

GOOD HEALTH in a place called Rural

Rural communities are an important and vibrant part of Eastern Ontario.

In fact, 25% of us living in Eastern Ontario are living in rural areas.^{1/2}

To make decisions that work for our communities, we must take into account rural Ontario's unique strengths and challenges. These fact sheets aim to:

- » highlight the realities of living and working in rural Ontario
- » outline the impact these realities have on families
- » suggest some considerations for policy development

What is A Place Called Rural? When we think of rural Ontario, we often call to mind images of rolling hills, grazing animals, nature trails, and lanes lined with autumn leaves. But rural Ontario can also mean:

- » travelling long distances to get your most basic needs and services
- » having poorer health than your urban neighbour
- » having fewer employment opportunities and lower incomes
- » having fewer programs and services available in your community

To make sure that the decisions we make lead to the best possible outcomes for children, youth and families, we must consider the unique strengths and challenges of rural Ontario.

3 reasons to think rural

Rural communities make life in urban centres possible. There's a strong relationship between the success and prosperity of rural and urban communities.

Good health drives economic growth. Children who grow up healthy, confident and secure are better able to contribute to society in the future.

Rural children and youth are an important segment of our community. In fact, thirty-six percent (36%) of children and youth in Eastern Ontario live outside of Ottawa.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

Economic uncertainty. Budget cuts at all levels of governments. It may not seem like the best time to confront the gap between urban and rural communities, but in fact, it's ideal. As governments reconsider budget and program priorities, we need champions from health and community services to promote changes that will give rural children and youth the same opportunities to reach their potential as their urban peers.

By thinking rural when making decisions, we can help families overcome their health and related social barriers and become drivers of economic growth. We can change *A Place Called Rural* with your help. Add your voice to help raise awareness and advocate for change. Find out more by visiting us at www.child-youth-health.net.

REFERENCES:

1. Community Information Database. *Community Profiles*. Available online.
2. Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus. (2007) *A Profile of Eastern Ontario (Regional Data Set)*. Available online.

www.child-youth-health.net