

Executive Summary

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Saskatchewan is one of the three western Canadian prairie provinces. The other two are Alberta and Manitoba. Over one million residents live in Saskatchewan. This report attempts to provide a picture of the health status of Saskatchewan residents as well as the key conditions which affect their health.

Population Health refers to an approach to health that aims to improve the health of the entire population and reduce health inequities among population groups. The determinants of health are addressed recognizing that they are complex and interrelated. The entire range of individual and collective factors and conditions—and their interactions—that have been shown to be correlated with health status are considered.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (2003), at every stage of life, health is determined by complex interactions between social and economic factors, the physical environment and individual behaviour. These interrelated factors are referred to as ‘determinants of health’. It is the combined influence of the determinants of health that determines health status. The determinants include Income, Social Support Networks, Education, Employment/Working Conditions, Social Environments, Physical Environments, Personal Health Practices and Coping Skills, Health Child Development, Biology and Genetic Endowment, Gender, Culture and Health Services. As the understanding of health increases, it is possible that more determinants will be included.

Health status reports describe the health of the population, offer comparisons within those populations and, when possible, to national figures; highlight issues related to the population’s health; and may serve as an educational tool for various target audiences including the general public.

Health status reports have limitations. There is no single measurement for the health status of an individual or population as health is a multi-dimensional concept and is difficult to measure. One report could not possibly describe all diseases and conditions. The Saskatchewan Provincial Health Status Report includes the results and interpretation for a number of health-related indicators, makes that information easily accessible to a wide variety of audiences, and provides evidence for planning and evaluation of public health and other health programs.

Health status reports are a labourious undertaking and quickly outdate as new information becomes available. As a result, the Saskatchewan Provincial Health Status Report is intended to be a “living document”. Chapters will be updated on a regular basis.

Chapters

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- 3 – The Population of Saskatchewan
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THE POPULATION OF SASKATCHEWAN

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Health Covered Population showed an increase in the number of Saskatchewan residents with health coverage between the years 2006 and 2010 from 1,005,237 to 1,070,477, representing a growing population.

Saskatchewan had the sixth largest population (968,157) in Canada according to the 2006 Canadian census. *Addendum: The preliminary results of the 2011 census have begun to be released. Saskatchewan's population in 2011 was reported to be 1,033,381, representing a 6.7 percent increase from the 2006 figure.*

Saskatchewan's census population was shown to decline between the years 1981 and 2006.

According to the 2006 census:

- Just over half (51.2 percent) of Saskatchewan's population lived in cities with populations over 10,000;

- Rural populations tended to be older;

- Approximately 15 percent of the Saskatchewan population self-identified as Aboriginal;

- All three dependency ratios (total, child and aged) for Saskatchewan were higher than those seen for Canada;

- Saskatchewan had a low proportion of immigrants compared to Canada as a whole; and

- The vast majority of the Saskatchewan population report knowing English only.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Social environment:

Saskatchewan 2006 labour participation rates tended to be one of the highest across Canada;

In 2006, Saskatchewan had the third lowest unemployment rate for the provinces and territories, lower than that reported for Canada as a whole;

Income levels reported for 2006 Saskatchewan residents tended to be below the Canadian average; and

Saskatchewan's 2006 population attain education levels below the Canadian average with a high proportion having less than high school education and a low proportion having post-secondary education.

Physical environment:

Air quality in Saskatchewan was consistently excellent to good, based on the air quality index (AQI);

Drinking water advisories/orders by health regions showed a clear seasonal peak; there were fewer in the winter months with a peak occurring in June and July; and

A warming temperature trend was evident for Saskatchewan.

INJURIES

According to the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) in 2005, approximately 15 percent of the Saskatchewan population aged 12 years and over reported having an injury in the past 12 months.

Falls were the most common injury.

Adolescents aged 12 to 19 years had the highest prevalence.

Males reported more injuries than females.

The top two activities associated with injury were sports or physical exercise, and work.

Injuries occurred most frequently in the home or its surrounding, and sports facilities or athletics areas.

There was no significant change in injury-related annual mortality rates from 1995 to 2009 or hospital separation rates from 1995 to 2008. For injury deaths in general, males had a higher prevalence than females.

Many of the specific-injury types exhibited declines or no changes in the rates, (e.g., farm injury-related hospitalizations, motor vehicle-related hospitalizations, bicycling-related hospitalizations, accidental burn-related hospitalizations).

Falls-related mortality rates more than doubled from 1995 to 2008 and non-snow off-road vehicle-related hospitalizations increased considerably from 2005 to 2008.