

# Public Health Association of British Columbia (PHABC)

Newsletter - January 2009



## *President's Report*

It has been an exciting and productive year for PHABC capped by our first ever video conference regional workshop held in conjunction with our AGM. We were fortunate to have the John Blatherwick Keynote Presentation given by Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. David Butler-Jones. His underlying message was that the power of public health lies in the solidarity of its diverse components and the partnerships it nurtures within communities. As we implement PHABC's Strategic Plan over the coming year it will be important for us to keep this message in mind. The Board's emphasis on building capacity across the public health workforce through regional workshops and the development of a virtual resource centre is one contribution we will make to building this solidarity and to strengthening the voice of public health. Another contribution will be our renewed efforts on advocacy. This will require us to look at new and strengthened partnerships so that we can contribute to changing the policies that reduce health inequities.

The past year has demonstrated that we play an important role in the public health discourse in BC. I would encourage those interested to go onto our website and review my President's report and the reports of our Board Committees to see the many initiatives and contributions of the Association: [www.phabc.org](http://www.phabc.org). With an upcoming provincial election, we will need to be sure we continue to provide leadership on public health issues.

Our Strategic Plan for the coming year has three main directions: developing the capacity of the public health workforce; contributing to the development of healthy public policy and developing a sustainable infrastructure for the Association. In fulfilling these directions we have strong Board committees. However, it is exciting to see that more and more members are interested in contributing to the work of PHABC. There are many opportunities to make a contribution and if you are interested in volunteering your time or expertise on one of our committees please email me directly at [pres@phabc.org](mailto:pres@phabc.org).

One final note as we look forward to the New Year. We have seen the release of numerous reports about the social determinants of health and the very significant inequities that exist even within a community as wealthy as that of our province. Public health cannot be complacent. As an organization, PHABC is committed to raising this issue and speaking out on it. But each PHABC member has a powerful individual voice within their own sphere of influence whether that is in their own neighbourhood, community or social network. PHABC sees the New Year as a time to commit ourselves to continuing to promote good health and an investment in prevention. Here is a New Years' resolution for PHABC members: ***don't let that voice be silent.*** Celebrate the New Year and your personal resolve at the PHABC open house on Friday, January 30 from 4:00 – 6:00 pm. Refreshments will be served. **See attached invitation.**

***Ted Bruce***  
***President, Public Health Association of BC***

### ***Highlights of the December 2, 2008 PHABC Annual General Meeting, and Regional Workshops on Inequities and Health***

On December 2, 2008, PHABC hosted a multi-site workshop on “Responding to Inequities in Health: The Role of Public Health”. The keynote speaker was Dr. David Butler-Jones, Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer who spoke on the topic from a national perspective. He was followed by a Panel consisting of Heather Fraser (Manager of Health Determinants and Global Initiatives, for PHAC) who presented an international perspective, Dr. Trevor Hancock (Public Health Consultant, BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport) and Dr. John Millar (Executive Director, Population Health Surveillance and Disease Control Planning, Provincial Health Services Authority) who both presented provincial perspectives, Ginette Thomas (Program Director, National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health) who spoke from a Aboriginal point of view and Lynn Moran (Executive Director, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC) who presented a multicultural perspective). A report on the event is posted on the PHABC website at [www.phabc.org](http://www.phabc.org). Based on the workshop, plans are being developed to identify and address priorities on a regional basis. They will be presented and discussed at a follow-up multi-site workshop on May 6, 2009. If you wish to participate in the current regional activities or attend the follow-up workshop, please email Irving Rootman at [irrootman@telus.net](mailto:irrootman@telus.net)

## **2008 PHABC AWARD RECIPIENTS**

### **Award of Merit**

#### **First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition**

First Call BC is a coalition of individuals and organizations across British Columbia. Their purpose is to create a greater understanding of and advocacy for legislation, policy and practice to ensure that all children and youth have the opportunities and resources required to achieve their full potential.

### **Phyllis Baird Community Nursing Award**

#### **Rhonda Wigglesworth-Fafard, Program Consultant, PHN**

Rhonda's Early Child Development (ECD) Program Consultant role entails professional and clinical leadership in the development, strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation of Public Health Prevention Services programs, policies, procedures, and standards related to the delivery of the ECD program across Interior Health.

### **Sharon Martin Community Development Award**

#### **Barbara Crocker**

Barbara has many accomplishments over her past 20 years in public health practice. Currently, Barbara is working on bringing "Alphabet Soup", a literacy and healthy eating program, into early learning settings in Vancouver, in partnership with Building Blocks, MOSAIC and HIPPIY. Barbara successfully brought Bookmates from Winnipeg to Vancouver to train 17 community facilitators and parents (2008) to run these programs and now they are working on piloting and expanding the possible reach of this model to build the community capacity around food/nutrition and literacy in the early years.

### **President's Award**

#### **Shannon Turner**

Shannon is currently the Director for Public Health for Vancouver Island Health Authority. In her career she has worked across the health care continuum for over twenty years in decision support, health promotion, program management, information management, risk management, quality improvement and strategic planning services. She was President of the Public Health Association of BC from 2004 – 2007 and still very active as PHABC's past President. During her tenure as President she established PHABC as a leading public health organization in BC and perhaps in Canada.

To read more about our award recipients visit the PHABC website at:  
<http://www.phabc.org/modules.php?name=Contentwn&pa=showpage&pid=322>

### ***PHABC Website Update***

PHABC is in the process of redesigning our home page and navigation system to serve you better. PHABC currently utilizes a Content Management System (CMS) to build and consolidate a network for public health across the province. This system allows the Association to provide a collaboration tool for both public health partner's, practitioners, and the general public.

Over the past four years, PHABC has established a solid "online" audience and our viewership has grown steadily to its current user level of over 100,000 page views per month. As the site grows and more people use the technology PHABC will be making changes to serve the public and its members better. To date you will notice some important improvements to the site navigation system.

The site now has three main navigation tools:

1. PHABC "at a glance" which contains information about PHABC and can be viewed without navigating away from the Home page.
2. The "top menu" which contains the Main Menu and other important pages.
3. The "quick links" menu on the left hand margin which will allow users to navigate to the most popular modules faster.

The PHABC website technology is currently being used nationally by other health related organizations and PHABC will continue to endeavour to improve the site with your support.

If you have comments or suggestions on ways to improve the site your feedback is always welcome at [execdir@phabc.org](mailto:execdir@phabc.org).

### ***New PHABC Constitution and Bylaws***

The new Constitution and Bylaws were both passed at the December 2, 2008 Annual General Meeting with some friendly amendments that involved minor grammatical edits. The old Bylaws are still in effect until the new Constitution and Bylaws are officially registered with the Registrar of Companies. In the

meantime, the Board of Directors will begin the transition to the new Constitution and By-laws.

The Membership will be notified when the new Constitution and Bylaws are registered and posted on the PHABC website.

### ***Advocacy***

Three resolutions were passed at PHABC's Annual General Meeting on December 2 and all had a clear focus on reducing health inequities. Advocating for policies to address health inequities must continue to be a priority area for public health and PHABC would like to take a leadership role on this issue.

Each resolution identified a different approach to reducing health inequities. The first resolution noted the link between poverty and health status and called for PHABC to advocate for a provincial plan to reduce health inequities. The second resolution called for PHABC to advocate for a provincial health literacy plan and play a stronger role in helping to coordinate health literacy initiatives. The third resolution called for PHABC to support the Canadian Cancer Society's call for measures to reduce the rate of cancer including the reduction of health inequities. Resolutions are an opportunity for PHABC to create a formal position and action plan on an issue. The PHABC Policy, Advocacy and Communications Committee will act to support follow-up action on these resolutions. To find out more information on the Committee, contact [Darryl.Quantz@vch.ca](mailto:Darryl.Quantz@vch.ca) and to see all the resolutions, visit our website at:

[www.phabc.org/modules.php?name=Contentpub&pa=viewdoc&cid=15](http://www.phabc.org/modules.php?name=Contentpub&pa=viewdoc&cid=15)

### ***About the Public Health Association of BC***

The mission of PHABC is to preserve and promote the public's health through disease and injury prevention, health promotion, health protection and healthy public policy. For information on PHABC and public health developments and resources go to the web at <http://www.phabc.org>.