

# APHEO ANNUAL REPORT 2010

ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH EPIDEMIOLOGISTS IN ONTARIO



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

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

### PRESIDENT

Anne Marie Holt  
HKPR District Health Unit

### VICE-PRESIDENT

Jason Garay  
York Region Public Health

### SECRETARY

Denis Heng  
York Region Public Health

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Ottawa Public Health

### ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION (OPHA) REPRESENTATIVE

Carmen Yue  
Toronto Public Health

### ONTARIO COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY HEALTH ACCREDITATION (OCCHA) REPRESENTATIVE

Ali Artaman  
Windsor-Essex County Health Unit

### ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES (alPha)

Gamil Shahein  
Eastern Ontario Health Unit

### PAST PRESIDENT

Joanna Oliver  
Halton Region Health Department

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT Submitted by Anne Marie Holt

### The year 2010 was one of "Strengthened Partnerships".

My role as 2010 APHEO President got off to a bit of a slow start. Following the second wave of the H1N1 pandemic in the fall of 2009, public health epidemiologists across the province were working to get their routine activities back on track-as was APHEO. Therefore, the transition to the 2010 Executive was delayed until the end of February.

Early in March, strategic planning working groups resumed their work in three key areas.

1. Increase the capacity of APHEO to advance and promote epidemiology in the public health system through enhanced linkages across policy, practice, training and research.
2. Promote professional opportunities and support knowledge exchange among public health Epidemiologists.

3. Build and promote tools and resources that support the practice of public health epidemiology.

**Two new working groups were struck in 2010.**

As part of that work, two new working groups were struck in 2010; 1) The Cancer Surveillance for Public Health Working

Group (CSPHWG) - a tri-organization working group of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (OAHPP), Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) and APHEO that came together to facilitate health units' access to and use of good quality cancer-related data and 2) The Capacity Building for Small, Rural and Northern Health Units Working Group that came together to facilitate collaboration among member health units in meeting the requirements of the Foundational Standard, identifying common challenges and making recommendations to APHEO.

We were also successful in attaining a fourth and final year of funding from Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to continue our work on the EpiData Project. A new Epi Data Project

*(continued on pg 2)*

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

Manager and expert panel were recruited to continue work on the Evaluation and Redevelopment of EpiData Project.

In the fall of 2010, APHEO hosted a workshop in partnership with the OAHPP and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) titled "Figuring Out the Foundations" that provided epidemiologists and others working in the area of epidemiology with tools and resources to meet the Population Health Assessment and Surveillance (PHAS) Protocol of the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS).

I am very inspired in my work as the APHEO President, in part because of our dedicated and knowledgeable Executive Committee members (Joanna Oliver, Stephanie Wolfe, Wayne Tucker, Alanna

Leffley, Gamil Shahein and Denis Heng) who have supported me in my role since the very first day. And, the exemplary work of our members. It is your commitment to the practice of public health epidemiology in your day-to-day activities that allow APHEO to be a recognized leader in public health.

Through collaboration with our partners and strong leadership we will continue to advance and promote the discipline and professional practice of epidemiology in Ontario public health units.



The Ontario Council  
on Community  
Health Accreditation



## OCCHA REPORT Submitted by: Wayne Tucker

The Ontario Council on Community Health Accreditation (OCCHA) continues to promote accountability and excellence in public health programs and services. There were a number of key initiatives for OCCHA in 2010 and these initiatives will continue into 2011.

- Ongoing implementation and evaluation of the new accreditation program, Advancing Quality in Public Health.
- Ongoing development and expansion of quality indicators and quality attributes in support of the OCCHA quality framework for public health units and to enhance the accreditation reporting process.
- Continued consultation with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care in support of the public health performance management and accountability, including consultation on the development of survey tools for the organizational standards.
- Development of planning and reporting tools for public health units to facilitate preparation for and participation in the accreditation process.

### OCCHA's Accreditation Fees (Changes)

Prior to the implementation of the revised accreditation program, OCCHA's fee structure was based on a one-time survey fee (to cover the costs of the actual on-site survey) and annual maintenance fees. Health units applying for accreditation were required to pay the survey fee (\$6,500.00) plus the first year's maintenance fee (\$3025.00). Upon being awarded accreditation, the health unit was billed an annual maintenance fee of \$3025.00 for each remaining year of accreditation.

The OCCHA Board approved a new fee schedule in 2010, thereby blending the survey and maintenance fees into a one annual standardized fee. As of January 2011, this fee will be \$6,800.00 per year. This includes all costs associated with the on-site review (including both the initial on-site review and annual reviews) as well as the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of accreditation tools, documents and processes. It should be noted that this fee, which is based on the actual costs of running the accreditation program, represents the first change in accreditation fees in four years.



The Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) is a non-profit organization that provides leadership to boards of health and public health units in Ontario. The Association also collaborates with governments and other health organizations, advocating for a strong, effective and efficient public health system in the province. In addition, alPHA advises and lends expertise to members on the governance, administration and management of health units.

Membership includes members of boards of health, medical officers of health, and senior public health managers. APHEO is one of the seven Affiliate Organizations that are represented on the alPHA board,

alPHA conducts regular meetings of its Board of Health Section and Council of Medical Officers of Health. The alPHA Advocacy Committee also meets regularly to discuss action plans for association resolutions, as well as emerging issues raised by members, public, government or media. This committee is designed to give opportunity for wider participation in alPHA business by interested health unit staff. alPHA holds its annual conference in the second week of June and its day-and-a-half long meeting at the end of January and a one-day fall workshop in November. The Association may also hold, from time to time, other

seminars up to one day in length on specific topics as the need arises.

I had the privilege to represent APHEO at the alPHA board meetings and the annual conference; in addition, I took part in the advocacy group discussions throughout 2010.

In June 2010, alPHA and the Eastern Ontario Health Unit hosted the alPHA's Annual Conference in Cornwall, Ontario; the conference title was "The New Essentials - Public Health Communications Today". Participants heard from speakers from a variety of backgrounds as they shared their expertise on a range of topics related to the rapidly evolving ways that people use, communicate and understand information, in order to enhance the key function of communications in a public health context. Regular business meetings of the Board of Directors and its Sections (Board of Health and Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health), the Annual Business Meeting and Resolutions Session were also held.

Throughout 2010, the alPHA board held a number of meetings and discussions, in person or via teleconference, where a number of important issues or topics relating to the practice of public health and the functioning of health units across the province. Some of these issues/ topics

are listed below:

- Legislative changes to the Health Protection and Promotion Act resulting from the CMOH H1N1 Report
- The compensation restraint in health units across the province
- The accountability agreements and funding to public health
- The development of Best Start, and Child and Family Centers
- Board discussion with Judith Wright, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health Promotion
- Board discussion with Dr. Charles Pascal regarding government follow up to his report
- The anti-fluoridation campaign

The board invited a number of government representatives and experts to present to the board. These individuals included:

- Judith Wright, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health Promotion
- Dr. Charles Pascal regarding government follow up to his report
- Jim Grieve, Assistant Deputy Minister, Early Learning Division, Ontario Ministry of Education

My participation was supported by my health unit (Eastern Ontario Health Unit) which has generously covered my time, travel and lodging expenses while traveling on APHEO business.

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## **APHEO MEMBERSHIP REPORT** Submitted by: Denis Heng



In 2010, APHEO's membership consisted of 222 members, constituting an increase over APHEO's 2009 membership count of 179 members. APHEO's 2010 membership included:

- 93 full members who represent 35 of the 36 health units in Ontario; and
- 129 were affiliate members who represent 59 different organizations, including 20 of Ontario's health units, and 5 LHINs.

## OPHA REPORT Submitted by: Alanna Leffley

As I reflect on my 3 years in the position of OPHA representative for APHEO, I am proud of APHEO's excellent reputation, voice and vision. Being on the Board at OPHA has provided me with the opportunity to help influence public health advocacy, ask questions to various ministry representatives, participate in OPHA planning and conferences.

As Public Health in Ontario transforms and budgets tighten and the players are changing (OAHPP, provincial and municipal elections to name but a few), a strong and unified voice for public health is essential and APHEO is an important part of it. OPHA continues to strive to work with many partners including:

- Health Promotion Ontario (HPO) – partnered in the OPHA Fall Forum on the Built Environment
- alPHa – joint advocacy on issues such as tobacco, alcohol and child health
- OAHPP – consultations on professional development and working together on the Ontario Public Health Convention in 2011

I am proud of APHEO's excellent reputation.

As OPHA rep for APHEO I assisted with OPHA's E-bulletin article regarding the elimination of the mandatory Census Long-Form and letter to Minister Clement. In the fall, students from Schulich School of Business, York University consulted with the Board and observed a meeting as part of OPHA's strategic planning process (below). I attended the farewell reception for retiring Executive Director Connie Uetrecht in November as well.

### OPHA 2010 Strategic Plan

1. Build Internal Capacity for Advocacy to Enhance OPHA's Impact on External Stakeholders.
2. Improve OPHA Branding and Communications.
3. Enhance OPHA Outreach to Membership.

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## CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SMALL, RURAL, AND NORTHERN HEALTH UNITS

### Members:

The APHEO Capacity Building for Small, Rural, and Northern Health Units was formed in 2010. 14 Health Units joined this working group.

### The purpose of the group is four-fold:

1. To develop connections and networks among small, rural and northern Health Units;
2. To identify challenges uniquely associated with small, rural and northern Health Units as they relate to addressing the OPHS;
3. To identify strategies to address these challenges; and
4. To liaise and make recommendations to APHEO

### Activities Summary:

The working group completed an environmental scan to identify common challenges experienced by the members followed by solution identification. Subgroups will then be formed to address these challenges.

## CANCER SURVEILLANCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH WORKING GROUP (CSPHWG)

Submitted by: Anne Marie Holt

**Established: May 2010**

Members: Anne-Marie Holt, Chair (APHEO), Mary-Anne Pietrusiak (APHEO), Ali Artaman (APHEO), Sue Bondy (APHEO), Ruth Sanderson (OAHPP), Hong Chen (OAHPP), Beth Theis (CCO), Verna Mai (CCO), Kamini Milnes (CCO), Haim Sechter (CCO).

This working group was established to facilitate health unit access to, and use of, good quality cancer-related data. And, to establish effective communication between Cancer Care Ontario, Ontario

Agency for Health Protection and Promotion and Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario. Areas of collaboration include training, accessibility to data and data quality.

**2010 Accomplishments include:**

- Tri-Agency working group was struck
- Established regular meeting schedule
- Developed workplan in areas of training, data quality and data access.

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## EPIDATA PROJECT - EVALUATION AND REDEVELOPMENT

**Established: 2007**

**Expert Panel Members:** Camille Achonu, Anne Arthur, John Barbaro, Jason Garay, Brenda Guarda (Project Manager), Kathy Moran

**Purpose:** Evaluate the use and expansion of EpiData for the practice of public health epidemiology. The project was awarded additional funding to continue for another fiscal year (2010/2011).

**2010 Accomplishments**

- Anne Arthur attended the International Congress on Infectious Diseases (ICID) Conference, March 2010 in Miami, Florida and presented an EpiData Project poster presentation.
- A new Expert Panel was recruited for the 2010/2011 fiscal year. Three new members joined the group: Camille Achonu, John Barbaro and Kathy Moran. Returning members include Jason Garay, Anne Arthur and Brenda Guarda.

The project was awarded additional funding to continue for another fiscal year (2010/2011).

- In September 2010, Brenda Guarda conducted a Canadian Alliance for Regional Risk Factor Surveillance (CARRFS) e-learning session entitled 'EpiData: The Relevance for Local/Regional Risk Factor Surveillance'. The presentation provided an overview of the EpiData software and how it can be used by CARRFS members for risk factor and chronic disease surveillance activities. The presentation is available on APHEO's website.
- The EpiData Project, in partnership with the Canadian Alliance for Regional Risk Factor Surveillance (CARRFS) began planning for an EpiData workshop to be held in 2011. Jens Lauritsen, creator of EpiData, will be coming to Canada from Denmark to conduct the training.

- In October 2010, Camille Achonu attended the Communicable Disease Surveillance Network meeting and conducted a presentation entitled 'EpiData: A Potential Tool for Pandemics and Large Scale Outbreaks'. The presentation is available on APHEO's website.
- At the request of PHAC, the Expert Panel, along with past expert panel members, met with representatives of PHAC on November 4th. The purpose of the meeting was to gather feedback on the project – its accomplishments, any challenges/issues during the project's life cycle, any lessons learned and our recommendations for PHAC in terms of how well the grants and contributions process worked, any improvements that may be required that can help make these types of contracts more successful in the future.
- The Expert Panel continued to test new EpiData functionality, specifically EpiData Manager and EpiData Entry Client.

## 2010 APHEO Workshop Submitted by: Joanna Oliver

**Planning Committee:** Ruth Diaz-Chambers, Deborah Carr, Rachel Savage, Joanne Thanos, Sandra Han, Joanna Oliver (chair)

In September 2010, APHEO held its focused workshop titled “OPHS for Epis: Figuring out the Foundations”.

The goal of this workshop was to assist epidemiologists in the implementation of the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) and specifically the Foundational Standard.

Input was received from APHEO members, via an online survey, to help shape the content areas. This two day workshop combined education, skill sharing and strategizing and offered three concurrent sessions categorized under the content areas of learning, tools and analysis.

The specific objectives of the workshop were:

1. To provide a review and refresher on the OPHS, with a focus on the Foundational Standard and the Population Health Assessment and Surveillance (PHAS) Protocol;
2. To strategize how to effectively and consistently use the PHAS and other protocols to meet the OPHS;
3. To provide a forum for public health professionals to share, discuss and learn about existing resources that can assist in the implementation of the OPHS;
4. To share unique and innovative data sources, and plan how to use them for the purposes of population health assessment and surveillance;

5. To exchange ideas and make recommendations for resources that APHEO could develop to support OPHS implementation, including the Core Indicators Project; and
6. To provide networking opportunities for epidemiologists and other public health professionals.

As such, this workshop intended to provide participants with an applied understanding of the role epidemiologists play in meeting the OPHS, as well as an opportunity to share and create resources which will assist in OPHS implementation. The post-workshop evaluation indicated high level of satisfaction with this event. Congratulations, and thanks, to the planning committee for a job well done!

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## APHEO WEBSITE REPORT Submitted by: Lee Sieswerda

The majority of new work on the APHEO website in 2010 went into piloting a web-based bulletin board system, or forum, as many of today’s young whipper-snappers would call it. Bulletin boards, or forums, are actually an old technology dating back to the 1970s and they remained popular until the widespread popularization of the Internet in the mid-1990s. Prior to that, you would plug your hot 286 computer into your screaming fast 14.4 kbps modem and dial the telephone number of the bulletin board you wanted to log in to. Some were free and some you had to pay membership fees to join, and if the bulletin board was outside of your local calling area, you had to pay long distance charges. Hard to believe that was only 20 years ago. Anyway, although they are now part of the Internet, modern forums are not functionally much different from their predecessors. Basically, they are still a place to post messages.

We are piloting a forum as a possible replacement for our email mailing lists for a number of reasons. First, mailing list software is difficult to maintain and keep current because the subscription list cannot be automatically synchronized with the APHEO membership list. Second, the message archive is not searchable, so for all practical purposes there is no useful archive of APHEOlist messages. Finally, every year there are

more problems with firewalls blocking APHEOlist messages, and at least once per year we get added to a variety of spam blacklists, which shuts APHEOlist down completely, and I have to beg to have us removed.

Unfortunately, forums have their own disadvantages. The main disadvantage for many people is that you have to log in to the system, with (yet another) username and password, to read or post messages. The APHEOlist email-based system has the advantage that it comes to you conveniently in your inbox, rather than you having to log in to find it. Also, email-based systems are very simple from the user perspective: to post a message, you simply send an email to the mailing list. Forums, although not really complicated, do involve learning to navigate a user interface. In short, based on the pilot, I think that a wholesale switch from a mailing list to a forum, at least in its current state, would result in a decline in member participation.

So, how do we marry the advantages of each system, while minimizing the disadvantages of each? I have some ideas about how it can be done, and a new website committee has been struck to help deal with questions like this. We hope to have solutions sometime in 2011.

**Established: February 1998**

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

**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:** Healthy Eating and Active Living (Lead: Jennifer Skinner, Co-lead Jan. to June 2010: Peggy Patterson); Infectious Disease (Lead: Sherri Deamond); Reproductive Health (Lead: Mary-Anne Pietrusiak); The Built Environment (Acting Lead: Popy Dimoulas-Graham, Lead: Ahalya Mahendra), Social Determinants of Health (Lead: Nancy Ramuscak) and Injury and Substance Misuse (Lead: Suzanne Sinclair)

**2010 Accomplishments:**

- A 3-year op plan was developed. Activities were refined and leads and timelines were assigned.
- In January 2010, Core Indicators Working Group (CIWG) representatives and other APHEO reps met with numerous reps from the OAHPP. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a more formal partnership and to identify concrete projects that we can begin to take forward in collaboration. OAHPP agreed to appoint a representative to the Core Indicators Working Group. In addition OAHPP appointed representatives to several subgroups with each assigned individual assisting in the activities of the subgroups, acting as liaisons between CIWG and OAHPP, promoting the Core Indicators Project and assisting in the development of crucial

resources. A second meeting between CIWG and OAHPP in October resulted in general agreement that the following support from OAHPP would be immediately helpful:

- assistance in revising the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) alignment and data gaps document  
Work on this document will begin in 2011.
- Jennifer Skinner, member of CIWG, was seconded to the OAHPP to work on the Chronic Disease Population Health Assessment Development Project. The purpose of the project was to begin the process of planning for and testing electronic reporting templates for selected Core Indicators and defining and preparing for the next steps. APHEO's Core Indicators are being used as the template for the creation of these electronic templates. Members of CIWG were invited to participate in the development of the draft template and to participate in the evaluation meeting. The project concluded at the end of March 2010.
- The CIWG website underwent significant restructuring. Major sections include
  - Home Page (FAQ, introduction, background),
  - Work Group and Sub-group info (meeting minutes, strategic directions paper, terms of reference, policies and procedures etc.),
  - Core Indicators (all indicators are listed),
  - Resources (standardization paper, orientation documentation, references, methodology, syntax files)In addition, new information was added to the website:
  - Orientation information and powerpoint presentation – for new CIWG/subgroup members
  - APHEOlist standardization discussion threads
- The following indicators were revised and posted to the Core Indicators website (<http://www.apheo.ca/index.php?pid=48>):
  - Population by Age and Sex
  - Population Growth
  - Projected Population Growth
  - Dependency Ratios
  - Population Density
  - Vegetable and Fruit Consumption

# APHEO 2010 FINANCIAL REPORT

Submitted by: Stephanie Wolfe

## Balance Forward from 2009

Chequing without 2010 membership paid in 2009	69,728.83
Membership 2010 (Paid in 2009)	-
<b>Total Chequing:</b>	<b>69,728.83</b>
Investments (GICs)	2,407.12
<b>Total Balance Forward:</b>	<b>\$ 72,135.95</b>

INCOME	BUDGET	ACTUALS
Joint CSEB Conference 2009	14,000.00	14,413.89
2010 Workshop Registration, Income and Sponsorship	9,000.00	14,075.00
2010 PHAC Contracts		
Epidata Project	6,000.00	7,424.43
Skills Enhancement		-
Chronic Disease Risk Factor Inventory Matrix		-
Core Indicators Project		-
External Parties posting jobs on APHEO website	500.00	494.49
Interest Income	100.00	-
GIC interest and maturation:		2,496.96
Membership 2010 (Paid in 2010)	6,000.00	\$ 7,335.18
Membership 2011 (Paid in 2010)		
Sales of Promotional Items (travel mugs)		225.00
Other deposits:		174.73
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>\$ 35,600.00</b>	<b>\$ 46,639.68</b>
<b>Total Income + Balance Forward Chequing Only:</b>	<b>\$ 105,328.83</b>	<b>\$ 116,368.51</b>

EXPENSE	BUDGET	ACTUALS	FUNDS AVAILABLE
Annual Report	750.00	465.97	284.03
2010 Workshop	12,000.00	15,638.06	(3,638.06)
2011 Conference Planning and Float	20,000.00	7,713.58	12,286.42
Gifts (speakers, past exec., etc.)	500.00	281.04	218.96
General meetings expenses	1,000.00	850.29	149.71
Executive meetings - teleconferences	750.00	18.98	731.02
General meetings - teleconferences	2,500.00	-	2,500.00
APHEO Exec member travel support	1,200.00	378.22	821.78
Travel support for APHEO representatives	1,200.00	597.51	602.49
2010 OPHA Membership	1,000.00	1,000.00	-
Promotional Items	1,000.00	1,105.87	(105.87)
Mailing costs (Courier fees, postage, etc.)	100.00	12.58	87.42
Membership Drive	100.00	60.76	39.24
Student Sponsorship			
APHEO Membership and other	500.00	-	500.00
APHEO Conference	500.00	-	500.00
Review of Skill Enhancement Modules		-	-
Website Domain Registration (to renew in 2016)	-	-	-
Software Purchases and Updates (e.g. Survey Monkey)	500.00	210.09	289.91
Website Upkeep (BrickHost)	3,000.00	-	3,000.00
GIC purchase	10,000.00		10,000.00
On-line Registrations	100.00		100.00
Miscellaneous	500.00	-	500.00
Insurance	2,000.00	1,835.75	164.25
<b>SPECIAL PROJECTS</b>			
Administration fees		-	-
Chronic Disease Risk Factor Inventory Matrix	6,600.00	6,600.00	-
Strategic Action Plan Expenses	10,000.00	839.72	9,160.28
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$ 75,800.00</b>	<b>\$ 37,608.42</b>	<b>\$ 38,191.58</b>

## SUMMARY:

<b>2009 Year End Bank Balance:</b>	<b>\$ 69,728.83</b>	
<b>2010 Year End Bank Balance:</b>	<b>\$ 29,528.83</b>	<b>\$ 78,760.09</b>

<b>GIC Assets</b>	<b>\$ 10,000.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 39,528.83</b>	<b>\$ 78,760.09</b>

**Actual Bank Balance (Dec 31, 2010):** **\$ 78,760.09**