

In Memoriam – A tribute to Marie DesMeules



It is with a deep sense of loss that we announce the passing of Marie DesMeules, Publisher of *Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada* (the HPCDP Journal).

During her career of over 30 years with Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Marie worked tirelessly to promote the importance of science and the need to understand and address the determinants of health in all policies. Marie was a pioneer in her work on gender equality, women's health, immigrant health, the health of Black Canadians and chronic disease epidemiology.

She was committed to conducting surveillance and research that provided a meaningful account of the social determinants of health and health outcomes for marginalized, yet resilient, populations in Canada. She also recognized the importance of sharing this information with key partners and decision-makers so that future public health actions would be based on sound evidence.

Marie led various teams across PHAC to fulfill many noteworthy achievements. These included numerous peer-reviewed journal articles that she authored and co-authored with leading internal and external researchers, as well as the formation and launch of the Canadian Best Practices Portal, which provided access to evidence-based interventions that addressed key determinants of health for chronic diseases.

In response to Canada's international commitments to strengthen capacity, evidence and action on social determinants of health and health equity, Marie led the development of the *Key Health Inequalities in Canada* report (2018), which has been accessed by users across Canada and in more than 80 countries. This report provided substantial new evidence on the most pronounced and widespread health inequalities, and a benchmark for ongoing monitoring and reporting of health inequities in Canada.

In June 2018, Marie received the Chief Public Health Officer Medal, the highest honour at PHAC for leaders in public health, for her achievements in linking social and economic factors to health inequalities.

Marie spent many years as the Director of PHAC's Social Determinants of Health Division. There she built an extensive network of collaborators from across every sector and was known for fostering strong and authentic relationships. Marie's expertise and leadership were integral in advancing key policy and program initiatives related to: the Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Reporting initiative; the integration of Sex- and Gender-Based Analysis Plus; the promotion of evidence-based decision-making with a consideration for health, equity and well-being issues in all policies; and the design and implementation of innovative and equity-focussed community-based funding models. Marie chaired the Mental Health of Black Canadians Working Group at the time of its inception and her contribution was foundational to the development and implementation of this unique and impactful initiative. She will be remembered as a true champion of equity and inclusion.

For the past few years, Marie led the Centre for Surveillance and Applied Research through the COVID-19 pandemic, serving as a galvanizing force during the expansion of its mandate to address the wider health impacts of COVID-19, including post COVID-19 condition (long COVID).

Marie DesMeules was a leader, mentor and valued colleague to so many throughout her career. As Publisher of the HPCDP Journal, she was unafraid to tackle controversial issues and steered a course that protected the scientific integrity and editorial independence of our journal.

She will be missed by all who knew her.