



BC Centre for Disease Control
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Supporting collaboration between food safety and food security in BC



Through an
equity lens

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Overview

- Background – Food and public health in BC
- History
- Research on collaboration
- Building new opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration



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Public Health Core Programs

Food Safety

- **Goal:** Minimize incidence of foodborne illness and outbreaks
- Legislated authority
- History of inspection, enforcement, education

Food Security

- **Goal:** Increase (community) food security for population
- Health promotion
- New in 2006; focus on facilitation



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Public Health Core Programs

Food Safety

- Risk management
- Health protection strategies

Food Security

- Support access to, and availability of, sufficient, safe, nutritious, and personally acceptable foods that are produced in a sustainable way

Improve population health re food and eating



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History of FS-FS alignment

- **Rationale:** Food safety and food security = foundational components of healthy eating → safe & healthy food for all British Columbians
- **New food security activities = new food safety issues**
- Ongoing efforts to align FS & FS programs
- No province-wide framework to facilitate collaboration in consistent manner

Why collaborate?

- Food safety is a component of food security
- Both sectors need to consider poverty, land use, agricultural practices, climate change, food skills, sustainability
- People with food insecurity tend to eat less nutritious food and be less equipped to handle food safely

Collaboration study (2015)

- Environmental scan
- Key informant interviews
 - food safety stakeholders
 - food security stakeholders
(public health staff and
community groups)



Food Safety and Food Security in British Columbia Promoting Effective Inter-Sectoral Collaboration

Promoting Successful Collaborations

The food safety and food security sectors in British Columbia aim to improve the health of the population as it relates to food and eating. Collaboration between the sectors provides opportunities for sharing best practices and addressing common challenges faced by public health dietitians and environmental health officers.

There are many examples of successful collaborations between the food safety and food security sectors in B.C. Joint projects and programs as well as formal collaborative efforts have occurred in the areas of healthy eating in schools, food in childcare facilities, temporary markets and farm gate sales, gleaning and donation, meat regulation, and others.

Why Collaborate?

Food safety and food security are linked.

- Food safety is a component of food security. Both sectors use a population health approach to consider factors such as poverty, land use and agricultural practices, climate change, capacity building, and sustainability.
- People who are food insecure tend to eat less nutritious and lower quality foods and may not be equipped to store and handle food safely.
- The food safety and food security sectors both have the potential to be affected by issues such as changing demographics, population growth, changing food preferences, and climate change. Collaboration can lead to more effective understanding of and responses to these pressures.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/food-your-health/healthy-food-access-food-security>



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Collaboration study: Key findings

- Collaboration associated with better working relationships
- Local context is key



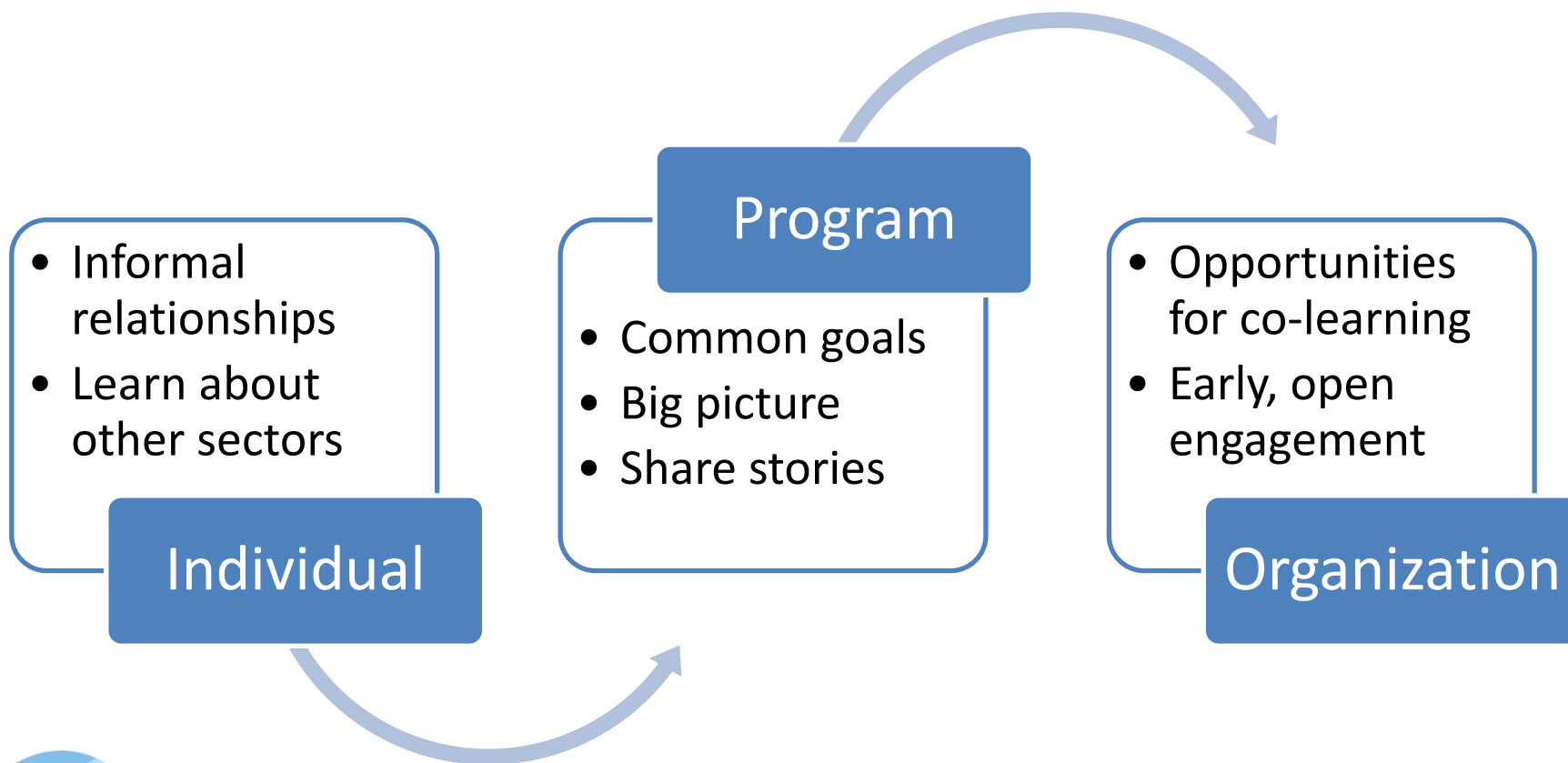
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Facilitators and barriers to collaboration

1. Early engagement and ongoing communication
2. Precedent, not prescription
3. Creative problem solving
4. Leadership from the top
5. Joint leadership and decision-making
6. Collaboration as a process



Supporting collaboration



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Health authority consultation (Dec 2015)

- Survey of population health dietitians and environmental health officers

Would having a process in place to help you respond to differences in approach with respect to food safety and food security be useful to you?



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Desire to align FS-FS

Sector	Yes (% from sector)
Food safety	67 (80%)
Food security	17 (89%)

Reasons why

Reason	N (%)
Ease of collaboration	21 (25%)
Increase consistency	37 (44%)
Learn from other jurisdictions	20 (24%)
All of the above	6 (7%)



Food safety-food security liaisons committee

Aim

- Support consistency, collaboration, and learning between the sectors



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Structure

- Designated food safety and food security ‘point persons’ from each health authority
- Field staff communicate with liaison from their sector (FS or FS)
 - new projects
 - unclear issues

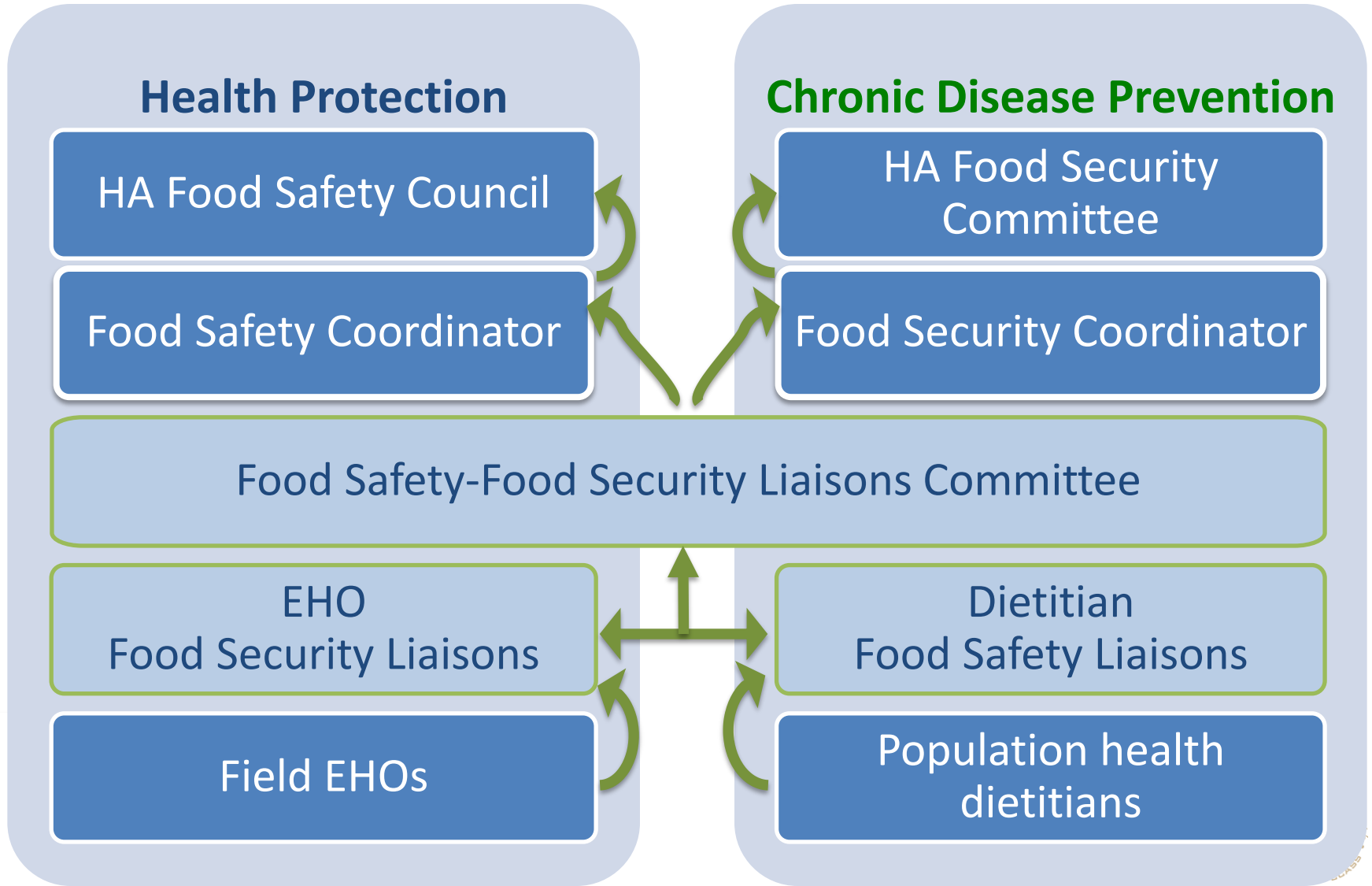
Rationale for new process

- Support alignment between Food Safety and Food Security → **common goals**
- Facilitate **communication and knowledge** sharing across sectors and within/across health authorities
 - More efficient use of EHO and dietitian time
 - Prevent tensions and inconsistencies
 - Share new learning
- Liaisons will build expertise in new areas and facilitate **more effective** healthy eating programs



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Current status



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Collaborators

Melanie Kurrein – Provincial Manager for Food Security, Population and Public Health, BCCDC

Lynn Wilcott – Food Safety Specialist, BCCDC

Research

Shannon Majowicz and Kelsey Speed –
University of Waterloo



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Thank you!

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<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/food-your-health/healthy-food-access-food-security>



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