
BC Core Competencies Project

Managed by the Public Health Association of British
Columbia

Funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and
BC Ministry of Health Services



Project Partners

Advisory and steering committee members from:

- Public Health Agency of Canada
- BC Ministry of Health Services
- Public Health Association of BC
- BC Health Authorities
- BC Academic Health Council
- BC Universities - Public Health Directors
- Public Health Consultants



Project Goal

- To ensure the public health workforce has a diverse group of people who are equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills, in the right place and time for the effective and efficient delivery of public health in BC.



Project Objectives

- 1. To identify and define the core and technical competencies for and learning needs of the public health workforce in British Columbia.
- 2. To identify and develop the tools, resources and processes necessary to support core and technical competency development for the public health workforce in BC.
- 3. To increase inter-professional dialogue and collaboration across the health and education sectors to support effective public health core competency planning and development.



Why is Engagement with Core Competencies Important?

- To develop and maintain standardized job descriptions and work performance indicators
- To confirm and respond to the professional development needs of departments and staff
- To work effectively in inter-professional & inter-sectoral teams to support progress in public health
- To understand the localized and discipline-specific core competencies in particular fields
- To advocate for increased organizational support and training opportunities



Increased Academic Sector Involvement is Essential

- Experts in education (teaching/learning outcomes)
- Connection to post-secondary public health curriculum
- Connection to innovation and new research
- Integration & interconnection of undergraduate, graduate programming and professional development
- Opportunities for increased mentoring, collaboration and co-planning



The Benefits?

- Consistency in performance expectations and results
- Quality management & improvement
- Effectiveness and efficiency in the workplace
- Life-long learning in public health
- Staff preparedness
- Staff flexibility / adaptive-ness
- Increased communication and collaboration
- Inter-sectoral partnership



Project Work to Date: Methodologies

- Stakeholder engagement and discussion
- Needs assessment
- Competency verification
- Identification of existing training opportunities
- Survey of policy and public health leaders
- Categorization of existing systemic supports and obstacles to public health workforce training



Methodologies

- Creation of tools for the public health workforce to assess their own competency levels (Employee/Employer self-assessment)
- Development of a professional development opportunity (Public Health Summer School)
- Mid term evaluation of the project
- Sharing of results with stakeholders and the public health workforce



Progress and Outcomes - 1

- Identified the core and technical competencies most critical to implementing the BC Ministry of Health Framework for Core Functions in Public Health.
- Verified additional competencies identified from the needs assessment.
- Identified policy enablers and barriers to core competency development and implementation.



Progress and Outcomes - 2

- Developed self assessment tools
- Summarized survey results for the Vancouver Coastal Health and Interior Health Authority pilot on community capacity building skills
- Organized a two-day 2010 Public Health Summer School
- Conducted a mid term evaluation



Progress and Outcomes - 3

- Hosted a Western Canadian meeting of the provincial and territorial Public Health Associations
- Compiled survey results for Northern Health Authority pilot on the core competency area “Leadership for all”
- Conducted environmental scan examining the use of networks as a best practice.
- Developed an outline of and proposal for a public health workforce network



Project Highlights

Needs Assessment

- Core competencies outlined by PHAC (Release 1.0) were affirmed as relevant in BC in addition to other competencies including community capacity building, competency enforcement, inter-professional collaboration, the application of new technology, knowledge exchange, health literacy and health ethics.



Project Highlights

Employee / Employer Self-Assessment Tools

- Developed to assess local needs for core capacity improvement
- Both show promise in the ability to use these tools for any competency area
- Have been piloted and implemented in BC for the core competency areas of community capacity building and leadership.



Project Highlights

Employee / Employer Self-Assessment Results

- The results of surveys conducted in BC in the area of **community capacity building** showed a strong consensus among front-line staff and senior management as to the major training areas:

“Able to establish effective working relationships with diverse individuals, organizations and groups.”

“Able to understand the concepts of community capacity-building and able to apply these to practice”



Project Highlights

Employee / Employer Self-Assessment Results

- The results of surveys conducted in BC in the area of **leadership** showed a strong consensus among front-line staff and senior management as to the major training need areas:

“Able to advocate for the greater public good/health of the population which may require challenging general opinion or stakeholder interest.”

“Have sufficient self-awareness (e.g., of values, principles, styles, emotions, strengths and limitations) to take responsibility for own performance.”



Project Highlights

Employee / Employer Self-Assessment Results

- 1 to 2-day, in-house workshops preferred
- Link competency training with an academic approach that can provide on-line and work-based mentoring and support
- Indication that health authorities could assist in an educational response by providing content expertise and/or mentoring support
- Need to ensure the academic sector is involved in ongoing and timely dialogue with the public health sector to facilitate appropriate educational responses



Project Highlights

Public Health Summer School

- 2010 theme: “Supporting Community Change from a Population Health Promotion Perspective”
- Two-day session held via teleconference at UBC, UVIC & UNBC and other sites
- 2011 theme: Supporting Population Health Promotion via Advocacy and Health Literacy Work
- Proposed four-day event (two, two-day sessions)



Recent Work - 1

- Documented the project to date's process, lessons learned and future considerations
- Identified possible public health continuing education opportunities
- Initiated the organization of a 2011 Public Health Summer School and a November PHABC conference



Recent Work - 2

- Initiated the development of core competency statements for public health ethics (equity)
- Developed a project communications strategy
- Developed a core competencies webpage
- Initiated the transition to a Western Canadian Public Health Workforce Development Network



Project Reflections

(Mid term evaluation results)

- Strong stakeholder support for the project
- Strong approval of PHABC management
- Adaptive planning essential
- A leading edge, innovative project
- A need for broader engagement of senior leaders in public health and education
- Communication and dissemination of project outcomes, resources and tools required.
- Support for a Western Canadian Public Health Workforce Development Network



Key Considerations - 1

- 1) The BC Core Competency project work to date has been essential in strengthening the standards, training and development of the diverse knowledge, skills and attitudes of the public health workforce in BC needed to implement the BC Core Functions Framework effectively.



Key Considerations - 2

- 2) Inter-professional collaboration between the health and education sectors has been crucial in core competency development. Broadened and continued engagement and dialogue with health and education stakeholders is desirable in the form of a core competencies network.



Key Considerations - 3

- 3) The BC Core Competency project has prioritized the sharing and connection of resources and tools for competency development, training and application.

Please visit the BC Core Competencies Project website for access to key resources:

www.phabc.org/modules.php?name=Contentcomp&pa=index



What You Can Do

- Consider joining the Western Canadian Public Health Workforce Development Network
- Talk to your colleagues and staff about the importance of public health core competencies and professional development
- Use and share the BC Core Competencies webpage and its information



Thank you

For more information please email:

staff@phabc.org

BC Core Competencies Project website:

<http://www.phabc.org/modules.php?name=Contentcomp&pa=index>

