

Alberta Doctors' Digest

The real longevity hack is a strong public health system

A robust public health system is stronger than what any biohacking influencer can offer!

The [2026 CMA Health and Media tracking survey](#) reported that 89% of Canadians go online for health information, which is not surprising in the current age of technology. However, with unbridled access to tech comes a plethora of misinformation and wellness hacks that are sometimes misleading and may pose greater health risks.

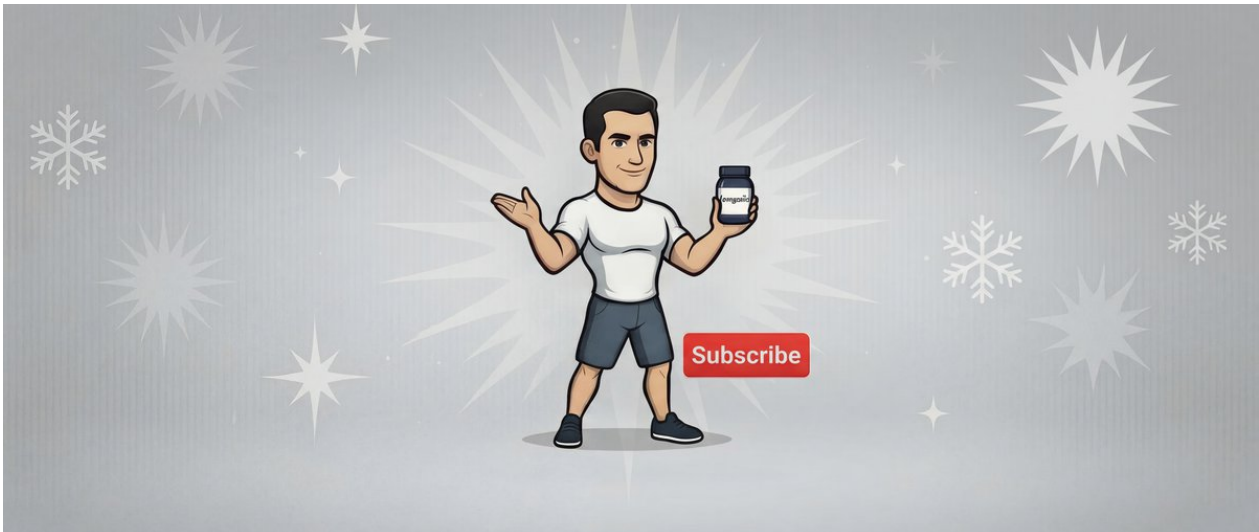
[Canadian Public Health Week](#) is the perfect time to highlight that the key to longevity and anti-aging is not in social-media-marketed antidotes or longevity clinic appointments, but rather in a strong public health system. It's unlikely that collagen powder every morning will help you age better if you still don't have clean air, safe drinking water, food regulation, immunizations or access to health care.

What's online right now

Currently on social media, there's a mass market of longevity, biohacking and anti-aging influencers making bold claims that the solution to aging, ailments and being human is a mere product, regimen, appointment or test away.

Examples of these figures include individual wellness influencers tied to personal products and brands, alongside private longevity clinics, many making dramatic promises of control over aging and the human lifespan. These claims often represent aging as a solvable ailment rather than a complex biological process, while often implying that conventional medicine is slow, outdated or intentionally withholding solutions.

The "longevity marketplace" packages familiar public health principles (nutrition, movement, sleep, disease/injury prevention) into expensive programs and products. While the underlying concepts are not inherently wrong, they are frequently exaggerated, stripped of nuance and placed behind paywalls that promise certainty without strong evidence. This encourages audiences to distrust mainstream medical advice or believe they are unwell without these products. The result is a well-marketed version of preventive care that blurs the line between evidence-based public health guidance and commercialized misinformation, posing real risks to public trust and informed decision-making.



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What is public health?

Real longevity advice is far less glamorous and doesn't sell products. It's not a daily elixir, but a strong public health system. "Healthy aging," as defined by the World Health Organization, focuses on the "maintenance of intrinsic capacity, physical, mental and social well-being throughout life." As outlined in a recent 2025 study ([Aging, longevity, and healthy aging: the public health approach](#)), "a coordinated public health approach is essential to promote healthy aging and mitigate the economic and societal impacts of population aging."

Public health is a distinct, yet complex, discipline that operates both within and beyond the health care system. While physicians frequently see the downstream impacts of public health work in clinical practice, public health also extends into communities, workplaces, schools and the policies that shape the conditions in which people live.

Operating at individual, municipal, provincial and federal levels, public health works collaboratively with communities and partners to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to lead long, healthy and fulfilling lives. Examples of public health activities that protect population health and support longer life expectancy include:

- Vaccination programs reduce hospitalizations from diseases such as measles and influenza.
- Tobacco control policies that have contributed to declines in conditions like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer.
- Public health STI screening and partner-notification programs help prevent complications of infections such as chlamydia and syphilis.
- Food and drinking water safety systems prevent outbreaks of illnesses such as E. coli O157:H7 infection.

Healthy aging is not antioxidant capsules or longevity programs. Healthy aging is what a strong public health infrastructure provides.

What are the steps?

The [2026 CMA Health and Media tracking survey](#) reports that 85% of Canadians trust physicians to help them navigate health. Physicians are best positioned to help Canadians navigate potentially misleading health information in the trillion-dollar wellness world.

According to [Public Health Physicians of Canada](#), *“Governments, communities and organizations rely on Public Health Physicians’ unique training and expertise to inform fair public health policies, evaluate data, develop programs to prevent illness and injuries, and respond in times of emergencies such as outbreaks and natural disasters.”*

Public health work brings together medical officers of health, public health inspectors, public health nurses and epidemiologists in collaboration with physicians and other professionals across disciplines, to protect and promote population health.

So, during this year’s public health week, it’s worth remembering that physicians are a key trusted voice within a complex, far-reaching public health system. Physicians are well-positioned to help patients interpret health information, recommend evidence-based prevention such as immunization and screening, and connect them with local public health and community programs. Those are the real longevity hacks.

Banner image credit: Conceptual framework for public health ([CPHA.ca](#))