Ten Years of Supporting Evidence-Informed Policymaking

Over the past 10 years, the McMaster Health Forum has harnessed research evidence, citizen values and stakeholder insights to help strengthen health systems and get the right programs, services and products to the people who need them. Through Forum+ we're now broadening our work to include social systems and the Sustainable Development Goals.

To celebrate this 10-year milestone, we're looking back on our growth and impact and thanking partners and supporters.

Here's to the next ten years!

– the McMaster Health Forum team

Table of contents

Supporting evidence-informed policymaking about health and social systems in Canada

Learn how

Developed policymakers', stakeholders', and researchers' knowledge about and skills for supporting the use of research evidence in policymaking, including how to conduct policy, political, and systems analyses, synthesize evidence, and engage stakeholders

Find evidence

Made it much easier to find and use synthesized research evidence, whether by searching Health Systems Evidence or (the much newer) Social Systems Evidence or commissioning us to prepare a rapid synthesis (or a citizen brief or evidence brief that can inform a citizen panel and stakeholder dialogue, respectively)
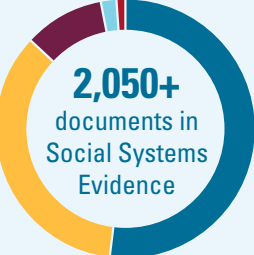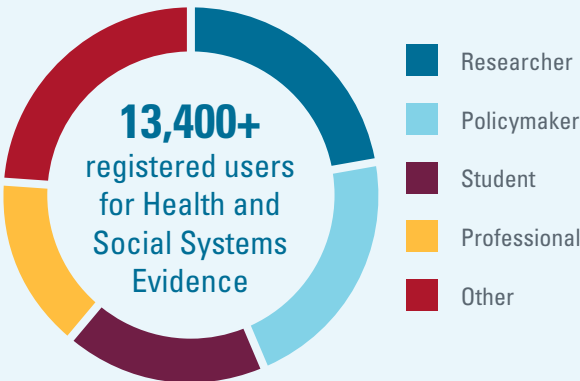
"Since we launched our Rapid Response program five years ago, policymakers' demand for rapid syntheses has grown remarkably and we have developed ever better ways of meeting their needs. We've responded to **50+ urgent requests**, with 22 in the last year alone.

We can now complement evidence reviews with key-informant interviews and documentary/website reviews to understand what other jurisdictions are doing, why, and with what impacts. For particularly complex questions, we have added 60- and 90-day response times to our existing 3-, 10- and 30-day response times."

Michael Wilson,
Assistant director

1,000+ Canadian policymakers
trained in how to find and use research evidence to inform policymaking, and how to set agendas and develop and implement policies

Health Systems Evidence
has been recognized by the World Health Organization as the best source of research evidence about health systems

13,400+
registered users for Health and Social Systems Evidence

- Researcher
- Policymaker
- Student
- Professional
- Other

15,750+
documents in Health Systems Evidence

2,050+
documents in Social Systems Evidence

- Systematic reviews of effects
- Systematic reviews addressing other questions
- Systematic reviews in progress and being planned
- Economic evaluations
- Overviews of systematic reviews
- Other

10,000+
documents downloaded from the Forum site (2018)

1,700+
newsletter subscribers

5
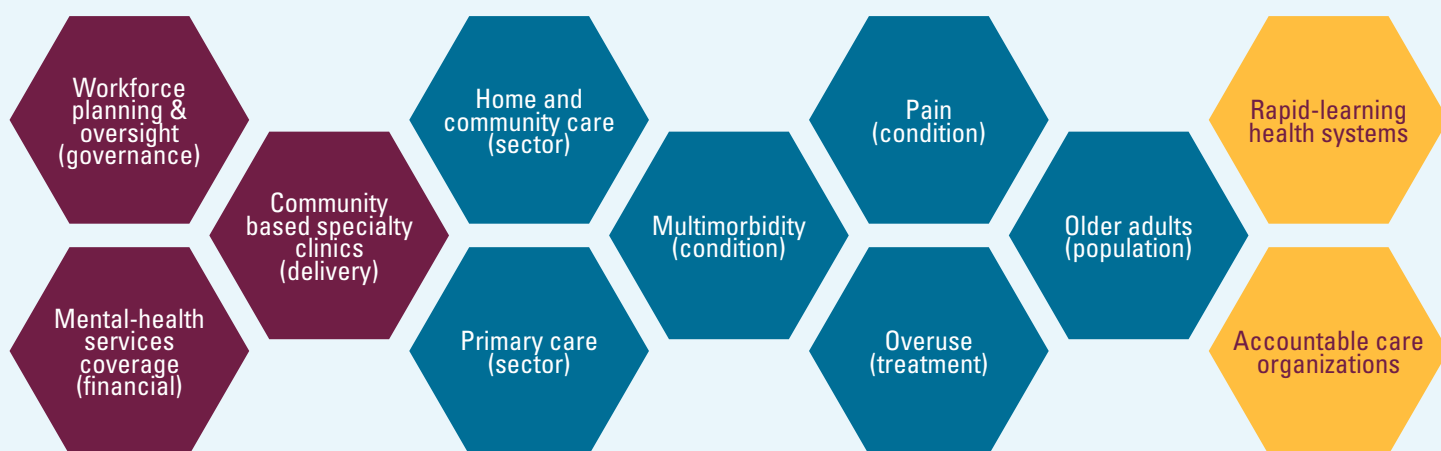languages for Health Systems Evidence

Spark action

Convened stakeholder dialogues and citizen panels to find the 'sweet spot' of a compelling problem, a viable policy option, and conducive politics

58 stakeholder dialogues
with **1,000+ participants**

51 citizen panels
with **600+ participants**

With the help of **500+ advisors**, (e.g., as steering committee members, key informants and merit reviewers), we've addressed a diverse array of topics in local communities, provinces and nationally:

⬡ **System arrangements**   ⬡ **Sectors, conditions, treatments and populations**   ⬡ **Cross-cutting arrangements**

- Workforce planning & oversight (governance)
- Mental-health services coverage (financial)
- Community based specialty clinics (delivery)
- Home and community care (sector)
- Primary care (sector)
- Multimorbidity (condition)
- Pain (condition)
- Overuse (treatment)
- Older adults (population)
- Rapid-learning health systems
- Accountable care organizations

Embed supports

Co-developed approaches to institutionalizing promising and proven approaches to evidence-informed policymaking

Evaluate innovations

Made available cutting-edge research, evidence syntheses and frameworks about how to support evidence-informed policymaking through **200+** widely cited peer-reviewed **papers**

Ontario

The McMaster Health Forum has enjoyed the support of the Ontario Government in providing the best available evidence, and citizen and other stakeholder insights, to guide health-policy decisions. We have worked in close partnership with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to foster the expectation that policy-development work will be evidence-informed.

Founding and enabling partnerships that support evidence-informed policymaking about health systems internationally

We have worked with partners to address a wide range of key issues, spanning a range of jurisdictions including:

Pandemics
(Canada, U.S. & Mexico)

Childhood cancer
(Latin America)

Civil society
(global)

As the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Evidence-Informed Policy, the Forum supports evidence-informed policymaking in WHO member states, WHO regional offices and at WHO 'headquarters':

» Co-developed (with WHO) and continue to support Evidence-Informed Policy Networks that undertake similar work to the Forum in **40+** low- and middle-income **countries**

» Hosted **120+** capacity-building **workshops** for policymakers and stakeholders from **60+ countries**

» Trained **1,900+** health- and social-system **leaders** in how to support evidence-informed policymaking
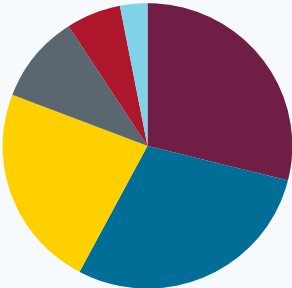
Arranged and funded over **60 internships** to support health-system strengthening in **36 organizations** in **12 countries**

QUEEN ELIZABETH *Scholars*

"We established the Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center based on the model and programs developed by the McMaster Health Forum, whose leadership and passion for making the best use of evidence continue to impact health systems around the world. We value our partnership with the Forum and we look forward to new and exciting opportunities to further strengthen our collaborations and learnings."

Fadi El-Jardali,
Director, K2P Center, Lebanon

Our collaborations by region

- 29% Africa
- 29% Americas
- 23% Western Pacific
- 10% Eastern Mediterranean
- 6% Europe
- 3% South-East Asia

Founding and enabling partnerships that support evidence-informed policymaking about the SDGs in Canada and internationally

We are increasingly being asked to address topics in the broader social-systems space, such as:

- Marijuana decriminalization
- Gambling-related harm
- Violence and injuries
- K-12 education
- Housing
- Poverty

SOCIAL SYSTEMS EVIDENCE

We're proud to have recently launched and already grown Social Systems Evidence to **2,000+ systematic reviews** (now in partnership with the Monash Sustainable Development Institute) as a platform that can enable both our efforts and our partners' efforts to support evidence-informed policymaking using two different 'ways in'…

…through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1 No poverty	2 Zero hunger	3 Good health and well being	4 Quality education	5 Gender equality	6 Clean water and sanitation	7 Affordable and clean energy	8 Decent work and economic growth	9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10 Reduced inequalities	11 Sustainable cities and communities	12 Responsible consumption and reproduction	13 Climate action	14 Life below water	15 Life on land	16 Peace, justice and strong institutions	17 Partnerships for the goals	

…or by government sectors and program areas

1 Citizenship	2 Children & youth services	3 Climate action	4 Consumer & social services	5 Consumer protection	6 Culture & gender	7 Economic development & growth	8 Education	9 Employment	10 Energy
11 Environmental protection	12 Financial protection	13 Food safety & security	14 Government services	15 Housing	16 Infrastructure	17 Natural resources	18 Public safety & justice	19 Recreation	20 Transportation

We're also helping to support evidence-informed policymaking about the SDGs in **14 countries** through our most recently launched network, Partners for Evidence-driven Rapid Learning in Social Systems (PERLSS), which includes over **70 people** across **27 organizations**

PERLSS
Partners for Evidence-driven Rapid Learning in Social Systems

"Our partnerships are an essential part of how we keep 'upping our game.' We now have collaboration agreements with **40 institutions** in **22 countries**. We have learned a great deal from our partners, and we can achieve many of our international impacts with and through them."

Ileana Ciurea,
Senior advisor, Strategy, collaborations and innovation

A new 'citizen lens' on our initiatives

We have worked to develop and integrate citizen-focused initiatives across many of our programs, and we continue to look for ways to better empower citizens and help them push for evidence-informed change in health and social systems

McMaster University — McMaster OPTIMAL AGING PORTAL — mcmasteroptimalaging.org

McMaster University — PORTAIL SUR LE VIEILLISSEMENT OPTIMAL DE McMaster — mcmastervieillissementoptimal.org

Information about healthy aging that you can trust

Exercise — Mental health — Nutrition — Transportation

"Providing a bilingual website that offers trustworthy information about how to age well is one important way that we empower citizens. We have recently expanded the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal to include content about the social aspects of aging."

François-Pierre Gauvin,
Senior scientific lead, Citizen engagement and evidence curation

We give diverse citizens a voice in policymaking through our **citizen panels**, the insights from which are now captured in the evidence briefs that inform stakeholder dialogues

We also empower local citizens by describing how the Ontario health system works. Our **book** chapters can be downloaded for free from the Forum website. We'll be publishing the second edition in 2020, which will include descriptions of many of the major transformations now underway

More recently we've started experimenting with online and face-to-face **training** for citizens in how to find and use evidence (such as through the Portal) as well as how to push for evidence-informed changes in the health system

890,000+
page views of
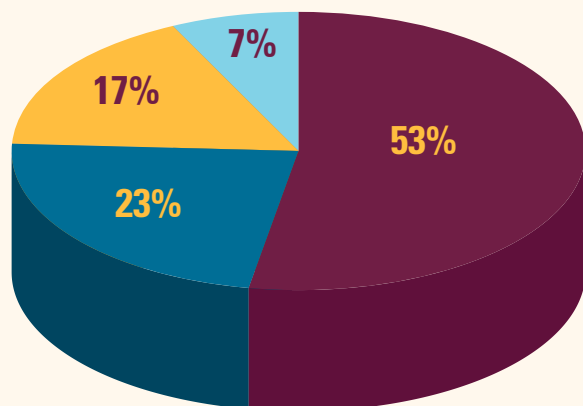McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

31,600+
email subscribers to
McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

3,500+
downloads of
'Ontario's health system' book chapters

Our funders and supporters

The Forum has received a total of **$16 million** in funding (**$2 million** within the last year alone) from a diverse array of sources, including:

53%

17%

23%

7%

peer-reviewed awards (e.g., funding from granting agencies such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research)

service agreements with government (e.g., British Columbia Ministry of Health and Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care), government agencies and related organizations (e.g., Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and International Development Research Centre), and professional organizations (e.g., Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario)

foundation grants (e.g., Hewlett Foundation and Labarge Charitable Foundation) and **donors** (Suzanne Labarge in support of the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal, Social Systems Evidence and other initiatives)

university support (e.g., McMaster's Forward with Integrity initiative)

Our team

15

full-time staff (current)

40+

part-time staff & students (current)

28

PhD students (cumulative)

87

Forum Fellows & Queen Elizabeth Scholars (cumulative)

"With our team's expertise spanning areas from research to communications, from event management to citizen engagement, and from digital marketing to partnership development, we've been able to rapidly expand our programs, reach and impact."
Julie Baird, Lead, Operations

The Forum's PhD students (such as Ahmednur Ali and Qi Wang) provide critical support to our programs while at the same time preparing them as future leaders. One of our current staff (Kerry Waddell) will soon transition to become one of our PhD students.

Many of the students and staff who have worked with the Forum have gone on to achieve significant impacts in Canada and beyond, two examples of which are Matthew Hughsam (a former Forum Fellow who completed a Forum-sponsored internship in the Office of the Presidency of South Africa and is now a senior advisor in the Ethiopian Ministry of Health) and Ekwaro Obuku (a PhD candidate and regular Forum visitor who is now also the president of the Uganda Medical Association).

Key milestones

2009
McMaster Health Forum launched

2009
First stakeholder dialogue convened

2011
Health Systems Evidence launched

2013
Rapid Response program launched

2013
First citizen panel convened

2014
McMaster Optimal Aging Portal unveiled

2015
Online capacity building launched

2015
Queen Elizabeth Scholarships launched

2016
Book about Ontario's health system published

2017
Forum+ launched

2017
Portal's French interface and social content launched

2018
Social Systems Evidence launched

2018
Partners in Evidence-driven Rapid Learning Social Systems (PERLSS) launched

Looking ahead: The next ten years

Thanks to our incredible partners and supporters, and our staff and students, we've helped to make research evidence, citizen values and stakeholder insights a regular part of the policymaking conversation in many parts of Canada and around the world. We're now making citizen empowerment a growing focus of our work. We're also considering how we can best support the growing use of a 'rapid-learning system lens' across Canada and internationally.

We're excited to see what the next ten years bring.

John Lavis,
Founder and director

Kaelan Moat,
Managing director

Let's collaborate

We already work with a diverse array of individuals and organizations, but we're always looking for ways to expand our networks. If you're interested in working with us to make an impact on health or social systems, contact us at forum@mcmaster.ca.

Keep in touch through our e-newsletters

✉ www.mcmasterforum.org/newsletter

Engage with us on social media

🐦 @McMasterForum
@forumHSS, @forumLMIC, @forumCDNhealth, @forumONhealth

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