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OF MANITOBA

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**MANITOBANS GETTING HEALTHIER AND LIVING LONGER; HEALTH GAP WIDENS BETWEEN RICH AND POOR.**

A study by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP) measuring the health of Manitobans and their use of healthcare services has found that most Manitobans are living longer and the prevalence of many diseases has decreased, but the health of those living in lower-income areas did not improve like that of others.

“On average, life expectancy has increased, mortality rates have decreased, and fewer people are living with a number of common health problems including heart diseases, osteoporosis, and respiratory diseases. We haven’t seen this pattern of improvement over so many indicators in past reports, meaning something about the health of Manitobans has changed,” says Dr. Randy Fransoo, Senior Research Scientist with MCHP and lead author of this report.

Researchers analyzed data using more than 70 indicators of health status and healthcare use to compare results from previous studies. Representatives from all 5 Regional Health Authorities (RHAs), Manitoba Health, and UM researchers collaborated in the creation of this report. Together with similar reports published in 2009 and 2003, the data provides a picture of our province’s health trends spanning almost 20 years.

“Unfortunately, the gap continues to widen because the health of people living in lower-income areas either stayed the same or didn’t improve as much as it did for others. Fortunately, the health status in lower-income areas didn’t decline further as we saw in the 2009 report,” says Dr. Fransoo.

Some good news: the Premature Mortality Rate (death before age 75) of Manitobans decreased from 3.4 to 3.1 deaths per 1,000 people and life expectancy increased, continuing a long-term trend. Men now live 77.5 years on average (one year longer than they did five years ago) and women 82.2 years (an increase of about half a year). Also, the prevalence of many major diseases and chronic conditions also decreased. These conditions include: Osteoporosis (down from 12.4% to 10.4%), respiratory diseases (down from 10.8% to 9.5%), Ischemic Heart Disease (down from 8.8% to 7.9%), and Congestive Heart Failure (down from 1.8% to 1.6%). In addition, heart attack rates decreased from 4.4 to 4.1 per 1000 residents age 40+ and stroke rates decreased from 2.9 to 2.7.

Conversely, the prevalence of both diabetes and hypertension increased, meaning that more Manitobans were living with these diseases in 2011/12 than 2006/07. However, this too may be a sign of good news, as other recent research has shown that the mortality rate among people with diabetes has decreased.

“We’re getting better at keeping people with diabetes alive longer – so the number of people living with the disease has increased. More importantly, the rate at which new people are being diagnosed with diabetes and hypertension both decreased over time – another positive sign,” says Dr. Fransoo.

Other information, such as how many people are in nursing homes, how many people were hospitalized, how many visited a doctor and how many filled prescriptions are also available in the report.

The full report; *The 2013 RHA Indicators Atlas* can be downloaded from the MCHP website at: [umanitoba.ca/medicine/units/mchp](http://umanitoba.ca/medicine/units/mchp)

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The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP) is a research unit in the Department of Community Health Sciences in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. Research scientists and their collaborators at MCHP study health services, population and public health, and the social determinants of health using data from the entire population of Manitoba.

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