

The McMaster Health Forum's goal is to generate action on the pressing health and social issues of our time. We do this based on the best-available research evidence, as well as experiences and insights from citizens, professionals, organizational leaders, and government policymakers. **We can help you to:**

## [Learn how](#) to make evidence-informed decisions or support others in doing so

### Capacity building

Want to up your game in understanding how health and social systems work, how to find and use research evidence, how to set agendas and develop and implement policies or how to support the use of research evidence in advisory and decision-making processes – or support others in doing so? Our courses, offered both online and in-person, build on the Forum's experiences in training thousands of health-system leaders from more than 60 countries. In partnership with the Ontario SPOR SUPPORT Unit, we also provide training for patients, providers, policymakers and researchers interested in providing patient-partnered evidence support to a learning health system.

### Tools

Browse the resources we have created or co-created to support our programs in the fields of evidence-informed health systems and collective problem-solving.

## [Find global evidence](#) through our own products and our sources of pre-appraised, synthesized research evidence

### Our products

The Forum prepares timely, demand-driven evidence products addressing a wide array of priority health- and social-system topics (rapid evidence profiles, rapid syntheses, evidence briefs and citizen briefs), products that capture insights from our stakeholder dialogues and citizen panels (dialogue summaries, panel summaries and videos of interviews with dialogue participants), and living versions of these products to keep them relevant when the evidence or context is evolving quickly. The Forum also prepares evidence syntheses as 'global public goods' that synthesize what is known based on the best-available evidence globally for a particular research question, which can vary by group and context. [Browse or search our site](#) for topics of particular interest to you.

### Health Systems Evidence

Health Systems Evidence is the world's most comprehensive, free access point for evidence on how to strengthen or reform health systems and how to get cost-effective programs, services and drugs to those who need them. Policymakers and stakeholders can access the resource for free at [healthsystemsevidence.org](http://healthsystemsevidence.org) and register to use enhanced features, or to sign up to receive monthly alerts on topics of interest. 16,000 users have registered to date for Health Systems Evidence.

### Social Systems Evidence

Social Systems Evidence is the world's most comprehensive, free access point for evidence about strengthening 20 government sectors and program areas, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Policymakers and stakeholders can access the database for free at [socialsystemsevidence.org](http://socialsystemsevidence.org) and register to use enhanced features, or to sign up to receive monthly alerts on topics of interest.

### McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

The McMaster Optimal Aging Portal is your source for healthy aging information that you can trust. This free website gives you access to evidence-based information about the health and social aspects of aging, including blog posts that bring the evidence alive, video blogs that provide insights from experts, interactive e-learning lessons, plain language summaries of high-quality evidence that can be acted on, and more. The Forum co-leads and provides the secretariat for the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal, which can be accessed at [mcmasteroptimalaging.org](http://mcmasteroptimalaging.org). Register for free to stay on top of the latest information on healthy aging.

### Other resources

Other key sources of evidence include our webpage of the [best evidence on military and veterans, preventing transmission of respiratory infectious diseases](#), as well as our past work focused on [COVID-19 public health and social measures](#).

## Find domestic evidence through our own products

### Contextualized evidence syntheses

The Forum has produced 200+ timely and demand-driven contextualized evidence syntheses for federal and provincial governments in Canada (including several government agencies), key health- and social-system stakeholders (e.g., health authorities and professional associations), citizen-serving organizations and international agencies. Our approach can be used to provide insights from the best-available evidence in ultra-rapid timelines (i.e., within days), or longer (weeks or months) and can adopt a 'living' approach where enhancements to scope and methods can be incorporated over time and used to evolve to 'global public goods'. Our contextualized evidence syntheses are also prepared in a way that includes a combination of different analyses to inform issues at different stages of the policy cycle, such as a policy analysis of the best-available evidence and system analyses (e.g., through jurisdictional scans) that provide insight into experiences of jurisdictions with addressing pressing policy issues.

## Spark action through stakeholder dialogues, citizen panels and more

### Stakeholder dialogues

In 2009, the Forum pioneered the use of stakeholder dialogues – a form of deliberative process – to spark action on pressing health- and social-system challenges. Each dialogue is informed by a pre-circulated, context-specific evidence brief that mobilizes the best available local and global evidence about a problem and its causes, options for addressing it, and key implementation considerations and when preceded by a citizen panel on the same topic it also includes citizens' insights. Deliberations – which can be in-person or virtual – elicit the tacit knowledge and real-world views and experiences of government policymakers, system and organizational leaders, professional leaders, and leaders from citizen-serving organizations aiming to identify next steps for different constituencies. The Forum has convened more than 75 dialogues to date and documented their impacts on a range of advisory and decision-making processes.

### Citizen panels

Having identified citizens' values and preferences as a missing ingredient in most advisory and decision-making processes, the Forum began convening citizen panels in 2013, initially as a stand-alone process but increasingly as an input to stakeholder dialogues where citizens' input can help to shape deliberations about how to address pressing challenges. Each citizen panel is informed by a pre-circulated citizen brief and comprised of citizens who reflect diversity both in lived experience with the issue at hand and in their age, gender, ethnocultural background and socioeconomic status. The Forum has convened 36 citizen panels to date and documented how they've shaped both stakeholder deliberations and advisory and decision-making processes.

## Leverage networks

In addition to delivering our own programs, the Forum plays many roles in strengthening health and social systems. Over the years we've worked closely with a remarkably diverse array of individuals and organizations who share our interest in collaboratively addressing critical health- and social-system challenges.

### Rapid-Improvement Support and Exchange (RISE)

RISE's vision is a rapid-learning health system that continually 'ups its game' in achieving equity-centred quadruple-aim metrics. Its mission is to contribute to the Ontario Ministry of Health's Ontario Health Team (OHT) Central Program of Supports by providing OHTs with timely and responsive supports for rapid learning and improvement (e.g., through coaching and the preparation of peer profiles that facilitate peer sharing and learning about OHT acceleration priorities), on-demand products and processes (e.g., RISE briefs and jamborees) and tools and resources (e.g., a comprehensive website for resources to support OHTs and a monthly newsletter and events calendar). In fulfilling this mission, RISE is committed to ensuring that OHTs have the support they need to strengthen their OHT building blocks and adopt a population-health management approach for their attributed population.

The Forum's director has edited a book answering the commonly asked question: how does the Ontario health system work? The book – entitled '[Ontario's health system: Key insights for engaged citizens, professionals and policymakers](#)' – can be purchased through Amazon or key chapters can be downloaded for free from the RISE website.

### Global Commission on to Address Societal Challenges

The Global Evidence Commission began in April 2021 as a grassroots effort to improve the use of research evidence, both in routine times and in future global crises. Our Implementation Council is now 95 organizational partners strong, and drawn from 18 countries in every part of the world and from many global and regional bodies. The Citizen Leadership Group brings together citizen leaders and leaders of citizen-serving organizations to advance the Global Evidence Commission's implementation priority to put evidence at the centre of everyday life

### COVID-19 Evidence Network to support Decision-making (COVID-END)

COVID-END was a time-limited network that brought together more than 50 of the world's leading evidence-synthesis, technology-assessment and guideline-development groups around the world. It covered the full spectrum of the pandemic response, from public-

health measures and clinical management to health-system arrangements and economic and social responses. It also covered the full spectrum of contexts where the pandemic response was playing out, including low-, middle- and high-income countries.

## Follow us

Keep up on all the news and products available from the Forum.

>> Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) (McMasterForum)

>> Subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) to view videos

>> Follow our X feeds:

- [@McMasterForum](#) for news about the full range of Forum programs
- [@EvidenceComm](#) for updates from the Evidence Commission and partners
- [@OHTrise](#) for news and events relevant to Ontario Health Teams
- [@Mac\\_AgingNews](#) for news about optimal aging

>> Like us on [Facebook](#) (@McMasterForum)

>> Sign up for [Forum Update](#), our monthly e-newsletter with updates about upcoming events, new publications, and updates from our international networks

>> Sign up for [RISE Update](#), a monthly e-newsletter for those interested in staying in the loop about OHTs and RISE

If you're a health- or social-system leader and want to discuss working with us to make an impact, contact us at [forum@mcmaster.ca](mailto:forum@mcmaster.ca).

Citation: Lavis JN. McMaster Health Forum Programs. Hamilton, Canada: McMaster Health Forum, 2019.

 This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#). Last updated on 3 December 2024.