What is public health?

Public health aims to optimize the physical and mental health of the population, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable.
Public health plays four essential roles.

1 PROTECT

Public health protects against immediate health threats and acts to prevent epidemics or citizen contaminations due to pollutants or hazardous substances.

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2 MONITOR

Public health continuously monitors the collective health status in order to detect if problems are worsening or anomalies arise in specific regions. This allows to identify priorities for action, then evaluate their effectiveness.

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3 PREVENT

It's better to be safe than sorry! Public health aims to reduce the number of illnesses, injuries, as well as, psychological and social problems. In order to do so, it vaccinates, tests, advises on safety measures, and raises awareness. It recommends laws, rules and policy changes.

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Collaboration with several organizations allows to:

• support the prevention of chronic diseases, mental health problems, violence, suicide, discrimination, addictions, drowning, homelessness, school drop-outs, etc.;

• offer respite programs or listening services;

• provide livelihood assistance: food security, access to safe housing or employment, etc.

4 PROMOTE

Knowing the full range of determinants towards being and staying healthy, public health informs and educates the public and decision-makers. It works to empower citizens to take action on the quality of their own lives. Furthermore, it recommends to governments to adopt policies, regulations, legislations, and programs that support safe and healthy living environments, equitable services for the population and decent living conditions for all.

To achieve all this, it works with various various partners in all sectors of society.

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Health is everyone's business! Every gesture counts in building sustainable health for all Quebecers!

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