# Rapid Response program
## Summary of service timelines

The table below summarizes what is possible in three-, 10- 30-, 60- or 90-business days. The question(s) may be about one or more of any of the following steps that are part of a robust policy analysis: 1) clarifying a problem and its causes; 2) framing options for addressing it; 3) identifying implementation considerations; and 4) informing monitoring and evaluation plans (i.e., any step in a robust policy analysis). Evidence syntheses about one or more steps of a policy analysis are underpinned and may be complemented by systems analysis (i.e., determining how the relevant parts of a health or social system currently work and identifying options for doing things differently) and a political analysis (i.e., understanding the political factors that may affect whether and how issues move onto government agendas and policy decisions are made).

For any given timeline, it may be that not all activities listed for each type of analysis are feasible. Instead, one or more components may need to be combined in different ways depending on the timeline, the complexity of the question, the types of evidence and insights that need to be collected, and the types of analyses that need to be conducted. We are not able to conduct a full systematic review within any of the timelines provided through the Rapid Response program.

For all timelines other than three-business days, we engage experts to conduct a merit review of the rapid synthesis to ensure scientific rigour and system relevance. For the 10- and 30-day syntheses, we send a draft summary to the requestor before merit reviewer feedback is received and then a final summary that incorporates reviewers' feedback is sent within another five to 10-business days (depending on how quickly reviewers send feedback).

| Timeline* | Type of analysis | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | **Policy analysis** | **System analysis** | **Political analysis** |
| **Three business days**<br><br>Examples of completed syntheses<br>○ Identifying performance measures, indicators and targets to monitor and evaluate dementia strategies<br>○ Identifying the effects of home care on health outcomes, client satisfaction and health system sustainability | • Identify systematic reviews and economic evaluations relevant to health systems from key databases (e.g., Health Systems Evidence (HSE) and Social Systems Evidence (SSE))<br>• Provide summary tables that outline:<br>○ key findings from relevant systematic reviews;<br>○ quality appraisals of systematic reviews (for reviews that are available through HSE and SSE); and<br>○ countries in which studies included in systematic reviews were conducted (for reviews that are available in HSE and SSE) | • Not feasible in this timeline | • Not feasible in this timeline |
| **10 business days**<br><br>Examples of completed syntheses<br>○ Identifying indicators and rates of poverty among older adults<br>○ Fostering an organizational culture supportive of evidence-informed policymaking | • As above and:<br>○ identify relevant primary research studies when existing systematic reviews can't be found, are old or are of low quality;<br>○ provide summary tables that outline key messages from primary studies (when included); and<br>○ prepare a brief summary of the key findings from systematic reviews (and primary research studies where relevant) | • Not feasible in this timeline | • Not feasible in this timeline |

| Timeline* | Type of analysis | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Policy analysis | System analysis | Political analysis |
| **30 business days**<br><br>Examples of completed syntheses<br>o Examining the impact of interprofessional training and patient engagement on falls prevention<br>o Supporting Professional Learning Approaches to Foster Global Competencies in K-12 Education | • As above and:<br>o conduct key informant interviews to identify additional research evidence (e.g., systematic reviews in grey literature reports); and<br>o prepare a detailed summary of the key findings from systematic reviews, primary research studies when included (and from system and/or political analyses if conducted) | • Identify and analyze policy documents (e.g., legislation/regulation, strategies or policy) and other sources (e.g., local data and health-system descriptions) to determine whether and how a small number of comparator jurisdictions in Canada and/or in other countries are addressing a health- or social-system issue<br>• Conduct interviews with key informants to identify additional insights about whether and how comparator jurisdictions are addressing a health- or social-system issue (feasibility depends on scope of policy analysis)<br>• Prepare a detailed summary of the key findings from the system analysis (and from policy and political analyses if conducted) | • Identify and analyze policy documents (e.g., political party platforms) and other sources (e.g., stakeholder websites) to identify factors that may affect government agenda setting and decision-making processes in relation to addressing a health- or social-system issue<br>• Conduct interviews with key informants to identify additional insights about political factors that may affect government agenda setting and decision-making processes in relation to addressing a health- or social-system issue<br>• Prepare a detailed summary of the key findings from the political analysis, and from policy and system analyses if conducted |
| **60 business days**<br><br>Examples of completed syntheses<br>o Creating a rapid-learning health system | • As above but with a more in-depth analysis and synthesis of findings from policy, system and/or political analyses | • As above, but for a larger number of comparator jurisdictions, with more key informant interviews and with a more in-depth analysis and synthesis of findings from policy, system and/or political analyses | • As above, but for a larger number of comparator jurisdictions, with more key informant interviews and with a more in-depth analysis and synthesis of findings from policy, system and/or political analyses |
| **90 business days**<br><br>Examples of completed syntheses<br>o Identifying and assessing core components of collaborative-care models for treating mental health and physical health conditions<br>o Identifying optimal treatment approaches for people with multimorbidity | • As above and:<br>o conduct a scoping review (if an in-depth scan of policy documents, sources for context and key informant interviews are not required) | • As above, but for a larger number of comparator jurisdictions, with more key informant interviews and with a more in-depth analysis and synthesis of findings from policy, system and/or political analyses | • As above, but for a larger number of comparator jurisdictions, with more key informant interviews and with a more in-depth analysis and synthesis of findings from policy, system and/or political analyses |

*The timeline starts after finalizing the question to be addressed with the requestor. For more information, contact forum@mcmaster.ca.
Wilson MG. Rapid Response program: Summary of service timelines. Hamilton, Canada: McMaster Health Forum, 2018.

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