

a.p.h.e.o.

n i n e t e e n n i n e t y e i g h t



annual report

To advance and promote the discipline and professional practice of epidemiology in Ontario public health units.

1998 APHEO Executive Committee

President: Julie Stratton, Perth District Health Unit

Vice-President: Brenda Guarda, Simcoe County District Health Unit

Secretary-Treasurer: Ruth Sanderson, Sudbury and District Health Unit

alPHa Representative: Mary Lou Decou, Regional Niagara Public Health Unit

OCCHA Representative: Paul Krueger, Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Public Health Department

president's report: onward ho!

submitted by: Julie Stratton

The Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario (APHEO) is an organization composed of epidemiologists, planners and analysts from health units, district health councils, health intelligence units and other health related organizations. Although the number of members remained the same in 1998, affiliates, the newest category, has almost doubled from 13 members in 1997 to 23 members in 1998.

1998 was a year of many changes in public health. The introduction of new Mandatory Core Programs and Service Guidelines, mergers and organizational changes are examples of a few of these changes. Regardless of these pulls on the field of public health, APHEO



members and affiliates continued to volunteer their time "to advance and promote the discipline of epidemiology in public health units".

APHEO and its membership accomplished these tasks through quarterly meetings with an educational component, the annual APHEO conference, promotion of epidemiology through the APHEO web site, participation in governmental committees, development of a core

set of health indicators, preparation of two resolutions and developing partnerships with other health agencies.

Some highlights of our educational sessions:

- Dr. Brent Moloughney, Acting Physician Manager of the Public Health Branch, Ontario Ministry of Health, discussed public health changes, the role of the Public Health Branch, and the direction of HELPS (Health Planning System).
- Connie Uetrect from Toronto Public Health and Barbara Davis from the University of Toronto presented the latest information about the Nutrition Monitoring System.
- In May, APHEO and the Toronto

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Public Health Research, Education and Development program (PHRED) hosted an Air Quality Indicators Seminar. Presenters included Dr. David Yap and Scott Fleming from the Ontario Ministry of Environment, and Dr. David Pengally from McMaster University. Participants learned about provincial monitoring, health significance of air toxins, current standard setting initiatives and air quality indicators of significance for public health.

- Mary-Anne Pietrusiak, Epidemiologist at the Regional Municipality of Durham Health Unit presented the work of the Provincial Health Indicators Work Group (PHIWG). As the chair, Mary-Anne and the group have established a core set of standardized indicators to be used by Health Units, District Health Councils and Health Intelligence Units in generating health status reports.

More information is available from the APHEO web site.

- Paul Gray, Project Manager at the Public Health Branch, Ontario Ministry of Health, enlightened the group about the advantages and disadvantages of Geocoding within a variety of different geographic boundaries.
- The annual APHEO conference entitled "Qualitative Research in Public Health: Looking Beyond the Numbers" was quite a success and attracted a diverse set of presenters and attenders to the one and a half day conference.

Two resolutions;

- "Reinstating Physician Notice of Birth or Still Birth (PNOB) Forms to the Board of Health" and,

- "Improving Provincial Birth Data" were prepared by APHEO member Mary-Anne Pietrusiak from the Regional Municipality of Durham Health Unit.



Both resolutions were presented to the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) and have been passed at their June 1998 Conference. These papers can be accessed from the APHEO web site.

With committed members, affiliates and an executive committee such as we had in 1998, we are guaranteed on having an even better year in 1999. In addition to our commitment to epidemiology, APHEO will continue to be a vital link for public health epidemiologists, planners and analysts working in the public health field.



OCCHA report

submitted by: Paul Krueger

During the beginning of 1998, OCCHA was dedicated to revising accreditation survey documentation and accreditation principles and standards. The OCCHA

position was vacant during the late half of the year; however, we look forward to future OCCHA reports from our new representative in 1999.

financial report

submitted by: Ruth Sanderson

January 1, 1998 to December 31, 1998

Income

Balance Forward from 1997	4,612.32
97 Conference	1,020.00
98 Conference	8,525.00
98 Membership	1,965.00
Front Page Training	666.70
ALPHA Reimbursement	1,604.89

Total Income '98 \$ 18,393.91

Expenses

97 Conference	631.34
98 Conference	9,842.93
ALPHA Meetings	996.41
Annual Report	236.25
Gifts	88.50
Mileage	128.00
Photocopy	330.03
Refreshments	250.26
Software	147.20

Total Expenses '98 \$ 12,650.92

Overall Total \$ 5,742.99

APHEO committees in 1998

submitted by: Brenda Guarda

Members of APHEO participated on the following committees during 1998:

Effective Public Health Practice Project

- An initiative of Public Health Research and Development Program (PHRED) Funded by the Ministry of Health, this group was tasked to complete five new systematic reviews as well as to identify 10 up-to-date completed reviews regarding the effectiveness of key components of the Mandatory Programs and Services Guidelines. APHEO is represented by Dean Middleton, York Region Health Services Department.

OPHA/alPHA Health Summit

- Julie Stratton from the Perth District Health Unit is our representative. The summit was designed to identify strategic priorities shared by public and community health associations. Two priorities were selected as the focus: Build and maintain a unified voice for public health, and, Focus on short-term costs vs. long-term effectiveness and benefits of public health

Program Management Office's Stakeholder Forum on Smart Systems for Health

- Mary-Anne Pietrusiak of the Regional Municipality of Durham Health Unit worked together with alPHA representatives to provide a public health perspective as the Program

Management Office of the Ministry of Health developed their business plan.

Provincial Health Status Report Advisory Committee

- Chaired by Dr. Ian Johnson of the University of Toronto and PHRED, the Provincial Health Status Report Advisory Committee was formed to provide advice and direction in defining the scope of the Provincial Health Status Report, four Ontario Health Survey reports and a Francophone Health Status Report. The following APHEO members are on the committee:

Mary-Anne Pietrusiak, Regional Municipality of Durham Health Unit, **Julie Stratton**, Perth District Health Unit, **Patrick Seliske**, Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Community Health Dept. **Hyewon Lee-Han**, Public Health Branch, Ministry of Health, **Alanna Leffley**, affiliate, Middlesex-London Health Unit.

Provincial Health Indicators Work Group

- At the initiative of APHEO, the Provincial Health Indicators Work Group was formed to systematically define and operationalize a core set of health indicators that will be adopted to ensure consistency and



comparability

across the province. Members of the Work Group include representatives from Health Intelligence Units, PHREDS, Institute for Clinical Evaluative Studies (ICES), and the Public Health Branch and the Information Planning and Evaluation Branch of the Ministry of Health. The framework and the list of indicators recommended by this group will be adopted by the Provincial Health Status Advisory Committee and used in the upcoming Provincial Health Status Report. The following APHEO members are on this committee:

Mary-Anne Pietrusiak, Chair, Regional Municipality of Durham Health Unit, **Terry Delmore**, Halton Region Health Unit, **Hyewon Lee-Han**, Public Health Branch, Ministry of Health, **Jo-Anne Peterson**, Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Health Unit, **Ruth Sanderson**, Sudbury and District Health Unit, **Patrick Seliske**, Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Community Health Dept. **Julie Stratton**, Perth District Health Unit.

1998 membership report

submitted by: Ruth Sanderson

Overall, 1998 was a year of flux. A number of new individuals joined APHEO, some members relocated, and some long-standing members left public health epidemiology. At the end of 1998, APHEO consisted of 26 members and 23 affiliates. Membership levels this year were similar to last year (1997-27 members) but we registered

a remarkable increase in the number of affiliates over last year (1997-13 affiliates). The affiliate category was first introduced in 1997 to accommodate individuals with an interest in public health epidemiology that do not currently meet the criteria for membership.

This past year marked a new beginning in communicating with our members electronically. To a large extent, email has replaced paper mail-outs and the APHEO web-page provides a reference for contacting members and affiliates.

alpha report

submitted by: Mary Lou Decou



1998 proved to be a year of many changes for alPHA, and, as APHEO's representative on the Board of Directors, I was involved with the changes that the year brought. I participated on the Operations and Administration Standing Committee, Distinguished Service Award Selection Committee, Benchmarking Staff Development Subcommittee, and Strategic Planning Session. In the fall, with the Board decision that one representative from the Affiliate Section should be involved as a participant

observer on alPHA's Executive Committee, I was selected to fulfill that role. Some of the key activities of alPHA over the past year included:

- Benchmarking, in partnership with OCCCHA and the PHRED program;
- Lobbying activities to advance public health issues, in particular, enforcement of the Health Protection and Promotion Act and the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines;
- Revenue generating activities, including those with GAN insurance;
- Annual general meeting at which

two resolutions from APHEO were approved;

- Year 2000 Project for which alPHA is receiving Ministry of Health funding; and,
- Public Health Summit in which APHEO president is a participant.

APHEO conference 1998

submitted by: Mary Lou Decou, Chair, APHEO Conference 1998

qualitative research in public health: Looking beyond the numbers

The theme of the 1998 APHEO Conference was key practical aspects of qualitative research. In order to meet the goals, the 1.5 day conference was organized to build from theory basics to application. We were very fortunate to have presenters from the academic, private, and public health settings. Together, they provided a complete picture on qualitative research and resources for future reference.

Topics addressed included:

- An introduction to qualitative methodology;
- The connection between qualitative with quantitative research;
- Sampling issues;
- Steps in analysis;
- Qualitative software advantages, disadvantages, and how to use them as tools; and,
- Six presentations on practical applications of qualitative research.

Sixty-seven individuals from Public Health Units, universities, Health

Intelligence Units (HIUs), the private sector, and the Ministry of Health attended the Conference. The overall feedback was positive as to the location, content, and the mix of speakers. An added experience which will not soon be forgotten by speakers or participants alike was the "pleasure" of "background whistling" by the "in-house-bird" who often seemed to be in competition for the attention of all involved!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped to organize the Conference, in particular Julie Stratton (Perth District Health Unit) who co-chaired the event and Adam Stevens (Brant County Health Unit) who undertook the responsibility of evaluation activities.

I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the Ministry of Health and all 5 HIUs, without whose financial support it would have been very difficult to provide a conference of this quality.

APHEO'S web site:

submitted by: Brenda Guarda

As Vice-President of APHEO in 1998, I had the opportunity (and challenge!) of updating and maintaining APHEO's two-year old web site. As with any new job, I had a steep learning curve to climb but as I got going and became more familiar with the software, I enjoyed every minute of it!

Our site has expanded and provides updates for members and affiliates but also gives the general public and others within public health a chance to see what epidemiologists really do. New to the site is information about our general meetings, such as dates, location and educational inservice topics. Our 1997 annual report can be viewed and the 1998 report will be added shortly. Information about APHEO's annual conference, held in November, is available and updates will be included as planning progresses.

For epidemiologists who are looking for employment in a public health department, job vacancies are also posted. Highlights of APHEO's work in public health, such as committee involvement and resolutions approved by alPHA are there as well. Take a look for yourself and let us know what you think! Our address is www.cehip.org/apheo.