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