This short document presents a case study comprising a scenario and accompanying resources for further reading. We originally produced this case for use during a webinar held in October 2015. We have adapted this and other cases and republished them together so that they might be used in combination with the summary versions of ethics frameworks for public health that we have produced to date. They are intended to give public health practitioners some material for practice in ethical deliberation.

Case

Your health authority is partnering with the provincial government to develop a mandatory helmet law for all cyclists. If the law passes, your office will be responsible for an information campaign, a rebate program for helmet purchases, and ongoing research.

Instructions

Through deliberation, please:

- Identify the ethical issues that arise in this case.
- Make a decision about whether your health unit should
  - Approve this law
  - Approve a modified version of the law
  - Reject this law / propose an alternative.
- Give reasons for your decisions.

Some considerations

- In 2015:
  - 5 Canadian provinces had laws requiring all cyclists to wear helmets (BC, NB, NS, NL & PE);
  - 3 provinces required only minors to wear helmets (AB, MB & ON);
  - 2 provinces and 3 territories had no bicycle helmet laws (QC, SK, NU, NT & YT).
- Adopting a mandatory helmet law is associated with an increase in helmet wearing (Institut national de santé publique du Québec [INSPQ], 2010; Public Health Ontario [PHO], 2014).
- The more comprehensive the law, the more helmet wearing increases (PHO, 2014).

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1 The PowerPoint and recording of the webinar are available online at: http://www.ncchpp.ca/128/Presentations.ccnpps?id_article=1491
Combining a mandatory helmet law with education and information increases helmet wearing (PHO, 2014).

An increase in helmet wearing decreases the number of head injuries, hospitalizations and deaths (INSPQ, 2010; PHO, 2014).

Subsidies for helmet purchases are cost-effective, and especially so for children (Kopjar & Wickizer, 2000).

### References


### Questions or comments?

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The National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP) seeks to increase the expertise of public health actors across Canada in healthy public policy through the development, sharing and use of knowledge. The NCCHPP is one of six centres financed by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The six centres form a network across Canada, each hosted by a different institution and each focusing on a specific topic linked to public health. In addition to the Centres’ individual contributions, the network of Collaborating Centres provides focal points for the exchange and common production of knowledge relating to these topics. The National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy is hosted by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ), a leading centre in public health in Canada.

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