



Public Health Association of BC

Public Health Association of BC

2019-2020 Annual Report

Presented at the Annual General Meeting

Thursday December 3rd, 2020

12:00pm - 1:30pm

Online Via Zoom



Public Health Association of British Columbia

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President's Report 2020

2019-2020 has been a most challenging year for all of public health. I am very pleased to report that the dedicated staff, volunteers, board members and working committees of PHABC have served with diligence and commitment in spite of numerous demands and challenges arising from COVID-19. Thanks to their contributions, we have been able to contribute in a variety of important ways to address population and public health issues arising during the pandemic. These extraordinary efforts have taken place while much of our operational commitments were ongoing and expanded. I've highlighted some of the accomplishments and plans below and invite you to read the annual full report to find out more.

I would like to begin by acknowledging Dr. Gord Miller our Past President who stepped in to provide oversight to PHABC while I was heavily engaged in managing the operations of the pandemic response within my health authority. Dr. Miller has been an extraordinary advocate for public health and provided countless hours of voluntary support to our board, membership and staff. I have been so grateful for his support and leadership throughout my term as President.

When COVID-19 began, PHABC reached out to British Columbians to understand how they were coping, what they were most concerned about and to provide them with resources to navigate this unprecedented public health emergency. Working with PlaceSpeak an online consultation platform provided PHABC with a means to discuss COVID-19 and its impacts. PlaceSpeak donated the topic to PHABC and truly supported citizens in BC in a direct manner via this dialogue. We learned so much about elder challenges, food insecurity, confidence in government messaging and built our online network with British Columbians.

Meanwhile, our regular work and operations continued and where projects were stayed due to the pandemic, we resolutely undertook new obligations as they arose in response to the threat.

This was our eleventh annual Summer Institute which focused on “Climate Change and Health”. In response to the pandemic, summer school was entirely virtual. This year the summer school was expanded to reach 210 participants across five provinces and one territory thanks to our partners; **Manitoba Public Health Association, Saskatchewan Public Health Association, Public Health Agency of Canada,** and the **Yukon Public Health Community of Practice.** Videoconferencing technology enabled us to register delegates from across Canada and even included some participants from Quebec, Ontario, and Newfoundland. Reaching a record number of sites this year would not have been possible without the tireless efforts from our Community, Capacity Building Committee, Scientific Program Committee, sessional facilitators, volunteers, and presenters. Without them we would not have been able to create such a popular and impactful program or facilitate the numerous sessions that allowed so many people to participate.

In terms of school health, PHABC has received multi-year funding by MOH to administer the Farm to School program. This initiative assists school-aged children in BC to learn about growing, procuring, and consuming healthy and nutritious local foods. Another program supported by PHABC is Kids Boost Immunity (KBI), a free, online program being used in schools across Canada with over 60 lessons in science/health and social studies for grades 4-12. Included are lessons that address vaccine misinformation through critical thinking related to bias, and strategies to evaluate information. KBI is being very well-received by teachers and students alike for its engaging “game” format and opportunity for students to earn vaccines for children in support of UNICEF. Since March 2018, almost 1 million questions have been answered and over 56K vaccines earned. We are proud of what our KBI team has accomplished provincially, nationally, and internationally with this school-based vaccine awareness initiative.

PHABC has a number of key partners and allies. I would like to acknowledge the BC Health Literacy Network and the Health Promotion BC network, both of whom are receiving administrative support from us, and are hosted on the PHABC website. Another key partner is the BC Population Health Network for which PHABC serves as the secretariat to this group. Bridge for Health is another strong partner in a number of activities including support for policy work, capacity building and working with public health interns. PHABC is a founding member of Prevention of Violence Canada a coalition dedicated to implementing the World Health Organization’s recommendations on violence prevention. The Poverty Reduction Coalition is another key partner with their work towards significantly reducing poverty and homelessness, and in concert with their work is First Call an advocacy group for child health in BC.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Farm to Cafeteria Canada with whom we share a national grant and SPARC BC an administrative partner for that grant. Another of our key allies is the BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society, and our Executive Director served as the chair of that proactive group of agencies seeking to improve population health for the last two years. We are also members of the World Health Organization Vaccine Safety Net as a result of our work with Immunize BC and I Boost and Kids Boost Immunity. Our Executive Director is part of the global advisory committee for the Vaccine Safety Network and is the Chair of that multi country forum. We also participate actively in the World Health Organization Violence Prevention Alliance. Our Executive Director co- chaired a National Municipal Crime Prevention council on Domestic Violence related to COVID-19 this year. She also supported Persons with Disabilities in their advocacy with the BC government to ensure guidelines for access to health services were adopted to support personal assistance during COVID-19 interactions with health care services. The list goes on, but it is clear that we work collaboratively in order to fulfill our mission and goals and we welcome the strength that comes with working in concert with like-minded individuals and agencies.

In response to COVID-19 and the extensive burden of care experienced by our membership, we asked and received unanimous support for our board to extend their terms for one year. Our board members bring a wealth of experience and diverse perspectives that can support PHABC to become an example of a vibrant, member-driven, sustainable organization in the future. We have accomplished a significant amount this year and our plans for next year are even bolder. We have a creative and dynamic team in PHABC with Shannon Turner as our Executive Director. We remain committed to strengthening the impact of people who are active in public health in BC and achieving our mission of promoting health, wellbeing, and equity for all British Columbians through leadership in public health. Reaching this requires a community of support and we hope we can count on your involvement so that we can continue to make a difference.

With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SOLORZANO", with a large, stylized initial "J" on the left.

Juan Solorzano
President
Public Health Association of BC



Governance Committee Report

Despite the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on regular meetings of the Governance Committee, we are happy to report on the following accomplishments:

- Board Member Engagement – during the early months of 2020, the Governance Committee engaged new and returning members of PHABC’s Board of Directors with the goal of better leveraging the rich knowledge and expertise that they bring to the organization. Overall, Board members were very satisfied with how we are governing as a Board, and their participation as Board members. Suggested areas for improvement included better performance measurement/monitoring, more face-to-face meeting opportunities, and greater clarity on how our provincial, national and international efforts align with one another and support our mandate. Once regular meetings resume, we will be working with Board members to develop a clear plan on how to move forward in each of the improvement areas suggested during the engagement process.
- Engaged in preliminary discussions about broader engagement of the public health community in BC in an effort to better understand how PHABC can support professional development, advocate for public health policy and actively engage members. Given the shift in priorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic we were unable to initiate this broader engagement process, but plan to move forward once regular operations resume.
- Contractors to Employees – over the past year, the Governance, Finance and Executive Committees worked together to complete the transition of PHABC’s workforce from contractors to employees. We trust that this new arrangement will enhance the organization’s ability to recruit and retain top public health talent.
- Facilitated strategic discussions with the Board of Directors to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on PHABC’s ability to fulfill its mandate, as well as the identification of windows of opportunity for the organization.
- Coordinated the extension of the terms of existing Board of Directors to provide governance continuity during the pandemic and delay the election of new Board members until next year.

Sincerely,

Juan Gabriel Solorzano and Shannon Weightman
Co- Chairs
Governance Committee



Finance Committee Report

The fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, was an extraordinary and demanding year for public health infrastructure and professionals. PHABC's COVID-19 response included the reallocated of resources to urgent response activities, some of which were unfunded by specific programs, reflecting the Association's commitment to public safety and the health of the population. Strong relationships with funding partners and service delivery agencies were leveraged to successfully modify existing programming, where necessary, to accomplish program goals within the context of the pandemic.

Despite these extraordinary circumstances, PHABC has experienced continued growth in revenues, attaining significant deferred revenue for future program delivery. Investments in infrastructure, expansion of service delivery, and efforts to increase PHABC's international exposure are ongoing. PHABC experienced another year of increased net assets, and continues to hold a sustainable operating reserve.

Overall, it is my pleasure to say that PHABC continues to be a fiscally healthy, vibrant and relevant charitable organization.

Sincerely,

Roger Wheeler, MSc, MBA, CPHR
Treasurer

Capacity Building Committee Report

Building and Supporting the Public Health Workforce for the Future

11th Annual Summer Institute 2020- Think Globally, Act Locally: Public Health and the Anthropocene

“Think Globally, Act Locally: Public Health and the Anthropocene” was the theme for the 2020 Summer Institute Program, was offered via Zoom for the first time and was accessed by over 200 participants from not only BC but several other provinces and territories. As ever, the organization for the Summer Institute involved many volunteer hours by the Scientific Program Committee, led by Dr. Trevor Hancock and Dr Maya Gislason as co-chairs. PHABC is very grateful for the time, energy and expertise which makes this such a useful and inspiring educational event. On Day 1, the Institute was focused in the morning on thinking globally, considering both the massive and rapid global ecological changes underway and their global and local health implications. In the afternoon, the focus shifted to how widespread value shift and cultural evolution can occur, as a prerequisite for the massive and rapid societal transformations required if we are to successfully navigate the challenge of the Anthropocene. On Day 2, the focus shifted to acting locally, with a particular focus on the concept of healthy communities that are also ‘One Planet’ communities. Participants were asked to consider how local action to create such healthy and sustainable communities could be undertaken in their roles as both professionals and citizens, what their public health or other organisations’ role should be, and the partners they would need to work with to move the identified agendas forward. The feedback from the evaluations suggest that, in spite of the on line format, participants were pleased with the Summer Institute.

The Institute’s videos, discussions and presentations can be accessed at

<https://phabc.org/presentation/public-health-summer-institute-2020/>

2020 Annual Conference postponed

The resources and knowledge gathered at Summer Institute and an Evidence Review provided by Dr Trevor Hancock, was to inform the direction and content of the 2020 PHABC Fall Annual Conference. However, due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic, the Fall Conference for 2020 on this theme has been deferred until 2021 in recognition of the heavy workload and burdens facing Public Health professionals. Dr Hancock’s Evidence Review will support and guide presentations at the PHABC 2021 Conference on this theme. The decision to postpone the conference was based on an inquiry, including a SCOT exercise (Strengths-Challenges-Opportunities -Threats) conducted by the CBC and approved by the PHABC Board.

Building the Public Health Work Force for the Future:

ChatterHigh

Background

The Public Health Association of BC (PHABC) works with ChatterHigh, a BC based organization, to make available a public health career platform for students on their internet site. PHABC created this online learning resource as a fun, engaging, informative opportunity which guides middle and high school students, parents and teachers through higher education and career options in the Public Health field. In the case of PHABC, this is of course related to increasing BC students, parents and teacher awareness of career opportunities in the Public Health field. Phase I of this resource was launched in January 2020 with a

“We believe students select careers and higher education programs based on what they know. If it’s not between their nose and their phone it doesn’t exist.

ChatterHigh students receive a fun, mobile, daily, 10 minute, 10 question, edu-game in the form of a quiz that allows them to research and explore thousands of higher education and career options. “

<https://chatterhigh.com/en/general/about>



recognition that Phase II would address the need for French translation of the resource starting in the 2020-21 school year. For more information on the ChatterHigh platform please visit the attached hyperlink: <https://chatterhigh.com/en/general/about/>

Context

The Role of PHABC and ChatterHigh in promoting public health careers among middle and high school students in BC.

The PHABC CBC with the support of Shannon Turner, the Executive Director, searched and investigated mechanisms for presenting the diversity of public health to students in middle and high schools across BC. This work resulted in an ongoing partnership with Chatterhigh, a BC web-based organization and made available an online public health career platform for use in BC schools.

The online tool, called “Building the Public Health Workforce for the Future”

The high-quality content for this online learning resource was created with the help of PHABC members from different disciplines offering a series of questions related to their particular Public Health profession. Students learn about public health career options by conducting online research to answer questions delivered as a daily quiz. The result is a fun, engaging, informative exercise which guides middle and high school students across BC, through higher education and career options in Public Health.

This project has been successfully increasing BC students’, parents’ and teachers’ awareness of career opportunities in the Public Health field and support the building of the public health workforce of the future. (See figure 1 below)

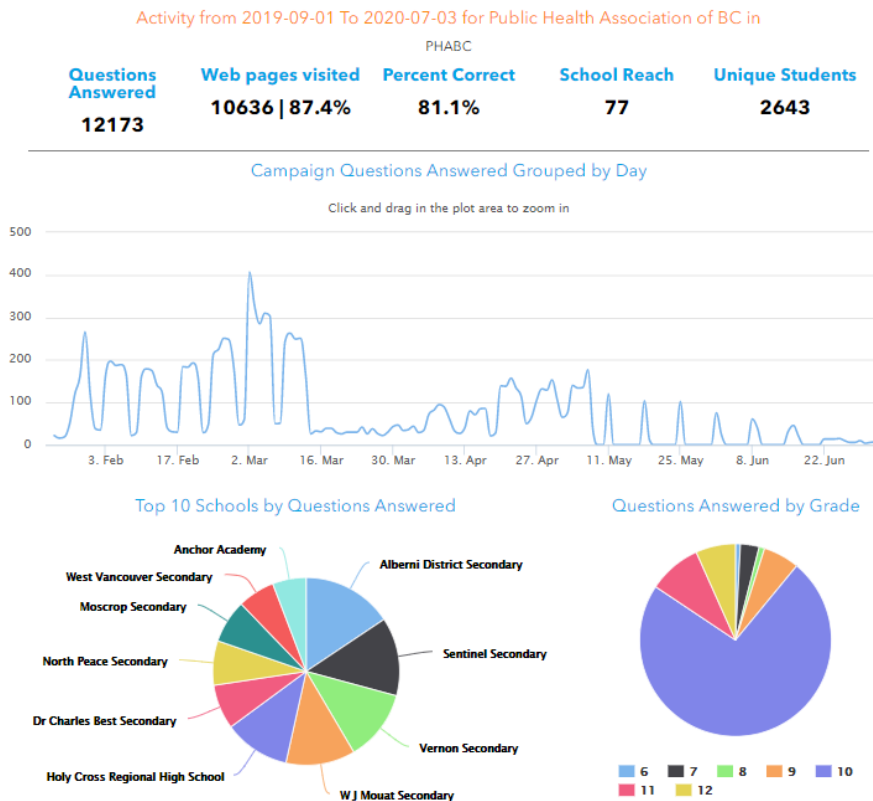


Figure 1: Summary data of Public Health's Chatterhigh Activities Feb-June 2020



While the numbers accumulated since the launch in January 2020 are impressive, what is striking is that a pandemic shattered normal routines for students and their schools not long after the campaign was launched. Thus, the numbers including the continuation of use after schools were sent into lockdown, is a testament to the match between the tool, the audience and untapped pool of interest in high schoolers. The majority of students using the tool are from grade 10, which is when the BC Career education curriculum begins to build on early career education with **Pursuing Preferred Futures in Career-Life Development**. <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/career-education/core/introduction/>

Phase II: French translation of “Building the Public Health Workforce for the Future”: The purpose of this phase is to expand the reach of this online educational resource designed and hosted by PHABC for French speaking middle and high school students, parents and teachers in BC. A discussion regarding this phase is currently underway with PHSA.

The information in this report was derived from our first evaluation for the program. A second, and more in depth evaluation of the platform is planned for Feb. 2021 and recommendations on the Chatterhigh work will be submitted to the PHABC board in the spring.

Future directions 2020-2021: Creating a Gallery of Memories and Reflections: Supporting Public Health Professionals to Tell Their Stories

Over the years, PHABC has talked about the need for engagement and support of front line public health staff. Given the circumstances of the current demands on the BC Public Health system, this need is more urgent than ever. PARC and the Capacity Building Committee (CBC) have both identified supporting public health staff to share their stories during this very intense time of public health crisis as important. At this time, the CBC sees an opportunity to pilot a mechanism for such support which could also serve as a ‘placeholder’ for the PHABC Annual Conference that usual accompanies the AGM. The CBC looks forward to facilitating venues online for the safe sharing of stories, in voice, writing, poetry, and other art expression.

Today we would like to provide you with an example of how an innovative, arts based and creative expression event can be the basis for gathering and telling stories from front line PHABC members and public health professionals. This design is based on a successful experience trialed recently within a BC health authorities. We think this type of event would help establish a forum for the introduction of positive and empowering learning and support as well as effective framing of trauma which has resulted from the above mentioned crises. We anticipate, with the right feedback, that we can repeat the facilitated art and storytelling experience twice more prior to the 2021 Fall Conference with a focus on the Opioid crisis, and the Climate Crisis.

Sincerely,

Maureen Rowan and Dr. Theresa Healy
Co-Chairs
Capacity Building Committee



PARC Committee Report

Our Mission:

The purpose of the Policy, Advocacy, Research and Communications Committee (PARC) is to advance policies that promote health, well-being and social equity. We achieve this by advocating for the implementation of healthy public policy at federal, provincial, regional and municipal levels of governments. We work effectively through partnerships with other non-profit organizations and civil societies to advance policy positions that align with PHABC's mandate. Finally, the PARC Committee also evaluates policy recommendations for final endorsement by PHABC Board of Directors.

Highlights from 2019-2020:

There was a Federal Election in 2019-20 fiscal year on October 21, 2019 and a provincial election in BC on October 24th, 2020. PARC used our online engagement platform Placespeak to engage with our members, the greater community, candidates and political parties on issues of public health.

The PARC Committee had its first meeting of this fiscal year on December 1st, 2019. PARC provided support to take a stand against a government crackdown and inequalities in Chile, and to file a parliamentary petition, that we shared with our membership. The petition was sponsored by House of Commons MP Jenny Kwan.

In January 2020, PARC and the BC Coalition for Healthy School Food submitted a letter requesting that a universal, healthy school food program be added to their election platform for all BC students. Shannon Turner, Executive Director of PHABC, and Samantha Gambling, consultant for BC-CHSF, met with MLAs and had positive discussions about creating healthy school food programs across BC.

This year PARC continued its work on a request from the Tobacco Reduction Program, VCH and Clean Air Coalition, to support their position for Smoke-Free Housing (SFH) policy. Healthy debate about this issue continues in the areas of harm reduction, stigma, building safe and inclusive communities and our concerns about the potential for worsening inequities.

We created a subgroup from the larger committee tasked to work on a PHABC position on the overdose emergency public health response. The subgroup developed a position statement endorsing a comprehensive public health approach to addressing the crisis that includes the provision of a safer, regulated supply of opioids to those at risk of overdose, the decriminalization of all psychoactive substance use, and work to decrease stigma, including capacity building for health practitioners. This bold, progressive position adds to the growing consensus, including voices like the VCH MHO, HoC, and PHO, that a new public health approach to substance use is urgently needed in BC. Following PHABC protocol, we requested approval and a letter of support from the PHABC Board. PARC took an important role in raising public health issues involving the overdose crisis with key decision makers including Ministries and the Public Health Office.

Input was sought on the Basic Income approach to poverty reduction that David Green's group has been working on. All were in agreement that the Public Health Association of BC should be a voice at the table and that there is an emerging policy window for public health to provide a strong rationale for the positive population health impacts of poverty reduction programs and policies in British Columbia.



Members of the PARC committee have been working with John Millar's Green New Deal Canada initiative regarding climate emergency and inequities. PARC worked to become more involved at the national level through the Council of Canadians. Member of Parliament Peter Julian introduced a Green New Deal motion in Parliament. PARC drafted a letter in support of the Green New Deal and sent it to members across party lines. Members of PARC met with Minister Wilkinson, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, about the Green New Deal initiative.

On March 11th, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak to be a pandemic. The pandemic created a raft of social and economic upheavals and shutdowns, impacting PARC committee meetings. Between March 11th and September 20th, 2020, the PARC committee was unable to meet as many of our membership and executive members were working directly with COVID response and recovery. During the time PARC members had limited capacity to meet they were still able to perform valuable work such as supporting an initiative to encourage the BC government to urgently provide more supports to children during the pandemic and encourage further assistance to the homeless during the COVID-19 outbreak. The COVID-19 outbreak also changed the focus and approach the committee had been taking and changed it to encourage governments and industry to include cleaner and more climate friendly approaches to the post COVID-19 economic recovery initiatives and job creation.

Sincerely,

Heather Ouellette and Chris Van Veen
Co-Chairs
Policy Advocacy Research & Communications Committee