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# **Frontline Health Care in Canada: Innovations in Delivering Services to Vulnerable Populations**

**David Hay**

Director, Social Development

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**Canadian Policy Research Networks**



# Overview

- Project investigated:
  - Access to primary health care services for people in rural, remote and northern regions, and inner-city areas
  - Issues and challenges for vulnerable populations
  - Innovations in service delivery by frontline health care workers, in context of challenging conditions and demands



# Vulnerable Populations

- Rural, remote and northern
  - Poorer health status and greater need for primary health care
  - Large gaps in service availability (e.g. mental health, addictions, cancer, trauma, dental, maternity)
  - Challenges of geography, weather
  - Recruitment and retention of health care workers



# Vulnerable Populations

- Inner city and marginalized
  - Low levels of education, employment, access to human and financial resources
  - Health problems are often severe and complex, complicated by poor housing, nutrition, oral health
  - Particular populations are at risk; street youth, homeless, immigrants and refugees, Aboriginal Peoples



# Frontline Health Services

- Characteristics
  - Effective, responsive
  - Delivery systems and mechanisms are not mainstream
  - Workers are “specialists”
- Access points
  - Urban (hospital emergency departments, community health centres, community services)
  - Rural (family doctor, rural hospitals, CHCs, mobile health units, nursing stations)



# Frontline Health Services

- Hospital Emergency Departments
  - Urban
  - Rural
  - Community Paramedicine
- Community Health Centres
  - Urban CHCs
  - Aboriginal CHCs
  - Rural CHCs



# Innovative Health Initiatives

- Target populations
- Appropriate care
- Delivery practices and systems
- Demands and resources



# Issues and Challenges

- Inadequate training
- Shortage of health care professionals
- Conflicting funding models
- Lack of integrated care
- Poor coverage of CHCs
- Inadequate services in the suburbs





# Policy Perspectives for Frontline Health

- Health Determinants
- Who is Responsible?
- Supporting Community Innovations
- Health Services, Access and “Wait Times”



# Summary

- Innovations in Delivery of Frontline Health Care Services
- Needs of Vulnerable Populations
- Appropriate Policy Perspective



# Read the full report

David Hay, Judi Varga-Toth and Emily Hines  
***Frontline Health Care in Canada:  
Innovations in Delivering Services to  
Vulnerable Populations***, Ottawa: Canadian  
Policy Research Networks, September 2006.

Available at [www.CPRN.org](http://www.CPRN.org)





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