



Biennial Report - April 2021

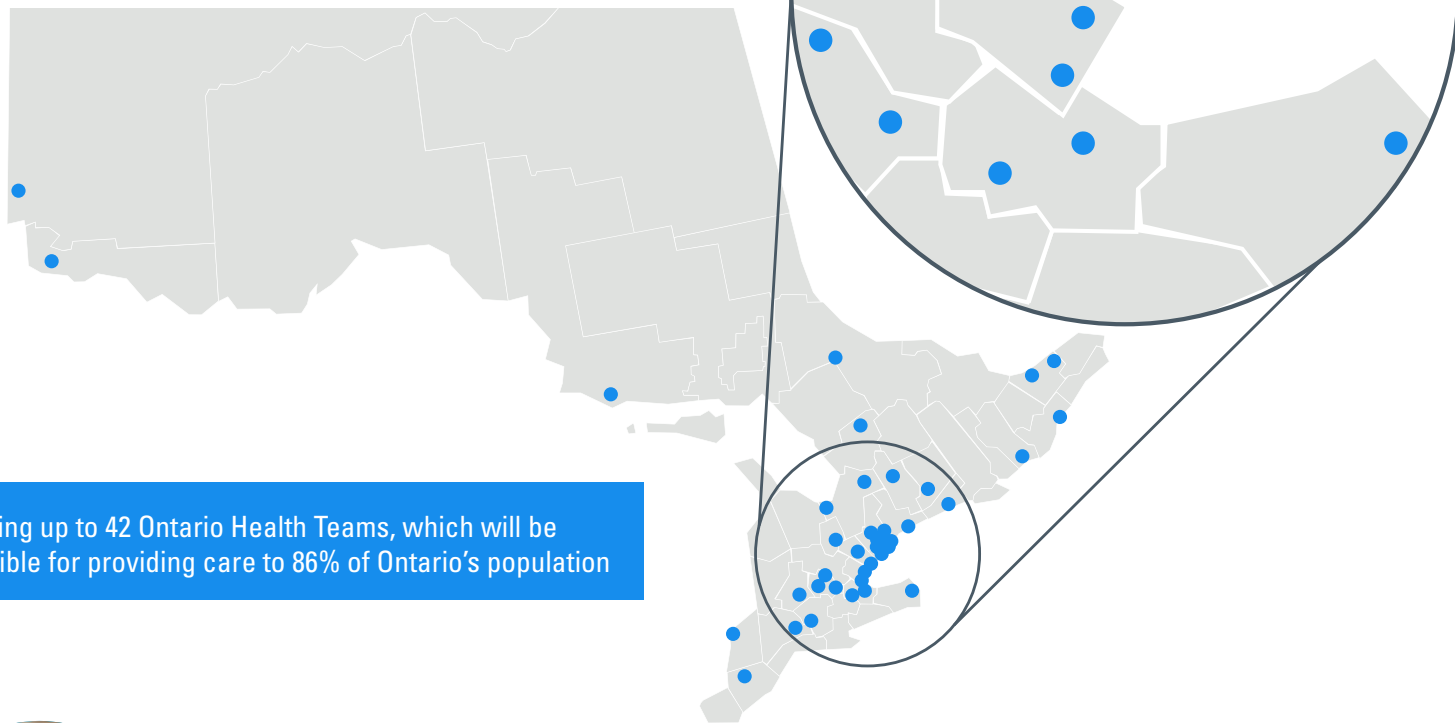
Agile, collaborative and impact oriented

The past two years have been unprecedented in many ways, creating new challenges and opportunities for the Forum. First, the government of Ontario initiated a large-scale health-system transformation, and the Forum pivoted quickly to establish Rapid-Improvement Support and Exchange (RISE) to support emerging Ontario Health Teams. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic led government policymakers to ask many urgent questions about all aspects of the COVID-19 response, and the Forum pivoted quickly to establish the COVID-19 Evidence Network to support Decision-making (COVID-END), with a global focus on enhancing coordination and reducing duplication in the evidence response to COVID-19 and a domestic focus on synthesizing and contextualizing the best available research evidence for Canadian decision-makers. Third, the COVID-19 pandemic required new ways of working, and the Forum pivoted quickly to hosting virtual versions of its stakeholder dialogues, citizen panels, and other engagement processes.

The Forum was able to move as far and as fast as it did because of its partnerships with groups that powerfully complement the Forum's areas of strength. With RISE, for example, we partnered with Rob Reid and colleagues at Trillium Health Partners' Institute for Better Health. With both RISE and COVID-END, we partnered with Jeremy Grimshaw and colleagues at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute. With COVID-END global we partnered with more than 55 world-leading evidence-synthesis, technology-assessment and guideline-development groups, and with COVID-END in Canada we partnered with the SPOR Evidence Alliance, Cochrane Canada, and more than 40 evidence-synthesis teams from across the country.

Through all of this work, the Forum maintained its focus on impacts, whether that involved: 1) helping OHTs achieve the quadruple-aim of improving care experiences and health outcomes while keeping providers engaged and per-capita costs manageable; 2) helping leaders around the world make evidence-informed decisions about COVID-19 related public-health measures, clinical management, health-system arrangements, and economic and social responses; or 3) strengthening health systems and getting the right programs, services and products to those who need them.

Growing networks



Supporting up to 42 Ontario Health Teams, which will be responsible for providing care to 86% of Ontario's population



"Transforming our system to support population health and to deliver seamless experiences requires a new way of thinking and working together. RISE has been instrumental in this journey. RISE provided one-on-one coaching for the Mississauga OHT, with practical, evidence-based advice from around the world on how to design and build sustainable population health systems that work for the people they care for and for providers."

Georgia Whitehead, Mississauga Ontario Health Team

"RISE has helped to bring rapid learning and improvement supports to Ontario Health Teams (OHT), and our work together at the OHT Forum, Learning and Improvement Collaboratives, RISE briefs and jamborees have set the stage for our coordinated efforts to support and enable all teams and advance provincial coverage."

Ivan Yuen, Ontario Health



RISE by the numbers

2,000+

engaged in RISE events and training

1,000+

subscribed to the e-newsletters

250+

registered to online shared space

270+

supported with registration for indigenous cultural safety training

120,000+

RISE website pageviews

30+

RISE briefs and other publications

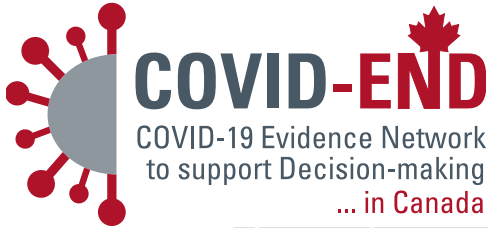
25+

approved teams received population-health management coaching

7

in-development teams received intensive navigation and facilitation supports

Growing networks



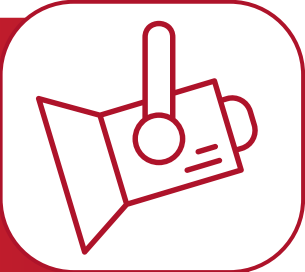
More than 40 evidence-synthesis teams have come together as part of COVID-END in Canada



“As systems have struggled to adapt to the constantly changing evidence base around COVID-19, there has been a lot of duplication of effort occurring around evidence synthesis. COVID-END offers an opportunity to reduce that duplication, and ensure a timely common high standard of evidence synthesis across Canada (including for provinces that may not have the resources available to the larger provinces).”

Braden Manns, Alberta Health Services

Canadian COVID-19 evidence



Canadian decision-makers can keep current through twice-a-month email updates about COVID-19 responses with three types of products from COVID-END in Canada:

- 1) Canadian spotlights;
- 2) global spotlights; and
- 3) horizon scans.

COVID-19 responses can include the full spectrum of public-health measures, clinical management, health-system arrangements, and economic and social responses.

COVID-19 living evidence profile

COVID-END and the McMaster Health Forum are producing living evidence profiles, which identify research evidence addressing pressing questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and are updated regularly. Each update focuses on profiling insights from the most salient newly identified highly relevant evidence documents and from the jurisdictional scans.

The living evidence profiles address:

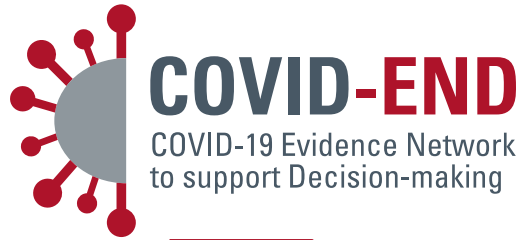


COVID-19 vaccine roll-out elements



Long-term care crisis management and renewal

Growing networks



AGREE
 AHRQ ACTS Initiative
 HiRU, McMaster PLUS
 HTAi
 INESSS
 MAGIC
 McMaster Health Forum (Co-lead)
 Memorial University of NL
 NCCMT
 OHRI (Co-lead)
 SPOR EA
 Veterans Affairs ESP

3ie
 Campbell Collaboration
 Cochrane
 Cochrane Germany
 Cochrane Ireland
 Cochrane Rehabilitation
 Collaboration for Environmental Evidence
 COVID-NMA (Cochrane France)
 EPPI-Centre
 EUnetHTA
 Evidence Aid
 Evidence Synthesis International
 Evidence Synthesis Ireland
 GIN
 MAGICapp
 NICE
 NIPH - FHI
 Oxford Centre for Evidence-based Medicine
 PROSPERO
 TRIP
 UNCOVER
 UNICEF Innocenti
 WHO

COVID-END is a time-limited network that brings together more than 50 of the world's leading evidence-synthesis, technology-assessment and guideline-development groups around the world

EBMC, Lanzhou University
 EBSSHC, Nanjing University
 GESI
 K2P Center
 PREBP
 University of Putra

Epistemonikos
 Fiocruz

ACE
 ACRES
 Africa Centre, Makerere University
 Africa Evidence Network
 CEBHC, Stellenbosch University
 Cochrane South Africa
 eBASE
 SAMRC

Agency for Clinical Innovation
 Cochrane Australia
 Joanna Briggs Institute

"The work that you have done in bringing together international agencies, evidence users and producers has been phenomenal. I am particularly impressed that despite the urgency of action, you have brokered a truly international collaboration that from an early stage placed equality and diversity at its centre - showing welcome leadership in this area."

Lesley Stewart, Director & Professor of Evidence Synthesis Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, University of York, UK



Global COVID-19 evidence



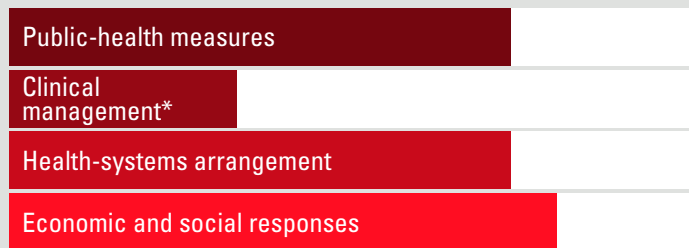
Global decision-makers can keep current through twice-a-month email updates about COVID-19 responses with two types of products from COVID-END:

- 1) global spotlights; and
- 2) horizon scans.

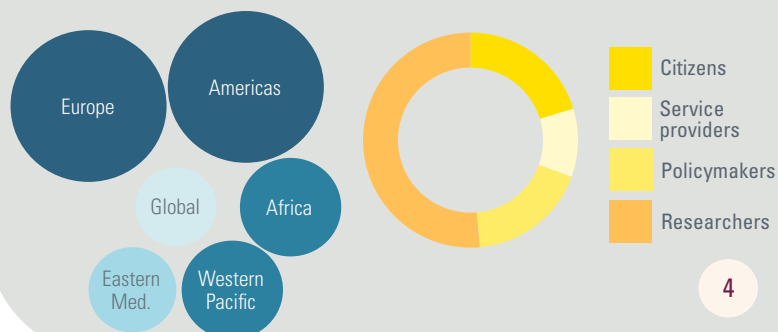
COVID-19 responses can include the full spectrum of public-health measures, clinical management, health-system arrangements, and economic and social responses.

Horizon scans for emerging issues

The panelists comprise a mix of strategic and 'out-of-the-box' thinkers and doers who collectively bring diverse perspectives to our horizon-scanning work. They cover a range of expertise, regions and perspectives



*Clinical management of COVID-19 and pandemic-related conditions



Other networks

We have worked with partners to address a wide range of key issues, spanning a range of jurisdictions including:



As the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Evidence-Informed Policy, the Forum supports evidence-informed policymaking in WHO member states, WHO regional offices and at WHO headquarters:

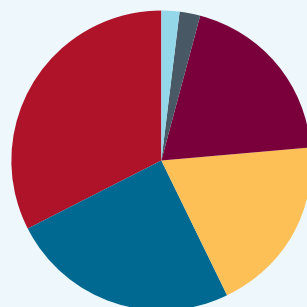
- » Co-developed (with WHO) and continue to support Evidence-Informed Policy Networks that undertake similar work to the Forum in **75+** low- and middle-income **countries**
- » Hosted **140+** capacity-building **workshops** for policymakers and stakeholders from **60+** **countries**
- » Trained **2,100+** health- and social-system **leaders** in how to support evidence-informed policymaking



Arranged and funded over **72 internships** to support health- and social-system strengthening in **45 organizations** in **16 countries**



Our collaborations by region



- 18% Africa
- 23% Americas
- 2% Eastern Mediterranean
- 30% Europe
- 2% South-East Asia
- 18% Western Pacific

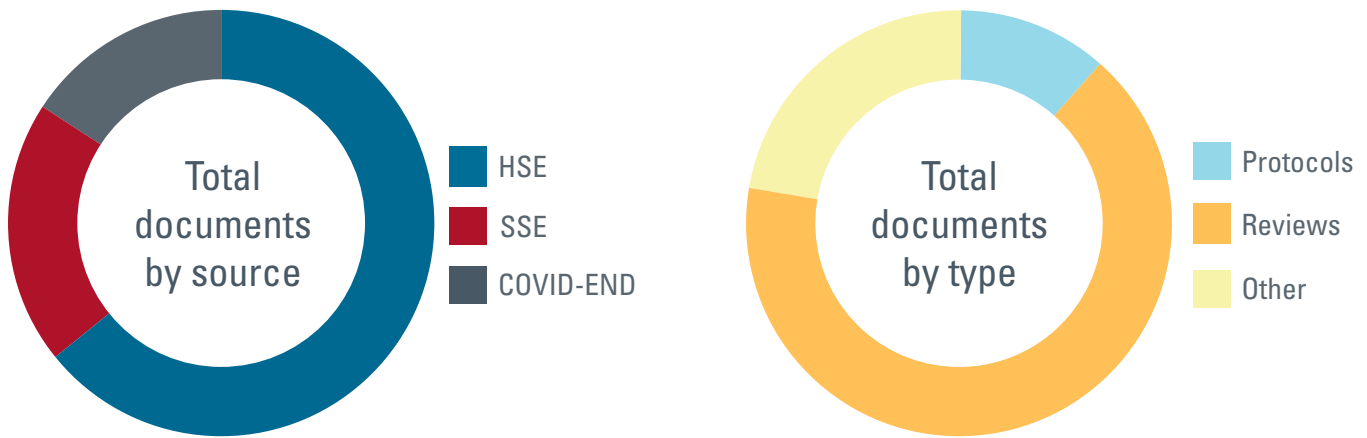
Key Forum programs

Learn how

1,000+ Canadian policymakers trained in how to find and use research evidence to inform policymaking, and how to set agendas and develop and implement policies

Find evidence

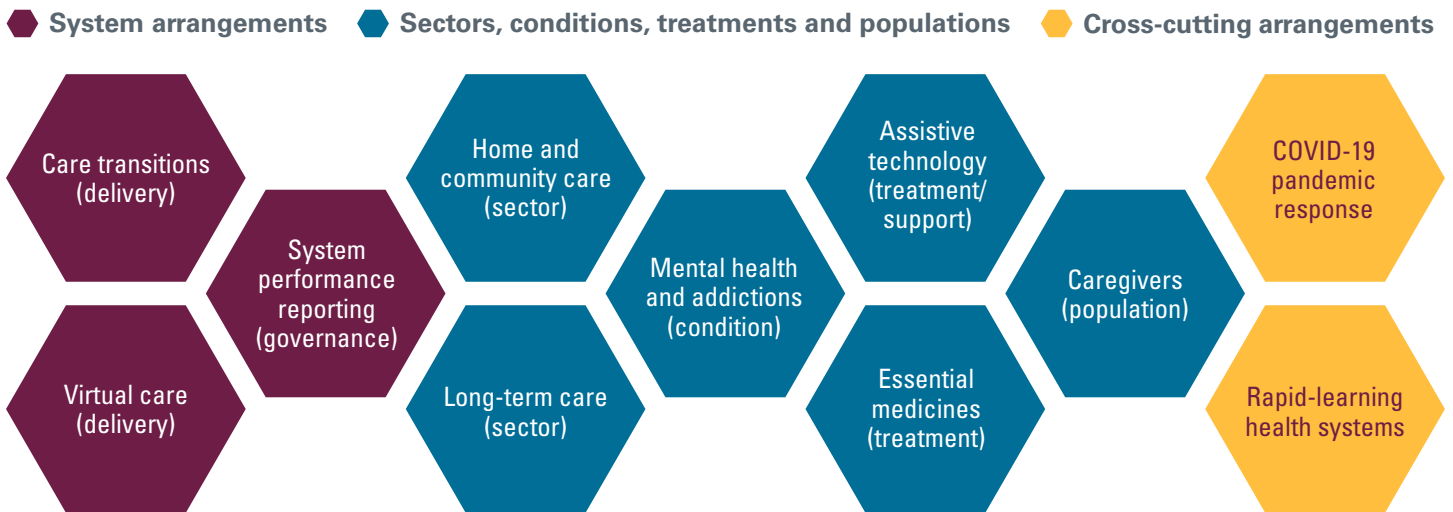
22,300+ documents in the COVID-END inventory, Health Systems Evidence (HSE) and Social Systems Evidence (SSE)



Spark action

65+ stakeholder dialogues and **50+ citizen panels**

With the help of **500+ advisors** (e.g., as steering committee members, key informants and merit reviewers), we've addressed a diverse array of topics in local communities, provinces and nationally:



Embed supports

Approaches to institutionalizing promising and proven approaches to evidence-informed policymaking

Evaluate innovations

200+ widely cited peer-reviewed **papers**, including evidence syntheses and frameworks, about how to support evidence-informed policymaking

Key Forum programs

Pivoting to a virtual model

The Forum, like many teams, has switched to working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our team has:

- transitioned to hosting online events, having now hosted two virtual stakeholder dialogues and four virtual citizen panels, with more to come in the future
- continued to host a range of webinars for the Forum, RISE, and COVID-END, as well as targeted webinars for EVIPNet teams.

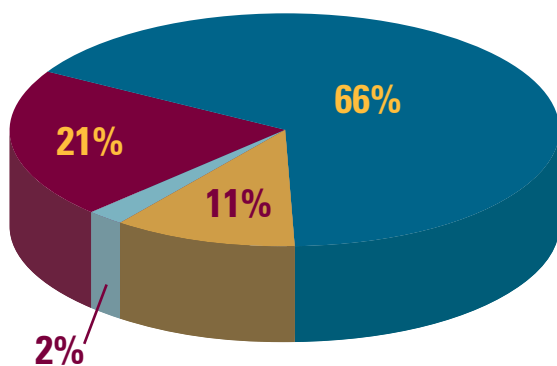
Exploring new ways to support evidence-informed policymaking

Over the past two years, we have continued to improve our existing approaches and developed new ways to respond to time-sensitive requests from policymakers and stakeholders for evidence about high-priority issues. In addition to completing 23 rapid syntheses on a broad range of topics, we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in the following ways:

- prepared 26 rapid evidence profiles on one-off issues
- initiated and maintained two living evidence profiles
- responded to many requests by packaging existing best-in-class resources for the Canadian context
- launched two twice-a-month spotlights, with one profiling new Canadian evidence syntheses and the other profiling the best evidence syntheses from around the world
- added new content to the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal to help citizens cope as best they can in a period where opportunities for social interaction, physical activity, etc. were limited.

Funding

The Forum has received a total of **\$22.5 million** in funding from a diverse array of sources (\$6 million in the last two years alone). In many cases, we have successfully leveraged initial investments into larger and more diverse funding support to achieve greater impact and support a broader development of key networks. For example, our work with RISE made possible an expanded investment from OSSU to support a rapid-learning health system in Ontario. Similarly, our work with the COVID-END global community, initially supported by charitable foundations and the National Institute of Health Research in the UK laid the groundwork for us to secure a \$1 million grant from the Government of Canada through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to establish a national network (COVID-END in Canada) to accelerate our impacts domestically.



Funding breakdown for the biennium

Peer-reviewed awards (e.g., funding from granting agencies such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research)

Grants and service agreements with government (e.g., B.C. Ministry of Health, Ontario Ministry of Health, Nova Scotia Health Authority), government agencies and related organizations (e.g., Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, AGE-WELL NCE), and professional organizations (e.g., Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario)

Foundation grants (e.g., Azrieli Foundation, the US Centre for Effective Altruism and Fidelity Charitable (USA)) and **donors** (Suzanne Labarge in support of the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal, Social Systems Evidence and other initiatives)

University support (e.g., McMaster's Forward with Integrity initiative, Health Evidence and Impact (HEI) Agenda 2020)

Key milestones

2009 to 2012



McMaster Health Forum launched

First stakeholder dialogue convened



Health Systems Evidence launched

2013 to 2015



Rapid Response program launched

First citizen panel convened



McMaster Optimal Aging Portal unveiled

Online capacity building launched



Queen Elizabeth Scholarships launched

2016 to 2018



Book about Ontario's health system published

Social Systems Evidence launched



2019



RISE (Rapid-Improvement Support and Exchange) launched

2020

COVID-19 REP (rapid evidence profile) service launched



COVID-19 Evidence Network to support Decision-makers (COVID-END) launched

2021

Canadian adaptation to COVID-END fully implemented



Advancing human and societal health and well-being

Since our 10-year anniversary report, we have introduced many new innovations (like rapid and living evidence profiles to inform COVID-19 responses) while continuing to execute our existing programs to a very high standard (like building capacity to find and use research evidence, maintaining one-stop shops for synthesized research evidence, and convening citizen panels and stakeholder dialogues). We have also expanded our reach and accelerated our impacts by creating and co-leading impact-oriented networks at the provincial level (with RISE), national level (with COVID-END in Canada), and global level (with COVID-END's 50+ world-leading evidence-synthesis, technology-assessment and guideline-development groups). These achievements were possible because of the dedication and perseverance of our talented team of staff and students during unprecedented times.

In all of our work we strive to be agile, collaborative and impact oriented. We want to see research evidence and systematically elicited citizen values and stakeholder insights drive change.

Looking forward, we are excited for the next two years where we plan to build on lessons learned during the pandemic, respond to emerging issues on the horizon, and continue to advance human and societal health and wellbeing.



Ileana Ciurea
Senior Advisor, Strategy,
Collaborations and
Innovation



Mike Wilson
Assistant Director

Let's collaborate

We already work with a diverse array of individuals and organizations, but we're always looking for ways to expand our networks. If you're interested in working with us to make an impact on health or social systems, contact us at forum@mcmaster.ca.

Keep in touch through our e-newsletter, and **engage with us** on social media



mcmasterforum.org/newsletter



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