

Public Health Association of British Columbia (PHABC)



Newsletter – May 2010

CPHA Advisory Council

PHABC is a member of CPHA's Advisory Council. The Council was established by CPHA to give provincial and territorial public health associations a role in the governance of CPHA given the CPHA Board is elected from the membership. After an evaluation of the Advisory Council it was felt that it was not an effective tool for participating in decision-making and will be discontinued. Instead a new model will be developed whereby a formal network of the provincial and territorial associations will be formed and will advise CPHA on policy matters. Interestingly, the associations have already started meeting and have begun to look for common approaches to larger public health issues they are facing in their individual jurisdictions.

Social Determinants of Health

PHABC along with representatives from the Health Officers Council were invited to make a presentation on the social determinants of health to the NDP Social Policy caucus. The presentation emphasized the impact of social determinants on health status. An approach to building a non-partisan effort to reduce poverty was also highlighted and included increasing workforce participation by vulnerable populations while at the same time re-building the social safety net.

Public Health Community of Practice

Two of PHABC's Board Committees have been doing considerable work to better understand the resources PHABC can provide to build the public health community of practice. In the past, PHABC has provided a web based platform to facilitate communication and collaboration for groups who wish to work together on common interests. The Board of Directors will be looking at new recommendations to strengthen PHABC support for other public health organizations including the possibility of affiliate membership for public health organizations. These potential new approaches will be considered by the Board of Directors at its upcoming meeting.

Workforce Development

PHABC continues its public health workforce capacity building videoconference workshops that highlight public health strategies that can reduce health inequities. The recent workshop on health literacy was fully subscribed. Two additional workshops will be held in the coming year. An additional video conference has been added in partnership with the Health Officer's Council, the Provincial Health Services Authority and Vancouver Coastal Health looking at ways to engage the business community in efforts to address the social determinants of health. Further information will be available on the PHABC website in June.

Core and Technical Competencies for Public Health in BC

The project is a partnership between the Public Health Association of BC, the BC Academic Health Council, the BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). It will contribute to ensuring that the public health workforce has the right mix of people equipped with the right mix of competencies, in the right place and at the right time for the effective and efficient delivery of public health in BC.

In fiscal 2009/10 the project developed self assessment tools for employees and employers and is in the process of piloting these tools in the community capacity building area (identified by the needs assessment as a priority) in regional health authorities. Over the next year these tools will continue to be piloted and the results will be used to identify education/training opportunities that facilitate the development of competencies throughout the BC public health sector.

Summer School in Public Health

PHABC is following up on a Workshop at the PHABC 2009 Conference to develop a Summer School in Public Health. A planning committee has been formed consisting of representatives of institutions of higher education, funders and PHABC. The members of the Association were asked to respond to an online survey. Over 170 people responded. Most emphasized a desire for specific skills and practical examples for public health practice. Topics with greatest interest included (1) Population health promotion; (2) Community capacity building (2) Program planning & evaluation. In terms of logistics respondents had concerns about funding for such an initiative (interest in having their employer's pay the registration fee, give them time off etc). Most responded that June & July would be the best timing for the school. It is hoped that a first summer school can be organized in 2010.

Healthy Public Policy

PHABC's Board of Directors has become quite concerned about recent media reports that health authorities may have to re-direct up to 10% of their budgets to address new Ministry of Health priorities. PHABC's position is that health promotion and prevention funding should be increased and that we will not see improvements in population health simply by re-directing funds as this will mean less money for already effective programs. As importantly, the PHABC Board believes that a large impact can be made by the Ministry by concentrating on its mandate to introduce healthy public policies. Huge impacts can be made through policy approaches as varied as smoking regulations and transfat regulations. What about salt regulation? What about advertising aimed at children? More needs to be done on this front and PHABC believes it is where the Ministry should be placing its priority. PHABC's Advocacy Committee has taken this on a priority over the next several months.

PHABC.org – BC's public health portal?

PHABC website continues to grow in popularity including hosting important sub-sites for other organizations. To keep pace with these exciting demands, PHABC will be

enhancing our website capability over the next year. The goal will be to provide more up to date public health news/information and make navigation easier. The PHABC website has seen growth over the past 2 years from 80,000 page views a month to over 165,000 page views a month

CPHA Centennial

It is CPHA's Centennial Year and to help celebrate PHABC is hosting a series of Webinar presentations by some of BC's pre-eminent leaders from recent years.

Celebrates CPHA Centenary With a Series of Webinar Presentations

LEADERS FROM THE PAST – FOUNDATION OF THE PRESENT

Three of BC's public health leaders will share their ideas about the past, the present and the future of public health.

What changes have we seen, what needs to change, what does the future look like?

1st Teleconference/webinar

May 27th, 2010 from 4:00 to 4:30 PM

Speaker: Dr. Gerald Bonham, M.D. D.P.H, F.R.C.P. (C)

"Health Reform and the Seven Deadly Sinners: The inherent conflict between belief and science".

2nd. Teleconference/webinar

September 30th, 2010 from 4:00 to 4:30 PM

Speaker:

Dr. John Blatherwick, CM, BC, CD, MD, FRCP(C) - Former Chief Medical Officer of Health Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

Public health in B.C. (from 1970 to 1990) what are the challenges for the future?

3rd Teleconference/webinar

November 18th, 2010 from 4:00 to 4:30 PM

Speaker: Franklin White, MD,CM; MSc; FRCP(C); FFPH(UK) - President, Pacific Health & Development Sciences Inc., Victoria BC; Adjunct Professor, Dalhousie University;

Associate, Universal Management Group (Montreal); Past President, CPHA 1986-88.

International and Global Public Health – Who reaps the benefits?

Please RSVP to staff@phabc.org before May 25th, 2010

Healthy Foods Initiative: Farm to School Project

PHABC's Farm to School program funded through the BC Healthy Living Alliance aims to prevent childhood obesity through improved local food security. Sixteen schools have piloted the program and more than 6,000 school aged children residing in communities from Fernie to Fort St. John have the opportunity to access fresh local fruits and vegetables on school premises.

PHABC has developed A New Crunch in School Lunch: The BC Farm to School Salad Bar Guide. The resource is available on the PHABC website. The project manager is also conducting regional workshops to disseminate the guide, share learning's, and inspire the support and development of additional programs.

For more information please visit the farm to school website at www.phabc.org/farmtoschool.



As part of PHABC's commitment to Public Health workforce development PHABC is pleased to promote the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sports Core functions for BC site on the PHABC platform.

For those who are not aware the web site has been created to serve as a resource for health professionals administering and performing public health services in British Columbia. The core functions framework provides a tool for Health Authorities and public health practitioners to review their existing programs and policies in 21 core program areas within four categories: health improvement, prevention, environmental health, and health emergency management. The general public will also find the information and resources of interest.

If you have not already done so please visit the site and have a look or you can click on the link below to try the resource quick finder:

<http://www.phabc.org/modules.php?name=Contentcore&pa=showpage&pid=187>