The Need to Strengthen the Public Health Workforce

- Numerous reports assessing & advising on strengthening public health systems in Canada
- Importance of competency-based workforce development & initiatives across the country are moving forward with this perspective
Workforce Challenges

Lack of:

• qualified public health professionals in Canada - aging workforce & uneven distribution of existing practitioners (especially in rural & remote areas)
• common measure & data to quantify the gap
• ‘surge’ capacity of public health practitioners in the case of an emergency
• skills development & training opportunities for existing public health practitioners
• Anticipate & respond to the health needs of Canadians
• Ensure actions supported by integrated information & knowledge
• Develop a dedicated, professional workforce & provide the required tools & leadership within a supportive culture
WHAT are Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada?

Set of essential skills, knowledge & attitudes necessary for the broad practice of public health

• Basic building block to develop the workforce
• Independent of discipline & program
## Process to Develop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Draft statements/preliminary consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Revised draft statements, glossary of terms</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006/7</td>
<td>National consultation</td>
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Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada: Release 1.0

36 statements organized under 7 categories:

1. Public Health Sciences
2. Assessment & Analysis
3. Policy & Program Planning, Implementation & Evaluation
4. Partnerships, Collaboration & Advocacy
5. Diversity & Inclusiveness
6. Communication
7. Leadership
Where are we now?

- Build awareness & knowledge
- Develop tools & resources to support use
  - orientation module
  - assessment tools for individual practitioners & organizations
  - performance management & Human Resource tools
  - *Skills Online* continuing education program
- Evaluation plan
- Continue to work & collaborate with partners
- pan-Canadian Environmental Scan to explore ways Core Competencies are being used & integrated
Moving Forward... Integrating Core Competencies

- Building capacity - key determinant for the performance of the public health system is a strong & competent workforce
- **Organization** is the unit of adoption
  - Competency-based workforce development is inherently a strategic Human Resource phenomenon
- *Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada: Release 1.0* is an innovation
  - challenge to support/encourage diffusion throughout the system
  - need to support the innovators/early adopters & encourage the next wave of organizations
Kenda MacFayden

Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection

Systems perspective
Building the Public Health Workforce for the 21st Century

A Pan-Canadian Framework for Public Health Human Resources Planning
The Joint Task Group on Public Health Human Resources
Advisory Committee on Public Health Human Resources
Advisory Committee on Public Health Human Resources

Public health needs of the population

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Workforce Development Framework for Public Health in Nova Scotia

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

RECRUIT
DEVELOP
RETAIN

Consult
Communicate
Coordinate
Collaborate

Highly Skilled and Motivated Workforce

Organizational Capacity
Talent Management Culture

Public Health Skills & Competencies

HR Planning and Strategic & Operational Business Goals

Public Health System

Pan-Canadian Framework
Atlantic Solutions
DohH Framework

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BC Public Health Workforce Development

A Systems Perspective

Cheryl Martin
Director, Public Health Planning
BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
CPHA Conference  June 8, 2009
Public Health Renewal Framework

- Core Public Health Functions (programs and supports)
- Workforce Development
- Modern Legislation
- Information Systems
- Health Assessment and Disease Surveillance
- Adequate Funding
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Delivery Structures
- Access to Expertise and Advice
Core Public Health Functions

- Public health programs (and supports)
- Meet the current and future public health needs
- Based on best practice and research evidence
- 21 core public health programs identified
Workforce Development (framework)

- Enumerate the workforce
- Forecast for future needs
- Innovative service delivery
- Educate to meet service delivery needs
- Recruit and retain in the public health sector
Competencies Project

Objectives

• Identify the core and technical competencies required to implement core public health programs

• Identify tools/resources/processes for increasing the competencies of the current and future workforce
Competencies Project - Methods

- Map core competencies required for each core public health program
- Map draft technical competencies for each core public health program
- Focus groups with health professionals, administrators, leaders
- Meetings with post secondary institutions health programs
Competencies Project – Findings

- Mapping determined that all core competencies will be required to implement public health programs
- Results verified by health practitioners and administrators
- Identified priority competency gaps
Competencies Project – Gaps

- Community development/mobilization/capacity building
- Health illiteracy and methods to address
- Applying social determinants of health to public health
- Health assessment and disease surveillance
- Advocacy in a public health setting
- Health Knowledge translation into action
Competencies Project – Current Workforce

• Develop a self-assessment tool for health authorities
• Identification of courses, programs, resources to address competency gaps
• Identification of mechanisms to promote attainment of knowledge and skills (collective agreements, regulating bodies, continuing education credits)
• Market these to health professionals and administrators
Competencies Project – Future Workforce

- Work with post secondary institutions health programs to incorporate competencies
- Need to have discipline competencies
- Need to determine entry to practice requirements
Strategies for Integrating Public Health Core Competencies in a Local Public Health Organization

Caroline Ball
City of Hamilton, Public Health Services
Hamilton Public Health Services

- Sits within City of Hamilton municipal structure
- Mixed urban/rural population (500,000+)
- 4 operating divisions - 600 full and part-time employees
- Unionized (ONA, CUPE)
Building a Core Competencies Strategy

• Sept 2007 – PHAC releases *Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada: Release 1.0*

• Core Competencies aligned with 2 key goals in Hamilton Public Health Services strategic plan (2007-2010):

  *Goal E “Be recognized as public health experts in the community”*
  
  *Goal F “Recruit, develop and retain a competent, flexible workforce”*
Building a Core Competencies Strategy

- New staff position to manage Core Competencies projects portfolio
- Project management model – multiple initiatives/levels
- 2007/2010 lenses:
  - Knowledge and awareness
  - Building (on) capacity
  - Assessing workforce readiness
  - Strategic collaboration
Results!

- 50% of workforce engaged
- 12 active projects
- Key resource partnerships developed
- Evidence of integration
  - Policy
  - Programs
  - Processes
  - Professional Development

Competent to the Core

Hamilton
Key Approaches

- Broad workforce involvement
  Example: *Competent to the Core Introductory Learning Events*

- Identify innovators and recruit “Early Adopters”
  Example: *Core Competencies Reference Group*
Key Approaches

• Seek out and support “Workforce-Driven” ideas

Example: Collaborating with Food Safety and Infectious Disease Teams to adapt CDC’s Interactive Outbreak Investigation Learning Module

• Engage managers (gatekeepers and catalysts)
Key Approaches

• Be responsive to emerging workforce environment needs

Example: Hamilton PHS using Core Competencies as a key framework for developing new Health Human Resources Skills Inventory in response to H1N1 learning

• Integrate core competencies as part of professional development and learning expectations

Example: Professional Learning and Development Fund requires that requests demonstrate application of Core Competencies
Key Approaches

• Leverage new capacity by reaching out to others
  
  Example: *Partnership with OPHA and 3 Public Health Units on Competency-Based Performance Management for Public Health Toolkit*
Mapping Discipline Specific Competencies

Jane Bellman
Chair, Pan Canadian Task Force on Public Health Nutrition Practice

Funding for this project was provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada
Public health needs of the population

- Develop accreditation standards / quality control measures
- Identify best practices in education (including placements, continuing education)
- Identify best practices in interprofessional deployment
- Identify best practices in recruitment and retention
- Develop recruitment / retention strategies to attract required competencies
- Develop structures to support interprofessional education (space, time, instructors)
- Deploy workforce in interprofessional models based on their competencies

- Develop worker competency assessment tools and incentives
- Align education programs to reflect competencies and interprofessional practice
- Map the competencies of each discipline against the core and function-specific competencies
- Develop organizational competency assessment tools and incentives

- Define the public health workforce for planning purposes
- Gather data on the public health workforce
- Identify core public health services
- Identify core* public health competencies
- Identify function-specific** public health competencies
Discipline Specific Groups

- Dietitians (public health nutritionist, public health dietitians, community nutritionists)
- Nurses
- Environmental Public Health Professionals
- Epidemiologists
- Physicians
- Health Promoters
- Dentists, Dental Hygienists, Dental Technicians, Dental Assistants
Pan-Canadian Task Force on Public Health Nutrition Practice

- Situational Assessment
- Analysis of Existing Definitions & competencies
- Pilot Consultation
- National Consultation
- Recommendations
Consultation Methodology

- Pilot
- Focus groups (20)
- Online survey (sent to >10,000)

**Stakeholders:** Public Health Nutrition Professionals, Educators, Employers, Public Health Colleagues, National & International Experts
Looked at what is already out there:

- Competences:
  - The *Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada: Release 1.0*
  - The Essential Competencies for Dietetic Practice - provincial dietetics regulatory bodies
  - Entry-Level Dietitian Competencies & knowledge statements from Dietitians of Canada
  - Provincial & International Public Health Nutrition Competencies (Toronto, NS, US, UK, Australia)

- Definitions of practice
- Leadership/organized groups
Competency Mapping Process

- **Step 1:** Define scope
- **Step 2:** Mapping of existing Canadian dietetic competency sets
- **Step 3:** Mapping of existing public health nutrition competency sets
- **Step 4:** Analysis of mapping to identify issues, similarities, and gaps.
Identification of national public health nutrition competencies

Core Competencies for Public Health In Canada: Release 1.0

+ Dietetic Competencies (Dietitian of Canada and Provincial Regulatory Bodies)

+ 6 Additional Competencies

= Public Health Nutrition Competencies
Key Findings from Consultation

- Ensure definition is focused, clear and reflects desired practice of public health nutrition in Canada rather than the current practice
- National leadership needed
- Enhancing existing national dietetic competency sets and add some competencies to strengthen
Task Force Next Steps

- Complete Recommendations
- Review membership
- Secure resources