

APHEO ANNUAL REPORT 2009

ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH EPIDEMIOLOGISTS IN ONTARIO



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

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT Submitted by Joanna Oliver

2009, what a year! It was somewhat reminiscent of 2003 - the year of SARS - for public health and public health epidemiologists. Only this time, the entire world was affected with this new, much anticipated and planned-for pandemic. I have the pleasure of providing you with some of my reflections on 2009, my second year as the president of APHEO.

The year 2009 began with the goal of delivering a chronic disease risk factor inventory matrix prototype to PHAC and seeing to completion PHAC-sponsored project on "Core Indicators for Chronic Disease and Risk Factor Surveillance", with built environment as a component. Both projects were concluded on target date and the Epidata Project continued in its third year of funding under the new leadership of Anne Arthur. Building on the strategic planning that took place in 2008, the five strategic planning work groups began to work on their respective goals.

**H1N1 –
a new public health emergency:
all hands on deck**

What no one anticipated was that 2009 was going to be a very busy year for public health and public health epidemiologists with a new public health emergency. In April, six years after SARS, a new respiratory disease - first reported in Mexico - appeared on our horizon marking the beginning of heightened surveillance and leading to public health response. This disease was soon identified as a novel H1N1 Influenza A with the first Ontario wave starting in the second half of April and necessitating the implementation of provincial and local pandemic plans. The entire world was watching and counting cases under the uncertainty of the potential severity and impact of this disease. Public health focused its efforts on H1N1 and APHEO continued with essential business only. The little bit of a break at the end of summer allowed for our general meeting to occur in September, but the second wave got in the way of our final meeting of the year, scheduled for

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT *(continued from front pg)*

November. This also resulted in a delay in the formation and announcement of the 2010 Executive requiring the 2009 Executive to continue until the end of February 2010.

In May, APHEO held its first joint APHEO-CSEB Conference which was hosted at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier in Ottawa. A lot of work and planning went into this conference with the additional challenge of making this event relevant to both associations. Monica Bienefelt was the co-chair of the planning committee representing APHEO. The theme was "Expanding horizons of epidemiology: from research into practice". At the conference awards ceremony, I had the pleasure of presenting Mary-Anne Pietrusiak with the APHEO Award of Excellence in recognition of her 11 year long commitment to the development of core indicators. Mary-Anne's vision, passion, and dedication to the Core Indicators project has significantly shaped and ultimately advanced public health epidemiology in Ontario. Mary-Anne was a founding member and chair of the Work Group (PHIWG) and while the group has transformed many times since it was first established, Mary-Anne consistently led the group in achieving significant milestones over the past 11 years. Another personal highlight for me, was meeting Dr. John Last.

At this conference, APHEO announced its new Student Award – the Elaine Hector Student Award. Elaine was an epidemiologist at the County of Lambton from 2002 and represented APHEO on the PHAC's Skills Enhancement and Core Competencies working groups. Elaine passed away in the spring of 2009 from breast cancer. This award is a tribute to Elaine's involvement in APHEO, her love of life, as well as life-long learning and her skillful ability to transfer knowledge.

In the fall of 2009, the Ontario Public Health Association celebrated its 60th anniversary and held a conference along with its constituent society members. Due to pH1N1, APHEO's involvement was somewhat limited but a number of our members were able to attend. I had the pleasure of attending the Presidents' reception on behalf of APHEO.

The year 2009 proved to be a year of multitasking for APHEO – meeting the needs and demands of the various projects while maintaining professional responsibility to respond to the public health emergency of pH1N1.

Speaking personally, as I reflect on 2009 - my second year as APHEO's President - I feel compelled once again to relay to you my thanks and appreciation for the dedication and hard work of each

of the 2009 Executive Members (Jason, Sherri, Dar, Popy, Anne-Marie, Alanna and Wayne). And, I would like to express my gratitude to the Halton Region Health Department for giving me the continued support to

carry on in my role for a second year. I continue to be impressed by the tremendous dedication and hard work of each of the work group chairs, project managers, work group members, the conference and workshop planning committees. You will get a chance to see some of their accomplishments later in this report.

Our association is an excellent example of how one's love and passion for a chosen field of work translates into the desire to better the profession, increase the body of knowledge and positively influence practice. APHEO members truly exemplify the association's mission and vision.

In short, 2009 was a year during which APHEO truly performed under pressure.

2009 proved to be
a year of multitasking
for APHEO

APHEO MEMBERSHIP REPORT Submitted by: Dar Malaviarachchi



In 2009, APHEO transitioned from paper based application process to an on-line application and payment system for new and returning members. In 2009, APHEO had 179 members. Of these, 76 were full members and 103 were affiliate members. The number of members was similar to the previous year's count of 183 members (77 full members and 106 affiliate members).

alpha REPORT Submitted by: Anne Marie Holt



alpha is a non-profit organization that advocates for public health policies, programs and services on behalf of health units in Ontario. alpha advocates members' interests and concerns before governments and other health-related organizations and consults and advises the Province on public health policies and programs.

This past year has been one marked by the emergence of pH1N1 Influenza A. Much of the work of alpha and its members for the better part of 2009 was in response to the pandemic. However, alpha also finalized a new strategic plan for 2009-2011, hosted a very successful conference in Timmins in June, and a 2 day symposia on "Equity from the Start". At the symposium, a representative of the Honorable Roy Romanow, Dr. John Miller and Dr. Charles Pascal provided a very provocative agenda on inequities in health.

For an update on actions alpha has taken in support of Resolutions passed in 2009 follow the link to view our online tracking chart. http://www.alphaweb.org/docs/lib_012452838.pdf



The Ontario Council
on Community
Health Accreditation



OCCHA REPORT Submitted by: Wayne Tucker

The Ontario Council on Community Health Accreditation (OCCHA) mission is to promote accountability and excellence in public health programs and services. OCCHA continues to work with the MOHLTC to strengthen support for public health renewal. An important strategic goal for OCCHA is to enhance customer service and promote the accreditation process.

The revised accreditation process "Advancing Quality in Public Health" was implemented in January 2009 using the new public health standards. A number of Health Units have received accreditation under the new process. A number of tools have been developed to support the new accreditation process such as an OCCHA annual agency questionnaire, on-line quality surveys for

board, staff and community partners and annual review reporting tools. OCCHA is planning a formal evaluation of the new accreditation process upon completion of the surveys in 2010.

OCCHA has a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Group and Quality Framework for public health units. This group provides OCCHA with feedback on CQI activities. Membership

An important strategic goal for OCCHA is to enhance customer service and promote the accreditation process

on this advisory group is open to all public health units. If anyone is interested in being a member of the group or want additional information on CQI they can visit the OCCHA website at www.occha.org or contact Bev Russ at bevruess@occha.org. The CQI framework for public health units has been updated and is now part of the revised accreditation process. To support the CQI framework, OCCHA has developed draft indicators and quality attributes for the revised accreditation standards.

The surveyor training workshop that was initially scheduled for the Fall 2009 had to be cancelled due to pH1N1. This workshop was rescheduled for March 2010.

I have enjoyed my term in this position as OPHA representative for APHEO. It was an interesting year with many opportunities for APHEO to provide additional input (through OPHA) on the changes to Public Health in Ontario.

The OPHA Board requires that constituent society representatives also sit on a Board subcommittee. APHEO is represented on the Advocacy Committee. This involves assisting with the development of resolutions, writing of position papers and input into various advocacy initiatives. OPHA's Advocacy Approach 2008/09 will strengthen and focus advocacy efforts in the following areas:

- Public Health System Advocacy – implementation of the Capacity Review Committee recommendations, increased investment in public health human resources, stable predictable funding.
- Issue Specific Advocacy – health inequity and social determinants; healthy school food policy; toxic use reduction strategy.

In 2009, OPHA's conference "Celebrating our past, Building our Future" (November 1-4, 2009, Toronto) celebrated the 60th Anniversary of OPHA. This conference brought all public health disciplines together. Despite pandemic H1N1 many APHEO members attended, though the APHEO general meeting planned on the final day of this conference had to be cancelled.

COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Performance Management Working Group

Established: December 2007

APHEO Members: Julie Stratton (Peel Public Health) 2007-2009; Shelley Stalker (York Public Health) 2009 - present

Mandate: To provide advice to the government on performance management and accountability issues in the public health system through the development of components of a performance management framework as recommended by the Capacity Review Committee (2006).

2009 Accomplishments

- Data forum held with select APHEO members to resolve data issues related to indicators in the Initial Report on Public Health and to discuss ongoing engagement with APHEO.
- Publication of the Initial Report on Public Health
- Continued work regarding performance management framework on measurement, governance and organizational standards and accountability agreements.

EpiData Project – Evaluation and Redevelopment

Expert Panel Members: Anne Arthur (Chair), Mary Lou Decou, Jason Garay, Brenda Guarda, Lee Sieswerda, Adam Stevens

The purpose of the EpiData project expert panel is to evaluate the use and expansion of EpiData for the practice of public health epidemiology. The project was set to conclude at the end of 2009, but APHEO was invited to submit a proposal for continued funding.

2009 Accomplishments

- Poster presentation at the joint APHEO/CSEB conference in May 2009. Available on the APHEO website.

- Creation and dissemination of an EpiData promotional brochure. Available on the APHEO website.
- The Expert Panel continues to test new EpiData functionality. Testing has been expanded to include testing on both PC and Mac platforms.
- User documentation has been created: the EpiData field guide and the date/time paper.
- Survey of APHEO members in August to gather feedback on the use of EpiData. Results were used to inform the Project's 2010/2011 workplan.

APHEO Core Indicators Working Group

Established: February 1998

APHEO Members: Various APHEO members and members from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Health Promotion, the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES), Statistics Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and public health units.

Chair: Shanna Hoetmer (January-October 2009), York Region; Acting Chair - Brenda Guarda, Simcoe Muskoka

Purpose: To systematically define and operationalize a core set of health status indicators using, as a framework, an elaboration of the Ontario Public Health Standards. To promote the use of the indicators and encourage public health units and others to adopt the indicators as defined and generate them for their areas.

- Sub-Groups: Cancer, Smoking and Sun Safety (Lead: Brenda Guarda); Healthy Eating and Active Living (Lead: Shanna Hoetmer); Infectious Disease (Lead: Sherri Deamond); Reproductive Health (Lead: Mary-Anne Pietrusiak); Leading Causes (Lead: JoAnne Heale); The Built Environment (Lead: Ahalya Mahendra, Acting Lead: Popy Dimoulas-Graham).

COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT *continued*

Two new groups were formed in 2009: Social Determinants of Health (Lead: Nancy Ramuscak) and Injury and Substance Misuse (Lead: Suzanne Sinclair)

2009 Accomplishments

- APHEO's one-year funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) for the development of chronic disease and risk factor indicators and related resources (Core Indicators for Chronic Disease and Risk Factor Surveillance Project) came to an end in July 2009. As part of this grant, 25 chronic disease and risk factor-related indicators were revised and 3 new indicators were created. A new paper on direct and indirect standardization was completed and posted on the APHEO website, along with accompanying sample calculations. Syntax files were completed to accompany four indicators: Adult BMI, Adolescent BMI, Food Insecurity and Low Risk Drinking. Additional deliverables included the development of a Strategic Directions report and the French translation of all project indicators and resources.
- Presentations on the Core Indicators were provided at the APHEO/CSEB Conference in May (oral); the National Surveillance Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse in May (oral); and the Symposium of The Canadian Alliance for Regional Risk Factor Surveillance in February (oral).
- Mary-Anne Pietrusiak, Durham Region, stepped down as the Chair of the Core Indicators, after more than 10 years. Thank you to Mary-Anne for all of her hard work! Mary-Anne continues as a member of the Core Indicators Working Group.
- As recommended in the Core Indicator's 2008 Strategic Directions document, representatives from APHEO, including the Core Indicators Chair, began the development of a position paper that would be sent to the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion. The paper would advocate for a more formal relationship with OAHPP, including a partnership to further develop and maintain the Core Indicators Project.
- Work commenced on the development of a 3-year operational plan.

APHEO Chronic Disease Risk Factor Inventory Matrix Workgroup

Members: Joanna Oliver (Chair) - Halton Region Health Department; Crystal Palleschi - County of Lambton Community Health Services Department; Renate van Dorp - Perth District Health Unit; Nancy Ramuscak - Peel Region Health Unit; Anne Marie Holt - HKPR District Health Unit; Amira Ali - Ottawa Public Health; Mary Lou Decou - APHEO; Kim Bergeron (Project Coordinator)

Time period: June 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009

Purpose of Matrix Working Group: To provide a consultative service to Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) Chronic Disease Risk Factor Inventory Project to identify the key elements of the Chronic Disease Risk Factor Inventory Matrix structure and develop a prototype. Deliverables included 1) Identification of the key elements and structure of the inventory matrix, 2) development of a matrix prototype, and 3) final report and user guide.

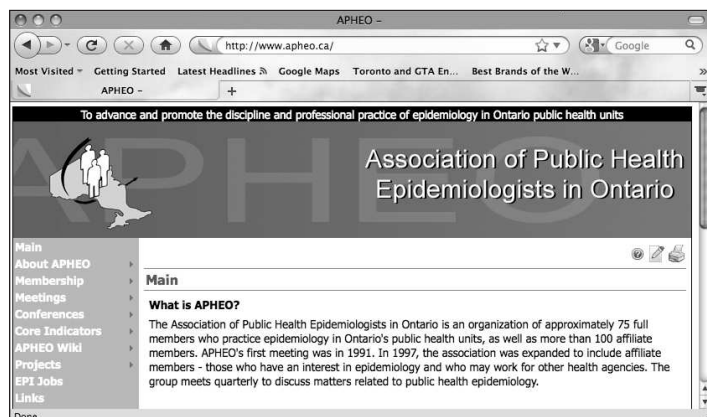
Phase 2: August 18, 2008 to March 31, 2009

1. Members of the APHEO Executive and the APHEO Risk Factor Inventory Work Group (APHEO RFI MWG) had met with the Risk Factor Inventory Matrix pilot group to pilot test the proposed matrix. The purpose of these meetings was to:
 - a. Gain insights into the process used
 - b. Understand the findings of the pilot test
 - c. Discuss any issues, problems and brainstorm solutions
 - d. Derive an action plan for next steps for the APHEO RFI WG
2. Changes were made to the proposed matrix, developed in Phase 1, based on the pilot test and were documented in a draft report.
3. RFIMWG wrote, reviewed and shared a draft of the report with PHAC in advance of the November 6-7th conference. RFIMWG presented at the conference and obtained feedback.
4. RFIMWG refined the structure of the matrix, based on the findings of the conference, and shared a draft of the report with PHAC.
5. RFIMWG submitted the final report on the key elements of the Risk Factor Inventory Matrix structure, along with a user guide and matrix prototype, to PHAC on March 13, 2009.

The project ended in March 2009 with the delivery to PHAC of the final report on the key elements of the Risk Factor Inventory Matrix structure, a user guide and a prototype of this matrix. A presentation was made to APHEO and PHAC as well as at the CSEB-APHEO 2009 Conference.

APHEO WEBSITE REPORT

Submitted by: Lee Sieswerda



Following up on the successful upgrade of the APHEO website to a data-driven, user-editable site in 2008, in 2009 we added an online membership payment system. In the past, both current and prospective members had to complete a hard-copy membership application form and then snail-mail it with a paper cheque to the APHEO Treasurer. With the new online payment system, only new members need to fill out the application form, then they have the option of paying online with a credit card or sending in a paper cheque. Existing members, rather than filling out an application form again, simply log into their account, verify that the information on file is correct, and then pay their fees, either online with a credit card or by sending in a paper cheque.

Feedback from members about the new payment system has been generally positive. A few people have needed to be coached through the new process, and there were a few software glitches that had to be fixed, but most people seem to appreciate the convenience of the new system.

APHEO 2009 FINANCIAL REPORT

Submitted by: Dar Malaviarachchi

INCOME

Joint CSEB Conference 2009	5,140.00
2009 PHAC Contracts	
Epidata Project	10,000.00
Chronic Disease Risk Factor Inventory Matrix	17,375.00
Core Indicators Project	9,884.75
Interest Income	191.16
Overpayments/Refunds	163.80
Membership 2009 (Paid in 2009)	5902.23
TOTAL INCOME:	48,656.94

EXPENSES

Annual Report	435.27
Joint CSEB Conference 2009 planning and float	5,528.87
Gifts (speakers, past exec., etc.)	100.00
General meetings expenses	124.09
APHEO rep attending constituent society meetings	493.76
Promotional Items	2140.54
2009 OPHA Membership	1,000.00
Website Upkeep (BrickHost)	1,732.50
Miscellaneous	769.53
Insurance	1,970.43
Special Projects	
Core Indicators Project	9,884.75
Strategic Action Plan Expenses	398.63
Chronic Disease Risk Factor Inventory Matrix	4,740.00
TOTAL EXPENSES:	29,318.37
Total Income – Expenses (2009)	19,338.57
Balance forward from 2008	
Chequing	50,390.26
Investments (GICs)	2,407.12
Total Balance Forward 2008	52,797.38
Year end balance 2009	72,135.95
Year end balance in chequing	69,728.83
Year end balance in GIC	2,407.12