



Public Health Association of BC

2021-2022 Annual Report

**Presented at the Annual General Meeting
November 9th, 2022**



President's Report 2022

Almost three years into the COVID-19 Pandemic, Public Health teams across British Columbia are experiencing the strain of maintaining the response to the pandemic, continuing to address the public health emergency of opioid overdoses and recovering routine public health activities that were reduced or suspended for the past two years. As 2022 comes to a close, Public Health finds itself facing the impacts of a changing climate, an exacerbation of mental health conditions, a worsening of public polarization, increase in social isolation, an “infodemic” of misinformation and deterioration of the mental wellness of children and youth. In these times of rapid change, staff, volunteers and the Board of the Public Health Association of BC have been actively involved in supporting public health staff across the Province, as well as participating directly in many of the initiatives aimed at mitigating the impacts of these concurrent crises. As President of the Board of PHABC, I am truly honored to work alongside the deeply committed staff, volunteers, board members and our working committees. It is often said that within crisis lies the seed of opportunity, and I am confident that the dedication and expertise of members in our association will continue to play a role in how we adapt, respond and take care of each other in these times.

Program & Partnership Highlights

The program operations of the Public Health Association of British Columbia continued its upward trajectory in 2022. There are many activities of the organization worth recognizing and below are some of the highlights:

- **Strengthening capacity for Public Health Communications:** PHABC hired a full-time communications director Selenna Ho. This strategic position allows PHABC to enhance the critical public health competency of public health communications, which importance became evident during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Selenna is working with PHABC projects and programs to create a cohesive communications strategy, develop brand guidelines for programs and expand network.
- **Promote Healthy Food Systems:** PHABC has a robust food systems program. During this year we were able to achieve the following:
 - Can You Dig It initiative supported the development of a number of community gardens around Surrey
 - Partnered with Food Banks BC to initiate project focused on food security in Northern BC
 - Received funding for the development of 2 School Farm Pro-D Day events for teachers in Victoria and Vancouver
 - Engaged in ongoing research for a project on reimagining future food systems
 - Conducted engagement and outreach activities through the BC Chapter of the Coalition for Healthy School Food to advocate for a universal meal program for all schools across Canada.
 - Expanded the Farm to School BC program, new granting cycle has opened and is accepting applications to start or scale-up school gardens.
 - Initiated the planning for the 2023 Farm to School BC Conference happening May 17-19, 2023 at the AMS Nest at UBC, Vancouver.



- **Prevention of Vaccine-preventable illness and promotion of public health immunization:** PHABC is an important system partner in promoting immunization, addressing vaccine hesitance and responding to the information needs of clients seeking this service. In 2022, our immunization program is proud of the following outcomes:
 - Completed a new Kids Boost Immunity video, promoting the use of the educational tool in classrooms as a way to spread knowledge about vaccination and health sciences while earning vaccines for children in developing countries through a partnership with UNICEF
 - Expanded KBI across Canada with Pilot projects happening in other countries around the world
 - Partnered with Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada to develop Clubs Boost Immunity, as another way to connect with youth across Canada about the importance of immunization
 - Reached a milestone of 1 million vaccines donated across I Boost Immunity and Kids Boost Immunity in June 2022
 - Hosted ImmunizeBC through our ongoing partnership with BCCDC
- **Providing operational support to other public health partners:** leveraging our event organizations and logistic support capacity, PHABC provided administrative support for the Health Officer's Council of BC Spring and Fall conferences

Capacity Building Highlights

We are thrilled about ending this year with the return of our in-person Annual Conference titled "**Our Planet, Our Health: Creating Well-Being Societies and Making Peace with Nature.**" The conference topic was inspired by recent WHO and UN initiatives, as well as the importance of recognizing the role Indigenous knowledge has in creating a healthy relationship between humans and the Earth. This event has been possible thanks to the dedication of volunteers in our Capacity Building Committee, as well as our Scientific Advisors **Dr. Margot Parkes** and **Dr. Trevor Hancock** and the many speakers, facilitators, staff and volunteer that help make PHABC a leader in promoting the ongoing learning of public health professionals in BC. Other activities include:

- Continued deployment of Chatterhigh, an initiative aimed to raise awareness of career options in public health with high school students. Continued engagement with students across BC through the creation of public health related questions. Over 100 questions on the topic now available in our portal.
- Expansion of questions to include a module on environmental health and climate change.

Healthy Public Policy Advocacy Highlights

As the complexity of our health challenges increase, so does the need to develop whole-of-society responses if we want to be successful in reaching our vision of a fair and healthy British Columbia for all. The Public Health Association of British Columbia is committed to advancing evidence-based policies that promote health, well-being and social equity. Through the efforts of the Policy, Advocacy and Research Committee of the Board as well as our talented staff and volunteers, PHABC is active in promoting policies that contribute to the health of British Columbians. Some of our highlights for this year include:

- Established 3 sub-committees from the committee's identified priorities for the year:
 - Sustainability to review and respond to request for PARC support that come from organization and initiatives focused on climate change, sustainability and environmental health
 - Affordable Housing/Homelessness to explore how PARC can be leveraged to encourage government to act on the housing crisis.
 - Harm Reduction/Safe Supply to update the 2013 PHABC position paper on psychoactive substances to use to advocate for action on the overdose and drug poisoning crisis.
 - We welcome any PHABC members to join these sub-committees to support action on these important priorities
- Signed letter of support and call to action for the promotion of a healthy eating mandate to the federal government.
- Supported the completion and submission of a framework around the development of a Just Transition Act in the federal government. Focus on framework is the acknowledgment of the multiple crises taking place currently, their interconnections and the need to consider all crises when developing the act to ensure no one is left behind.
- Hosted a presentation on a new policy monitoring framework around social listening developed within the Office of the Chief MHO for Vancouver Coastal Health led by staff in Population Health Policy and the Public Health Surveillance Unit.
- Sent letter to BC Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy a letter supporting the review of the Integrated Pest Management Regulation (IPMR) and ban of rodenticides due to environmental damage.
- Signed letter to Federal Minister of Environment & Climate Change to set more ambitious emissions caps for the oil and gas sector.
- Signatory of letter to all Premiers and Prime Minister Trudeau supporting the creation of wellbeing societies and making peace with nature in alignment with WHO's focus on Our Planet, Our Health. These topics are the focus of this year's conference.

Governance Highlights

The crisis of health human resources has continued to impact healthcare organizations across Canada as they struggle to recruit and retain talent. In addition, we are observing concerning levels of burnout in the sector. In the face of these times in the labour market, PHABC has continue to strengthen its position as an employer of choice. In addition to generous health benefit packages and an employer-supported retirement savings program, we are enhancing our supports for the well-being of our staff by offering more flexible work arrangements and access to resources for mental wellness and resiliency.

- Welcome to Allysha Ram as new director-at-large and a fond farewell to out-going director-at-large Maria Robinson, who will continue her relationship with PHABC through her support with the BC Chapter of the Coalition for Health School Food as Indigenous Advisor.

I am truly grateful for the leadership that our Executive Director, Shannon Turner has demonstrated over the past few years, and particularly in these turbulent times. Shannon leads the organization with deep caring and support for her team while also ensuring that PHABC continues to meet its contractual obligations and be a leading institution in BC. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mariah



Robinson who is ending her term on the Board of PHBC. Mariah has helped the organization deepen its commitment to indigenous Truth and Reconciliation, and she will remain an advisor to the Board as we continue in this journey.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and its aftermath has reminded society of the critical importance that Public Health plays in our lives. As we move into this new phase, Public Health Leaders in PHABC will continue to be called upon to address the many challenges our Province is facing including the Opioid Overdose Emergency and the impacts of the pandemic in the determinants of health. I trust our staff, volunteers and partners are up for this challenge, and I look forward to working together towards our mission of promoting health, wellbeing and equity for all British Columbians through leadership in public health.

With sincere gratitude,



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:

- During the early months of 2022, the Board of Directors welcomed and orientated four new Directors to the Board who began their terms in December 2021, including Gordon Cote, Lena Hozaima, Zahra Mamdani, and Astou Thiam. These new members bring a wealth of experience and diverse perspectives that will support PHABC to be a vibrant, member-driven, and sustainable organization.
- The crisis of health human resources has continued to impact healthcare organizations across Canada as they struggle to recruit and retain talent. In addition, we are observing concerning levels of burnout in the sector.
- In the face of these times in the labour market, PHABC has continue to strengthen its position as an employer of choice. In addition to generous health benefit packages and an employer-supported retirement savings program, we are enhancing our supports for the well-being of our staff by offering more flexible work arrangements and access to resources for mental wellness and resiliency.
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Sincerely,

Shannon Weightman and Juan Gabriel Solorzano
Co- Chairs
Governance Committee



Finance Committee Report

The 2021/2022 fiscal year for the Public Health Association of British Columbia (PHABC) Finance Committee started on a busy note with the outgoing Treasurer Roger Wheeler passing the reigns to incoming Treasurer, Gordon Cote and Kelsey Sanford taking on the vital role of Financial Officer. I am very grateful to Juan, Roger, Shannon, Christina and Kelsey for their patience orienting me as well as being so welcoming at every juncture.

This year, The Finance Committee, comprising of the Executive Director, the Operations Manager, the Finance Officer, and Treasurer have been working diligently upgrading financial reporting processes for broader financial oversight and macro level analysis. In addition, a new variance reporting template system for project managers was introduced. These variance reports, produced quarterly, assist project managers to align their targeted allocation while ensuring “spending” transparency. The roll-up of these variance reports, combined with monthly reviews of reconciliation, income and balance sheet statements, has enabled the finance “shop” to strengthen its budgeting, monitoring, tracking, and reporting on a year-to-year basis.

Other activities of note for PHABC included a review of the employee health and dental plan with benefit representatives. The review included analyzing which areas of the plan employees utilized the most, to better support staff needs and to determine the most cost-effective option for the plan renewal. In October 2021, the Board of Directors also approved the addition of an Employee & Family Assistance benefit through Homewood Health. This new benefit allows employees and their families to immediately access short-term counselling, life smart coaching services and online recourses, including a library of 20 online e-courses.

PHABC’s financial position is on solid footing. The consolidated statements reflect a healthy financial situation and a year-over-year, positive trend visa-vie net income. Cash reserves signal the need for the organization to strategically invest for longer-term financial sustainability. Cash on hand will provide a buffer in the event there are project shifts or economic pressures. An area to note in this year’s financial statement is the change in position of accounts receivable and deferred revenue. The good news here is that PHABC has collected on accounts owing, and while deferred revenue has increased, there is much work for PHABC forthcoming.

Overall, it is my pleasure to declare that PHABC continues to be a fiscally healthy, growing, and a relevant charitable organization. I am pleased to present our financial statement for fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, conducted by Burns & Co Chartered Professional Accountants, to the membership at the Annual General Meeting, November 8th, 2022.

Sincerely,
Gordon Cote,
Treasurer

Capacity Building Committee Report

Building and Supporting the Public Health Workforce for the Future

I. Annual Summer Institute 2022

We did not have a summer institute this year due to overload and delays caused by COVID-19. Supporting public health staff transitioning back to a different world would not be best served by adding a Summer Institute. The wisdom of this seemed to be confirmed when COVID-19 cases were rising at one point. We will be back better than ever so, see you next year for a fabulous Summer Institute 2023.

II. 2022 Annual Conference



Figure 1: 2022 PHABC Annual Conference

A major focus for our year was being back for an in-person conference!

The Public Health Association of British Columbia will be hosting its annual conference on November 9th and 10th, 2022 at the Victoria Conference Centre. This year's conference, "Our Planet, Our Health: Creating Well-Being Societies and Making Peace with Nature" is an expansion of the topics covered during the 2020 Public Health Summer Institute, is inspired by recent WHO and UN initiatives, and recognizes the important role of Indigenous knowledges in fostering healthy relationships between humans and the Earth. This year's Scientific Program Committee for the conference chairs are Dr Margot W. Parkes and Dr Trevor Hancock. We believe that in choosing this theme, PHABC is once again showing its commitment to be at the leading edge of change and action on urgent public health issues

Early lessons from conference organization

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the range of the ecological changes and the socio-cultural forces that constitute the Anthropocene and their implications for population health and health equity;
2. Explore and understand the importance and implications of Indigenous knowledge and practices in managing our co-existence with nature and the creation of well-being societies – and thus for public health action both globally and locally;
3. Understand the health and other co-benefits of an ecologically sustainable and socially just “One Planet” community and society;
4. Imagine and begin to design the local social and public health response to this situation – including local social and political actions – that will lead to more sustainable, just, convivial and healthy “One Planet” communities.

Conference Themes

To invigorate public health practice, education and research towards a healthy, just and sustainable future. The conference plenary sessions will focus on four inter-related themes:

1. Making Peace with Nature for Public Health
2. Ecojustice/Eco-social Equity and Public Health
3. Well-being Societies

Figure 2: Learning Objectives and Conference Themes

While a full evaluation will be forthcoming after the conference, here are some early reflections:

Went well:

- Great job in promoting the organization
- The program is appealing
- Many local presenters
- Staff capacity, while stretched, was timely and effective which permitted the SPC to focus on developing the best content

Needs improvement:

- More diversity among the presenters in terms of background, language, and affiliation (most presenters came from SFU, UVIC or UNBC)
- Broader organizational involvement in policy and decision making

III. PHABC & ChatterHigh

Building the Public Health Work Force for the Future: ChatterHigh Background As reported last year, the Public Health Association of BC (PHABC) works with ChatterHigh, a BC based organization, to make available an informative and inspiring Public Health career platform for High school students advancing into thinking about future educational and career choices. PHABC has created this online learning resource as a fun, engaging, informative learning opportunity which guides middle and high school students, parents and teachers through higher education and career options in the Public Health field. This is of course related to increasing BC students, parents and teacher awareness of career, and uptake of opportunities in the Public Health field.

This year, PHABC stepped up its relationship with ChatterHigh by not only refreshing the daily Quiz by including a section on Planetary health but also by developing modules. These will provide more in-depth

educational learning. The first pilot of the modules is almost complete and after the input gathered at the conference, the next module will be on Planetary Health.

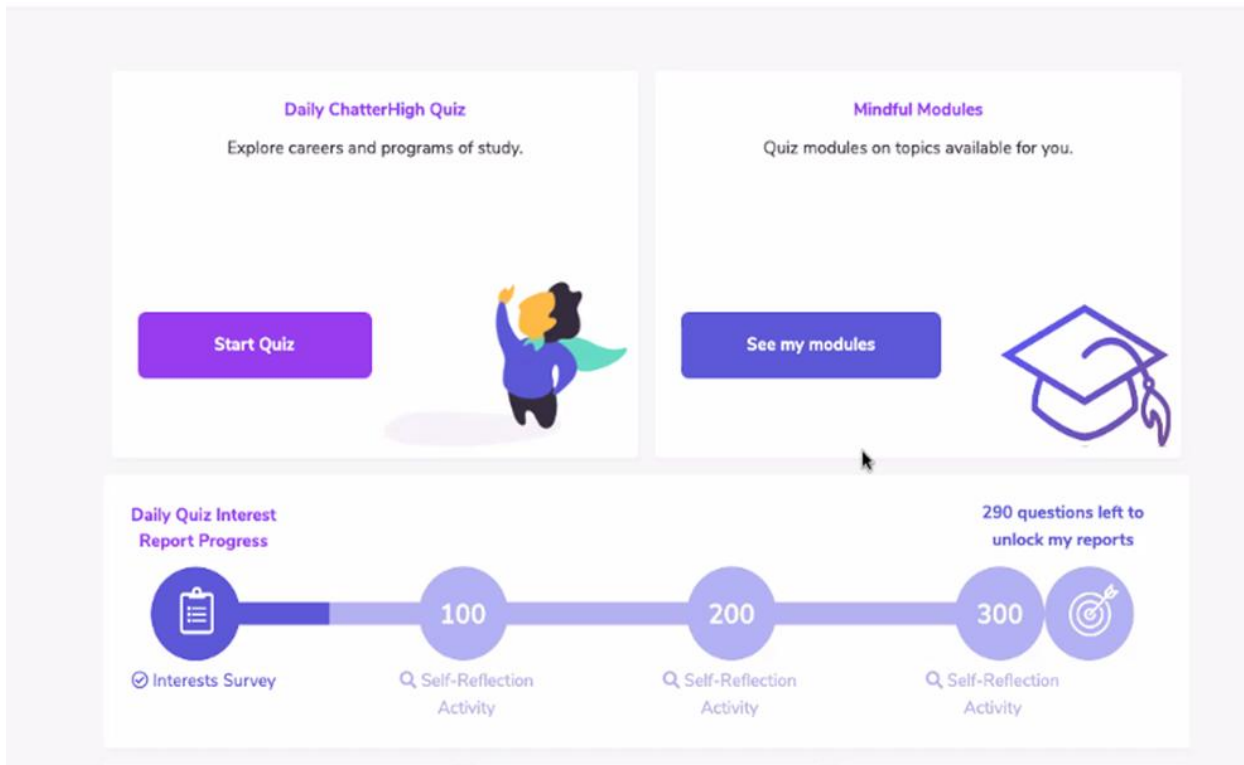


Figure 3: Snapshot of welcome page on Chatterhigh webpage.

Furthermore, the ChatterHigh team will be present at the conference and will co-present with Dr Theresa Healy at the conference on the initiative and its progress, and will also co-host a workshop on youth engagement in the era of planetary health. This partnership is also considering a publication on this important work.

For more information on the ChatterHigh platform please visit the attached hyperlink:

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

Lesson Learned

Went well:

- Daily Quiz renewal
- New module creation about planetary health

Needs improvement:

- Reinforce to the board that the Chatterhigh contract becomes a regular programming arm of PHABC
- French translation is needed
- Set up a schedule for more specific and systematic reports from ChatterHigh

IV. Members' survey – ongoing

Heather, Theresa, Lena, Richard and Astou have worked diligently to design a questionnaire for the members, in order to better serve their interests, needs and diversity.

This is a work in progress. A strong first draft is in circulation.

You will see and experience the outcome of the work in the near future. Watch for the invitation to participate.

V. Other ideas

The committee has other ideas for capacity building initiatives. These will be held and reviewed in light of the members' survey results

Thank You

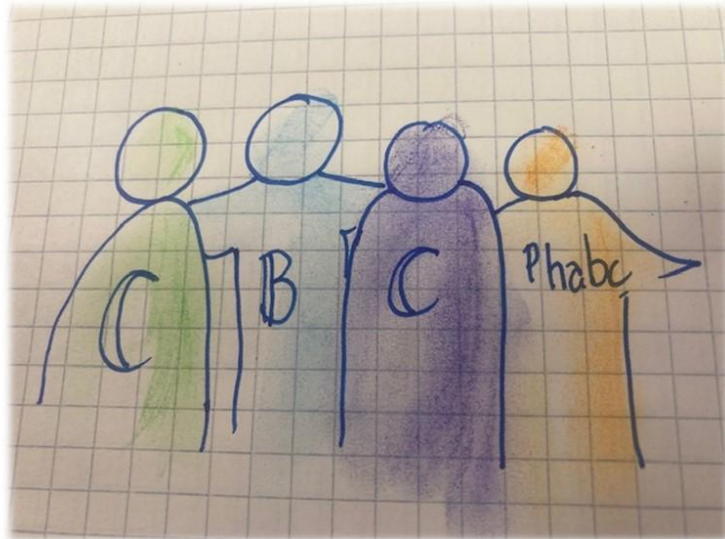


Figure 4: made by Dr Theresa Healy

Sincerely,

Dr. Theresa Healy & Astou Thiam
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.

I would like to acknowledge the expertise and commitment of the PARC committee members in promoting and advocating for healthy public policy

From Reactive to Proactive:

- Creation of 3 subcommittees:
 - Sustainability
 - Harm Reduction/Safe Supply
 - Affordable Housing
- Developed to review and approve asks in principle so larger PARC can approve with less discussion time
- Members with specific expertise and/or interests join voluntarily
- Trust subcommittee to be informed more fully on topics
- No regular schedule for meeting, convene as asks come in or priorities identified

Sustainability Subcommittee:

- Just Transitions Act submission
- John Miller did most of the background work
- Shannon developed letter
 - Letter approved to go to board for final approval
- Need to collect more information on Net Zero advisory body set up to advise government on the Just Transitions Act
- Need to collect more information on tables being set up in the different provinces

Affordable Housing Subcommittee:

- Focus beyond homelessness
- Consider looking for grant opportunities for development of a white paper
- Potential partners
 - Housing groups
 - BC non-profit housing
 - BC Disabilities
- Need to check current policy environment, gaps
 - Maybe do an environmental scan
- Next step is to develop guiding principles
 - To direct our advocacy work from a public health perspective
 - For sharing with collaborators in future
 - For creating a position statement



Harm Reduction/Safe Supply Subcommittee:

- Goal is to update 2013 position statement
- Focus on 4 pillars
 - Peer engagement
 - Safe supply
 - Upstream measures
 - Decriminalization of personal supply
- Overarching theme of de-stigmatization
- Include mental health
- Committee needs a chair to get the work on track

Other PARC Activities:

- Letter of support for Promotion of Healthy Eating mandate
 - Focus on health literacy, healthy eating, healthy eating policies, marketing regulations
- Request from Walkers Caucus to support creation of short videos showing the value of curb ramps for persons with disabilities
 - Heather is gathering information for the letter of support
 - Ted is researching bike safety
- Request for support of Rodenticide Intentions Paper
 - Ted drafted a response letter supporting the review of the Integrated Pest Management Regulation and ban of rodenticides due to environmental damage
 - Noted that in the past, PHABC has had Environmental Health Officers as active members to help us respond to such requests
 - PHABC has been asked to participate in safety conversation re: building a safer Victoria
 - Hosted a presentation on a new policy framework around social listening
 - Potential for a longer-term project with CMHA
 - Signed a letter to Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to set more ambitious emissions caps for the oil and gas sector
 - Signatory of letter to all Premiers and Prime Minister Trudeau supporting the creation of wellbeing societies and making peace with nature in alignment with WHO's focus on Our Planet, Our Health.

Sincerely,

Heather Ouellette and Zahra Mamdani
Co-Chairs
Policy Advocacy Research & Communications Committee