

# crunch

Chair in Research on Urban Neighbourhoods, Community Health & Housing



**The Chair in Research on Urban Neighbourhoods, Community Health and Housing (CRUNCH)** is an internationally-unique, five-year program examining the effects of complex, neighbourhood-level, population-based interventions on health and its determinants, particularly for children. It is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Since 2009, the program has reviewed existing evidence on the health effects of neighbourhood interventions from Canada and other countries, developed and refined methods to investigate the effects of neighbourhood interventions on health, and conducted an ambitious program of primary research.

The central hypothesis of CRUNCH is that complex, population-based interventions focusing on urban residential neighbourhoods can have positive effects on the health of residents, but to replicate the results requires an understanding of *how* interventions work, not simply *if* they work.

## CRUNCH OUTCOMES

- 🏠 a knowledge base for neighbourhood-level action to improve the physical and mental health of some of the most vulnerable in any community;
- 🏠 training and mentoring of current and future practitioners of neighbourhood-based intervention research; and
- 🏠 translation of findings so they can be better used by decision-makers, practitioners and the community.

**Partners include** government agencies, municipalities, community-based service agencies, health centres, neighbourhood groups, St. Michael's Hospital and McMaster University.

**Academic collaborators** come from a variety of research backgrounds, including epidemiology, population health, geography, child development, statistics, psychiatry and health program evaluation.

**CRUNCH offers** quality education and employment opportunities to undergraduates, graduate students, post-docs and others with experience in research management, data analysis and knowledge translation.



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**CRUNCH specializes in natural experiments:** opportunities to collect baseline data prior to a major change and study the impacts of the change, both while it is taking place and after it is complete.

CRUNCH research projects are usually longitudinal, multidisciplinary and partnership-based. Projects use cutting-edge technology and methodological best practices to gather and analyse information. Results are shared in ways that respond best to a community's needs.



The outcome is research that is used locally, nationally and globally to direct and manage neighbourhood initiatives and improve the health of our most vulnerable. CRUNCH gets research off the shelf and into the hands of those who are doing work in neighbourhoods—policy-makers, planners, program managers, activists and other researchers.

## CURRENT PROJECTS

### **Regent Park Redevelopment**

Investigates whether the health of residents of Toronto's Regent Park, one of Canada's oldest and largest concentrated public housing communities, improves after the area is redeveloped.

### **GTA West Social Housing & Health**

Examines the impact of subsidized housing on the health of adults who receive it for the first time. Research sites are the cities of Toronto and Hamilton and the regions of Halton and Peel.

### **Hamilton Neighbourhoods**

Investigates unexplained improvements in early child development scores in a disadvantaged north Hamilton neighbourhood; organizes the *Code Red Rx: Prescription for Healthy Neighbourhoods Speaker Series*; and has a lead role in a McMaster Health Forum Stakeholder Dialogue on neighbourhood development strategies.

### **Income Inequality & Population Health**

Looks at the effect of income inequality in Canadian cities on mortality risk and the association between income inequality and premature mortality in Canadian and U.S. cities.

### **Built Environment & Health**

Work for the Region of Peel—including a diabetes atlas, a healthy urban development tool and a "realist review" of the literature on built environments and physical activity—to be used by planners and program managers.

**For more information: [crunch.mcmaster.ca](http://crunch.mcmaster.ca)**



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