

a.p.h.e.o.



annual report

1999

TO ADVANCE AND PROMOTE THE DISCIPLINE AND
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF EPIDEMIOLOGY IN
ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH UNITS

1999 APHEO Executive Committee

President: **Brenda Guarda**, Simcoe County District Health Unit

Vice President: **Brian Laundry**, Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
and Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Health Unit

Secretary-Treasurer: **Sherri Ennis**, Toronto Public Health and Central East Health Information Partnership

alPHA Representative: **Mary Lou Decou**, Regional Niagara Public Health Department

OCCHA Representative: **Ruth Sanderson**, Sudbury and District Health Unit

President's Report: Reflections On Our First Decade

Submitted by: Brenda Guarda

The Association of Public Health Epidemiologists was born on March 7, 1991. Fourteen lonely epidemiologists met, but what the group's role should be and even what their official name would become were all decisions to be made.

All the group knew was that they had a lot of work ahead of them – strengthening the role and profile of epidemiologists in health units, accessing local level data and helping to improve the quality of the data that we use every day.

How we have grown from those uncertain beginnings!

What started out as a public health unit epidemiologist association has become a network of the "regulars" as well as representatives from District Health Councils (DHC's), Health Intelligence Units (HIU's), Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Health Canada. Our focus has shifted from strictly local issues to including provincial and national topics.

Education is more important to the group. We have adopted the practice of devoting half of our regular meeting days to epidemiology-related presentations.

Our voice has become louder and more vociferous! We have a strong voice in the public health field and our dedicated members often volunteer as APHEO's representatives on various workgroups and committees. Two outstanding examples are the Provincial Health Indicators Work Group and the Provincial Health Status Report Advisory Committee.

Public health epidemiologists in Ontario have long felt the need for a consistent set of definitions for health indicators. As a result, APHEO brought together epidemiologists from across the province, together with staff from HIU's, the Public Health Research, Education and Development (PHRED) Program and two branches of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to develop the *Core*

Population Health Indicators for Ontario. APHEO hopes that others will adopt the indicators, apply the methods and use the data sources as described in the report for the sake of provincial consistency.

When the PHREDs took on the responsibility for developing the Report on the Health Status of the Residents of Ontario, APHEO supported this initiative and participated in the production team and the advisory committee.

The authors of both of these reports worked collaboratively to ensure the Provincial Health Status Report could provide important reference values for all local health units.

Thank you to all involved in the development of these reports and congratulations to all APHEO members and affiliates for your hard work. We have an exciting future ahead of us in the new millennium!

OCCHA's Mandate

OCCHA is an independent agency directed by a Board whose members are appointed by professional associations involved in community health. OCCHA exists to promote excellence in community health programs and services by: OCCHA's accreditation process is confidential, voluntary, peer generated and peer reviewed.

Key Areas of Activity in 1999

OCCHA continues to be a partner, along with PHRED and alPha in the Ontario Benchmarking Project.

Indirectly APHEO is represented as Ruth Sanderson sites on this Steering Committee as one of the two OCCHA representatives. The partnership's mission is to improve public health practice by promoting and supporting the development and coordination of benchmarking in Ontario public health units. Information on the pilots, new benchmarking projects and warehousing of information is provided to health units through the "Benchmark" newsletter.

The first meeting of the Mandatory Programs Measurement Working Group, which OCCHA is a member, was held November 3. Its purpose is to develop comprehensive measures which will demonstrate board of health effectiveness in implementing public health standards (i.e., Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines). The Measurement Working Group will develop and evaluate measurement methodology to support achievement of the goals of public health standards.

Ruth Sanderson also participated on the Principles and Standards Committee, a standing committee of OCCHA. This committee reviews and revises the accreditation standards.

OCCHA is investigating the development of a web site to house the results of the benchmarking initiative. It is anticipated that the site will be running by the summer of 2000. Surveyor training is scheduled to occur in the spring of 2000. If anyone is interested in this training, please contact the OCCHA office 905.639.6367 or e-mail occha@interlynx.net.

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APHEO Committees in 1999

Submitted by: Brenda Guarda

Members of APHEO participated on the following committees in 1999:

- **Mandatory Programs Measurement Working Group**

The group's purpose is to develop comprehensive measures which will demonstrate board of health effectiveness in implementing the program standards of the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines. The working group is in the process of developing and evaluating measurement methodology. APHEO is represented by Mary Lou Decou, Regional Niagara Public Health Department.

- **Mandatory Programs Technical Review Committees**

The first Mandatory Programs Technical Working Groups were formed in late 1997 to develop indicators to monitor the implementation of required programs and services for routine reporting from public health units. In 1999, five Technical Review Committees were created to develop revisions for provincial consultation by June, 2000. APHEO participants include:

Terry Delmore, Halton Regional Health Department, Injury Prevention including Substance Abuse Prevention Group.

Brenda Coleman, Elgin-St. Thomas Health Unit, Reproductive Health Group

Adam Stevens, Brant County Health Unit, Early Detection of Cancer Group

- **Dental Index Survey (DIS) Protocol Working Group**

Ruth Sanderson from the Sudbury and District Health Unit is our representative. The working group first met in February, 1999 with the intention of revising the DIS protocol. The objective of the group is to review the goals of the survey and make recommendations for revision to the Mandatory Guideline Committee.

- **Effective Public Health Practice Project**

The project was established in September 1998 with the mandate to produce summary statements on 15 Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines requirements based on a minimum of 5 new reviews conducted by the project and 10 existing reviews. Peter Choremiotis, Epidemiologist with the Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Health Unit served on the project for a few months. Mary Lou Decou, Regional Niagara Public Health Department is our current representative.

- **Provincial Health Status Report Advisory Committee**

Chaired by Dr. Ian Johnson of the University of Toronto, this committee was formed to provide advice and direction during the production of the recently released *Report on the Health Status of the Residents of Ontario*. The following APHEO members are on the committee:

Mary-Anne Pietrusiak, Durham Regional Health Unit,
Julie Stratton, Perth District Health Unit,
Patrick Seliske, Waterloo Regional Community Health Department,
Alanna Leffley, Middlesex-London Health Unit
Hyewon Lee-Han, Peel Regional Health Department

- **Provincial Health Indicators Work Group (PHIWG)**

At the initiative of APHEO, the Work Group was formed to define and operationalize a core set of health indicators that will be adopted to ensure consistency and comparability across the province. In November 1999, a draft report entitled *Core Population Health Indicators for Ontario* was released. The methods recommended by the Work Group were incorporated in the *Report on the Health Status of the Residents of Ontario*. In this way, the provincial report can provide reference values for health units who wish to calculate the same indicators for their own geographic area. All core population health indicators can be found on our web site at www.cehip.org/apheo under the Indicators section. Congratulations to all PHIWG members for your hard work!

1999 Membership Report

Submitted by: Sherri Ennis

For APHEO Members and Affiliates, 1999 was a year of many changes. During the year, 27 members and 28 affiliates registered with APHEO. Throughout the course of the year many members and affiliates changed jobs often changing status from member to affiliate and vice versa. At the end of 1999, total membership was at 57, including some early registrations for 2000. This represents the largest membership APHEO has ever seen. This record membership is predominantly as a result of the rapidly increasing numbers of affiliate members. Since the introduction of this category in 1997 when 13 affiliates joined APHEO, affiliate membership has more than doubled reaching 32 by the end of 1999.

The continued use of electronic mail as our primary mode of communication has made staying in touch with APHEO's growing membership easier than ever.

APHEO's Promotional Display

Submitted by: Brenda Guarda

A display has been created to promote APHEO and explain who and what we are. It includes information on our Executive Committee, committee involvement and important epidemiology issues. The display has been used at our 1999 APHEO Annual Conference and the OPHA Conference. It is available to any-one who would like to use it. Contact Brian Laundry or any of the other Executive Committee members if you are interested.

1999 continued as a year of change for alPHA. As APHEO’s representative on the Board of Director’s, I continued to be involved with these changes. I participated on the Executive Committee, Operations and Administration Standing Committee, Distinguished Service Award Selection Committee, and Strategic Planning.

Some of the key activities of alPHA over the past year included:

- APHEO chairing a meeting to bring together representatives from alPHA, Statistics Canada, Ministry of Health and Health Intelligence Units to discuss improving quality birth data
- Presentation of the only distinguished service award to John McGurran, one of APHEO’s charter members at alPHA’s annual general meeting
- Ongoing activities in the Benchmarking Partnership, including the publication of the Benchmark
- Lobbying activities to advance public health issues including regular meetings with the Deputy Minister of Health and Chief Medical Officer of Health
- Participant on the Mandatory Programs Review Committee
- Y2K readiness initiative for the Ministry of Health
- The striking of working groups to begin reviewing alPHA’s constitution and strategic plan

<p>1999 Annual Conference</p>	<p>Submitted by: Adam Stevens</p>	<p>APHEO’s Web Site</p>	<p>Submitted by: Brenda Guarda</p>
<p>The Broader Determinants of Public Health: What We Need to Know Now</p> <p>The goal of the 1999 APHEO Conference was to better understand the impacts of the broader determinants of health, while learning how to apply this knowledge to our day to day work in Public Health. Nearly all of the participants were mostly or very satisfied with the 1.5 day conference held in Hamilton at the Royal Connaught Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel November 18th and 19th. Speakers were passionate during their presentations and topics ranged from the necessity to improve the social determinants through policy development to questioning the nature of the causal relationship implied by the use of “determinant” as a label.</p> <p>Other presentations dealt specifically with topics such as the physical environment, aboriginal health, measurement of low birth weight, shiftwork and health, calculating the attributable burden of physical inactivity, and health among Canadian children. New this year was the sitting for a panel discussion, which was utilized to allow participants to have more input and time for discussion and with all of the first day presenters. Less dueling than expected among presenters but well received, this format (or something like it) will likely be utilized again in future conferences.</p> <p>Thanks are deserved to our sponsors CWHPIN, NHIP, and SRHIP, as well as the entire conference planning committee. Special thanks are also deserved for Sherri Ennis who assisted me throughout with invaluable tidbits of information and Philippa Holowaty for chairing the event – although they seem to think that I have a problem delegating. Also, I’m sure we will never forget my attempt to grab cheap laughs because Philippa took the wrong turn on the freeway and I was left to introduce our key speaker without any biographical information. I still beg to differ with Terry Sullivan when he stated: “At least we know epidemiologists will not be taking over the world anytime soon!”</p>		<p>Our web site is now three years old. A lot of work goes into the maintenance of the site. Special thanks to Sherri Ennis, Analyst with the Central East Health Information Partnership (CEHIP) for her assistance and support and to CEHIP for hosting our site.</p> <p>Take a look at our web site to get up-to-date information on our 1999 Annual Conference, our meeting dates and last year’s annual report.</p> <p>Also included is the list of all members and affiliates and their email addresses. If you’re interested in joining our group, the web site will tell you how!</p> <p>If you have any suggestions for improving the site, contact our webmaster, Brian Laundry Epidemiologist with the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit and the Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Health Unit.</p>	