Urban Health Framework

1. Access to Recreation and Open Space
2. Access to Healthy Foods
3. Access to Medical Services
4. Access to Public Transit and Active Transportation
5. Access to Quality Affordable Housing
6. Access to Economic Opportunity
7. Completeness of Neighborhoods
8. Safe Neighborhoods and Public Spaces
9. Environmental Quality
10. Green and Sustainable Development and Practices
Here is the conceptual “Framework for Urban Health.” We will spend this module examining each component of the model in more depth and look at some examples of a few of the key components.
The first component to discuss is public health interventions and research. Public health professionals seek to improve health outcomes through a variety of initiatives which can include: health education, enhancing social networks, changing social norms, modifying the physical environment, improving health and social services or improving the quality of care or services received by individuals. The goal is to create the conditions where people can be as healthy as possible and where and individual who is faced with making a health related decision (what food to eat, whether or not to exercise, whether to seek care for a health issue, etc.) is able to make the healthy choice with as few barriers or challenges to doing so. We want to make the healthy choice the easy choice!
Of course we want to see an improvement in health outcomes and a reduction in health disparities that exist among urban dwellers. In addition to health improvement, public health is also concerned with non-health outcomes that if they are positive can lead to improved health indirectly, primarily through addressing the social determinants of health.

Including non-health outcomes allows us to specify the broader contributions of public health. For example, improving housing in low-income urban neighborhoods may not only reduce exposure to environmental pollutants, but may also increase neighborhood stability, reduce crime, and improve economic development.
Interventions and Outcomes

Enduring structures are those systems and or characteristics of an area that impact health, but are difficult to change in a short time period. These structures can be supportive of positive health outcomes or a barrier to health outcomes. Let’s take a brief look at each of them.
Economic systems influence access to materials and resources necessary for our well-being. In this brief video you’ll learn about four types of economic systems that can influence health.

There are four types of economic systems outlined in the short video:
Think about how many of the social determinants are influenced by 1) economic systems and 2) the priorities of governments in how goods and services are distributed to all citizens.
Here, government refers to the system or type of government. Depending on the type of government system in place, this will directly impact the ability of public health professionals to implement health programs and policies, as well as conduct research into public health issues. The next slide has several descriptions of government systems. For each there are advantages and disadvantages to improving and protecting the public’s health.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>A central government shares power with a number of small local governments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Where the government is elected by the people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plutocracy</td>
<td>A government composed of the wealthy class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oligarchy</td>
<td>Rule by a small group of people who share similar interests or family relations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capitalist</td>
<td>People can own their own businesses and property but usually pay taxes from some of the money they make. Most capitalist governments provide their own education, health and welfare services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monarchy</td>
<td>Rule by an individual (King or Queen) who has inherited the role and expects to pass it onto their heir.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional or Local</td>
<td>A government or council that controls a smaller area within a country. Most local governments are controlled by the central government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communist</td>
<td>The government owns businesses and farms. It provides healthcare, education and welfare.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constitutional Monarchy</td>
<td>Has a democratic government that limits the control of the Monarch (King or Queen).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Despotism</td>
<td>Rule by a single leader, all his or her subjects are considered his or her slaves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totalitarian State</td>
<td>A country with one political party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revolutionary</td>
<td>If a government is overthrown by force, the overthrowing government is sometimes called the Revolutionary Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anarchy</td>
<td>A situation where there is no government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Republic</td>
<td>A country that has no monarch. The head of the country is usually an elected president.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictatorship</td>
<td>A country ruled by a single leader who has full power over the country. This leader is not elected.</td>
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Culture and religion can impact health by reinforcing healthy or unhealthy behaviors as well as determining the relationship between individuals and those individuals who can impact their health. For example in the physician patient relationship shared culture and religion contribute to a trusting relationship whereas cultural differences may negatively impact relationships.

Cultural sensitivity training (including understanding religious beliefs and practices) is important to helping public health professionals be as competent as possible in forming sustainable and productive relationships with individuals, families and communities.

[Click here to read article – Cultural Competence and Health Care Disparities: Key Perspective and Trends]

[Click here for an example of training specifically for public health professional]
One important consideration in addressing health disparities is the ability to know as much about the vulnerable population as possible, so relying on the broad brush strokes that this map and the website provide are inadequate in terms of assuring that a public health intervention is respectful of the religious or spiritual beliefs of the vulnerable community.

This map shows the distribution of religions throughout the world. For a closer look at the United States, please explore this website to see the religious diversity in each state:
The physical or spatial characteristics of the land on which a city is established can influence the ability of the population to remain healthy or place the population at greater risk for health issues.

Important geographical characteristics to consider are:

- Land formations such as mountains can restrict access to resources as well as influence air pollution through temperature inversions.
- Soil quality is important for food quality and quantity, as well as for structural support of buildings.
- Vegetation that naturally occurs may provide more or less resources to support a large population.
- Access to fresh water is critical to support large urban environments.
- The location of cities can place individuals at risk for disruptions such as tornados, hurricanes, floods, droughts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, dust storms, etc.
- Finally, climate change (changing temperature ranges) impact human and animal activity which can have detrimental impacts on human health.
Global / National Trends

Movement of individuals within a country from rural to urban areas or of individuals from other countries to a foreign urban area are powerful drivers of the rapid urbanization occurring in the world.

This movement may be legal or illegal depending on the levels of government involved. In addition there have been issues related to forced migration, such as the Japanese internment camps during world war II and the relocation of Native Americans by the government in the 1800’s).
Global / National Trends

People migrate from one place to another for two reasons.

**Push Factors and Pull Factors**

1. People want to get away from things they do not like in the countryside.
2. People are attracted to things they do like in the city.
Schematic Framework for Analyzing the Rural-to-Urban Migration Decision

This image is a somewhat complicated schematic that helps analyze these push/pull factors in much more detail. Imagine for yourself what might drive you to relocate to another area or country.
The current view on immigration and urban migration is that, in many cities, this influx of individuals is greater than the urban areas’ abilities to

- create jobs
- provide social services

So, many attractive features of the urban environment will not be afforded to the latest settlers.

This video gives a brief overview of the challenges faced by individuals who migrate from rural to urban areas in China. This video also raises issues of other enduring structures including the system of government and culture:

Urban Migration for Young Chinese on the Rise
Let’s next briefly examine the issue of illegal vs. legal movement, here in the US. In this video, you will learn about San Francisco’s approach to illegal immigrants as one of many “Sanctuary Cities.”
Suburbanization is a powerful factor influencing the ability of urban areas to provide for its citizens for a primary reason of loss of jobs and taxes. This loss of city income makes it harder to maintain services and infrastructure for those who remain in cities.

In the past there was concern regarding the movement of large corporations to the suburbs. This is still of concern in some areas, however a minority of larger cities have a very easy time attracting corporations, particularly with tax incentives and the promise of accessibility to a highly educated and trained workforce.
Globalization

Globalization is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies and governments of different nations. It is driven by several factors including international trade and investment and aided by information technology.

The globalization process has effects on the environment, on culture, on political systems and economic development as well as on the well-being of individuals, families and communities around the world.

Globalization is important to public health leaders for both positive and negative reasons including:

• Improved access to knowledge and technology
• Marketing of harmful products & unhealthy behaviors (or healthy products and behaviors)
• Environmental degradation (e.g. air, water pollution)
• Increasing conflict & security risks
• Cross-border transmission of diseases
“Globalization is deeply controversial, however. Proponents of globalization argue that it allows poor countries and their citizens to develop economically and raise their standards of living, while opponents of globalization claim that the creation of an unfettered international free market has benefited multinational corporations in the Western world at the expense of local enterprises, local cultures, and common people.

Resistance to globalization has therefore taken shape both at a popular and at a governmental level as people and governments try to manage the flow of capital, labor, goods, and ideas that constitute the current wave of globalization.

“To find the right balance between benefits and costs associated with globalization, citizens of all nations need to understand how globalization works and the policy choices facing them and their societies.”
Globalization

Detailed conceptual framework for globalization
Municipal Determinants

City Policies and Practices
Can impact the provision of goods and services and directly impact several of the social determinants of health. Traditional targets of municipal policies include:

- Schools
- Education
- Social services
- Police
- Courts
- Fire services
- Housing
- Parks and recreation
- Sanitation
- Mass transit
- Consumer protection
- Economic development
- Zoning and urban planning
City markets and services
Municipal policies can directly affect city market and services in several areas, but of primary concern are:
Food Markets – how available are healthy food choices to urban communities?
Housing Markets – what is the quality of housing available to urban communities?
Transportation- how easily (in terms of time, cost and effort) are individuals able to access good and services in a city which promote health?

Civil Society / Social Movements
Civil society is seen as a social sphere separate from both the state and the market. The increasingly accepted understanding of the term civil society organizations (CSOs) is that of non-state, not-for-profit, voluntary organizations formed by people in that social sphere. This term is used to describe a wide range of organizations, networks, associations, groups and movements that are independent from government and that sometimes come together to advance their common interests through collective action. Traditionally, civil society includes all organizations that occupy the 'social space' between the family and the state, excluding political parties and firms. Some definitions of civil society also include certain businesses, such as the media, private schools, and for-profit associations, while others exclude them.

From a public health perspective community based organizations, faith-based organizations and social movements play an important part in making up complex social networks which can support or impede initiatives to improve health outcomes.
Urban Living Conditions

Demographics, SES, ethnicity, attitudes, norms, behaviors
Each city is unique in terms of the mixture of population demographics: age, sex, ethnic group, country of birth, religion, socio-economic status, etc.

These individual, family and community norms and behaviors are influenced by several factors including education, culture, social hierarchy, etc.
Physical Environment
In terms of the physical environment, the built environment is in a constant state of change with construction, maintaining, reconstructing and retrofitting of structures. Important components of the physical environment include:

- Housing stock and buildings
- Air quality
- Water Quality
- Settled dust and soil
- Noise,
- Land use (parks, playgrounds, etc.
- Transportation systems
- Sanitation systems
- Presence of rodents, cockroaches, etc.
Urban Living Conditions

Social Environment – Networks
Finally in the urban health framework we can look the social environment as an important consideration. Key characteristics of the social environment include:

-Social order and organization – or how safe and orderly is the social environment
  - Is there persistent poverty?
  - Is there a high turnover of the population?
  - Is there a great deal of ethnic heterogeneity?
    Are communities segregated?
-Social cohesion or isolation – or how connected do people feel to their communities?
  - How do churches, schools and other organizations welcome participation from individuals? How do organizations foster community relationships?
  - Are individuals willing to intervene on behalf of others for the common good?
  - Behavioral contagion – or how easily do positive or negative health behaviors spread?
This completes our examination of the Framework for Urban Health. This framework provides one approach to thinking systematically about the factors which may contribute to the health or ill-health or an urban community. You will likely have noticed that the factors discussed are interrelated in many ways and potentially influence each other complex ways. This reflects the importance of studying urban health approaches and engaging across disciplines to create sustainable and effective public health interventions.
The World Health Organization’s Health Cities Program is an example of how public health professionals can incorporate key elements of the urban health framework into programs. This video gives a brief overview of the Healthy Cities Program.

The WHO Healthy Cities project is a global movement. It engages local governments in health development through a process of political commitment, institutional change, capacity-building, partnership-based planning and innovative projects. Nearly 100 cities are members of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, and 30 national Healthy Cities networks across the WHO European Region have more than 1400 cities and towns as members.

The primary goal of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network is to put health high on the social, economic and political agenda of city governments. Health is the business of all sectors, and local governments are in a unique leadership position, with power to protect and promote their citizens' health and well-being.

The Healthy Cities movement promotes comprehensive and systematic policy and planning for health and emphasizes:
• the need to address inequality in health and urban poverty
• the needs of vulnerable groups
• participatory governance
• the social, economic and environmental determinants of health.