

## 2011 Public Health Summer School Backgrounder

### Supporting Population Health Promotion via Training and Education in Advocacy and Health Literacy

In relation to the core competencies development work that has occurred in BC, the need to expand the educational and training opportunities for the public health workforce in BC has been identified. The Public Health Association of BC and partners are working to respond to this need and support public health professional development in BC through the organization of a second Public Health Summer School.

Expanding from the two-day 2010 Public Health Summer School, “Supporting Community Change from a Population Health Promotion Perspective”, this year’s summer school is a proposed four-day event tentatively scheduled from July 5 – 8, 2011. A survey of public health practitioner preferences for summer school curriculum content was conducted to construct the proposed topic areas to be addressed in this year’s summer school.

**Population health promotion** has been reaffirmed as an overarching theme to guide the development of the 2011 Summer School. Continued focus on population health promotion brings consistency and connection between last year’s educational event and this year’s endeavours. Advocacy and Health Literacy have been selected as two sub-themes for the 2011 Summer School. **Advocacy** is a core public health competency defined nationally within the Public Health Agency of Canada’s publication: Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada, Release 1.0. Advocacy is an important knowledge and skill set to acquire, both to highlight the needs of individuals and to push for long-term systematic changes in public health. **Health literacy** has also been identified as a core competency priority area requiring additional training and educational support. The Core and Technical Competencies for Public Health in BC project has underlined the local potential for increased collaboration and sharing across health and education sectors in the field of health literacy. Development in this core competency area would contribute to improving local capacity to assist individuals or populations to find and understand health information and materials that support informed decision-making regarding health.

To increase the flexibility and breadth of this summer school, it has been proposed to structure the four-day school into two two-day sessions. Participants could have the opportunity to attend a single day, one or both two-day sessions, depending on their schedules and interests.

**Day one and two (July 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>):** This segment of the summer school would discuss advocacy in relation to population health promotion. Curriculum would focus on data, indicators and how to collect and use evidence critically and effectively to support advocacy work. In addition, this session would examine the principles of advocacy in combination with relevant examples or case studies to allow for applied learning opportunities.

**Day three and four (July 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>):** This segment of the summer school would offer an inter-disciplinary look at population health promotion. An exploration of innovative and inter-professional approaches to health literacy would allow for rich dialogue and exchange amongst

public health and education professionals. Health communication strategies would also be outlined to complement core competency development in the field of health literacy. Partnership between the PHABC and the BC Health Literacy Network would be pursued to host this portion of the summer school.

This year's curriculum delivery will emphasize the use of interactive learning activities and small group discussions to encourage critical thinking, collaboration, problem solving and sharing. Having the opportunity to apply new knowledge, skill sets and attitudes in an engaging educational environment, supports the successful transfer of new learning to the workplace.

Dr. Irv Rootman, Dr. Stephen Corber and Ms. Leona Gadsby are currently co-chairing the development of the 2011 Public Health Summer School. Two sub-committees are currently being developed to support the planning of the advocacy and health literacy segments of the summer school. Dr. Stephen Corber is leading the development of the two-day advocacy session, Ms. Leona Gadsby is leading the development of the two-day health literacy session and Dr. Irv Rootman is providing overarching support for both initiatives, as the principle project lead.

The organization and coordination of the Public Health Summer Schools is made possible by the voluntary efforts of numerous public health professionals in combination with the infrastructural support of various universities in BC. Any financial, technical or human resources in support of this event would be greatly appreciated, as funding for this event is limited. Building on the successes of the 2010 PHABC Summer School, this year's educational event is sure to attract broad participation, meaningful discussion and group learning across BC.

For more information about the planning stages of this summer school or to become involved in this initiative please contact Irv Rootman at: [irrootman@telus.net](mailto:irrootman@telus.net).

We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

**The 2011 Public Health Summer School Chairing Committee**

Dr. Stephen Corber  
Ms. Leona Gadsby  
Dr. Irv Rootman