

## Abstract

The Core Indicators for Public Health in Ontario is a key initiative of the Association of Public Health Epidemiologists Ontario (APHEO), developed to enhance standardized reporting of information across public health units.

The APHEO Core Indicator Work Group (CIWG) partnered with Public Health Ontario (PHO) to revise 31 existing and develop 17 new Core Indicators and Core Indicator resources.

The CIWG and PHO also collaborated to produce two companion documents: *Alignment of the APHEO Core Indicators with the Ontario Public Health Standards*<sup>2</sup> (OPHS) and *Gaps in Public Health Indicators and Data in Ontario*<sup>3</sup>. The *Alignment* document summarizes the current capacity of the Core Indicators to address population health status requirements of the OPHS and the *Gaps* document identifies where these requirements cannot be addressed due to lack of indicators or data.

APHEO Core Indicator definitions are being incorporated into Public Health Ontario's (PHO) on-line central analytic tools. The *Alignment of the APHEO Core Indicators with the Ontario Public Health Standards* and *Gaps in Public Health Indicators and Data in Ontario* documents will provide a springboard for discussions on future Core Indicator development.

## Objectives

- To provide an overview of APHEO Core Indicators for Public Health in Ontario.
- To describe the collaborative processes used to revise and develop Core Indicators, Core Indicator resources and to produce the *Alignment of APHEO Core Indicators with Ontario Public Health Standards* and *Gaps in Public Health Indicators and Data in Ontario* reports.
- Summarize the results of this work.

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## Introduction

In 1998, the Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario (APHEO) created the Provincial Health Indicators Work Group (PHIWG)<sup>1</sup>. PHIWG brought together epidemiologists from across the province, along with staff from public health units, academia (e.g., Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES)), and government (e.g., Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) and Health Canada). Building on this existing foundation, in 2006, the PHIWG was renamed the Core Indicators Work Group (CIWG)<sup>1</sup>.

As participants in the APHEO Core Indicators for Public Health in Ontario, the CIWG and public health practitioners in Ontario collaborate with various partners and have collated information on over 120 population health indicators<sup>1</sup>. This work enhances standardized reporting of community health status information in public health units in Ontario.

The Core Indicators for Public Health in Ontario project is exclusively a web-based resource, developed and maintained by APHEO members on a voluntary basis, and accessed by public health practitioners in Ontario as well as by interested individuals across Canada and internationally. Core Indicators will form the basis of PHO's online "Snapshot" central analytic tool that will enhance standardized public health reporting in Ontario.

## Materials & Methods

### The APHEO CIWG collaborated with PHO to:

#### I. Revise existing/develop new Core Indicators and resources

- The CIWG identified priority areas for indicator revision and development. These included the built environment, injury and substance misuse prevention and reproductive health.
- Subgroups were assembled for each topic area and the indicator and resource development/revision process was initiated.
- In September 2011, PHO helped to advance the project by assigning a full-time epidemiologist to support the work.
- In June/July 2012, revised and newly developed indicators and resources were reviewed by APHEO members external to the process as well as targeted individuals with subject area expertise. Reviewer feedback was incorporated into the final documents.

#### II. Produce the "Alignment of the APHEO Core Indicators with the Ontario Public Health Standards" Document

- Existing APHEO Core Indicators were reviewed.
- Each OPHS program standard was represented in a table. Emergency Preparedness was not included as no Core Indicators currently exist for this standard.
- Existing Core Indicators and Core Indicators under development that fulfill program requirements were listed under the appropriate standard.

## Materials & Methods continued

### III. Produce the "Gaps in Public Health Indicators and Data in Ontario" Document

- Gaps were identified based on a comparison of the Core Indicators and the requirements outlined in the OPHS. In addition, selected MOHLTC Guidance Documents (i.e., Child Health and Reproductive Health) were used to provide more detailed descriptions and potential indicators for more 'general' assessment and surveillance requirements (e.g., growth and development, preparation for parenting)<sup>3</sup>.
- The following gaps were identified:
  - Indicator gap
    - Indicator currently under development
    - Indicator under consideration – a priority for development in the near future
    - Indicator not developed – not currently under consideration for development due to other priorities
  - Data gap – no data exists

## Results

A total of 31 existing Core Indicators and Core Indicator resources were revised and 17 new Core Indicators and Core Indicator resources have been developed. (Chart 1)

*Alignment of APHEO Core Indicators with the Ontario Public Health Standards* was finalized on June 30th, 2012. *Gaps in Public Health Indicators and Data in Ontario* was finalized on August 28th, 2012. These documents are available on both the APHEO and PHO websites.

The Gaps document identifies:

- 80 indicator gaps, primarily in the areas of chronic disease prevention; injury and substance misuse prevention; reproductive health; and child health. Of these, 22 indicators are in development or under consideration for development.
- 101 data gaps, primarily in the areas of chronic disease prevention, (specifically alcohol consumption and tobacco control); and reproductive health, (specifically preconception health, healthy pregnancies, and preparation for parenting). (Chart 2)

Chart 1. Summary of Core Indicator-related outputs, 2012 - 2013

Domain	Core Indicators		Core Indicator Resources	
	Newly Developed	Revised	Newly Developed	Revised
Built Environment	3	-	2	1
Injury and Substance Misuse Prevention	7	8	2	2
Reproductive Health	-	13	3	7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>

## Results continued

Chart 2. Summary of Identified OPHS Requirement Indicator and Data Gaps

Program Standard	Indicator Gaps		Data Gaps
	In Development or Under Consideration	Not Developed	
Chronic Disease Prevention	*	13	27
Prevention of Injury and Substance Misuse	8	2	6
Reproductive Health	12	16	45
Child Health	2	19	14
Infectious Diseases of Prevention and Control	*	1	3
Rabies Prevention and Control	*	*	*
Tuberculosis Prevention and Control	*	1	*
Sexual Health, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Blood-borne Infections (including HIV)	*	2	3
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	*	*	1
Food Safety	*	2	*
Safe Water	*	0	*
Health Hazard Prevention and Management	*	2	2
Public Health Emergency Preparedness	*	*	*
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>101</b>

\*None identified at this time

## Conclusions and Next Steps

The collaboration between APHEO and PHO has effectively advanced the work of the CIWG. Core Indicator revision and development was completed in three APHEO CIWG priority areas: the built environment, injury and substance misuse prevention and reproductive health. APHEO Core Indicators will form the foundation of definitions used in PHO's online "Snapshot" analytic tool that will enhance standardized public health reporting in Ontario. The *Alignment of the APHEO Core Indicators with the Ontario Public Health Standards* and *Gaps in Public Health Indicators and Data in Ontario* documents provide a starting point for discussion on future Core Indicator development and for raising awareness about the need for datasets to fill information gaps. *Alignment of the APHEO Core Indicators with the Ontario Public Health Standards* and *Gaps in Public Health Indicators and Data in Ontario* will be reviewed and updated regularly. The feasibility of transforming these reports into living documents to facilitate the revision process will be explored.

## References

- Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario [homepage in the Internet]. The Core Indicators for Public Health in Ontario. Toronto: Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario; 2011 [cited 2013 Feb 28]. Available from: <http://www.apheo.ca/index.php?pid=48>.
- Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario Core Indicators Work Group; Public Health Ontario. *Alignment of the APHEO Core Indicators with the Ontario Public Health Standards*. Toronto: Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario; 2012 [cited 2013 Feb 28]. Available from: <http://www.apheo.ca/resources/indicators/Core%20Indicators-Alignment%20of%20the%20APHEO%20Core%20Indicators%20with%20the%20OPHS.pdf>.
- Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario Core Indicators Work Group; Public Health Ontario. *Gaps in Public Health Indicators and Data in Ontario*. Toronto: Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario; 2012 [cited 2013 Feb 28]. Available from: <http://www.apheo.ca/resources/indicators/Core%20Indicators%20-%20Gaps%20in%20Public%20Health%20Indicators%20and%20Data%20in%20Ontario.pdf>.