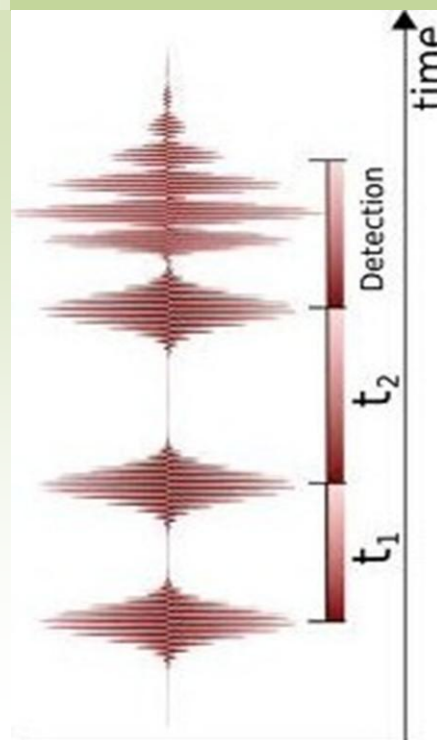


Public Health Pulse



alPHa Activities

Government Relations

Transfer of Health Promotion Functions: With the dissolution of the Ministry of Health Promotion following the provincial election this past fall, alPHa wrote Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews to recommend that the public health-related functions and responsibilities within the former ministry should be transferred to the Public Health Division in the MOHLTC. Minister Matthews wrote back and thanked the association for its input on the transition, indicating that the decision would be made with the Ontario Public Service.

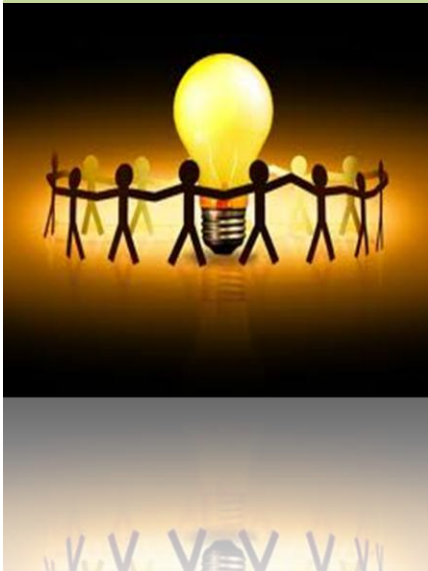
Deputy Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: On December 19, members of alPHa's Executive Committee met with Deputy Minister Saad Rafi to introduce the Association, its role and public health's role within the broader health system, particularly in health promotion. Overall, the meeting was a good step toward building a positive relationship with the Deputy Minister. It ended with him expressing interest in meeting alPHa again in a couple of months.

Public Health Leadership Council (PHLC): alPHa President Dr. Paul Roumeliotis and COMOH Chair Dr. Penny Sutcliffe represent the Association on this provincial committee of public health leaders. Chaired by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), the Council comprises of members not only from alPHa, but from the Office of the CMOH, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Public Health Ontario (PHO) and local medical officers of health. The Council coordinates on system-wide operational issues related to public health, including health unit data sharing agreements, PHLC program tables to support priority initiatives, health promotion, COMOH priorities, and PHO activities, among others.

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Professional Development Committee

The *alPHA Professional Development Steering Committee (PDSC)*, which oversees professional development activities and events for the Association, has been working on the upcoming winter symposium in February and annual conference in June. It is presently seeking new representatives from all constituent societies of alPHA, i.e. COMOH, Boards of Health Section, and Affiliate organizations. Interested

individuals should contact Linda Stewart, alPHA Executive Director, linda@alphaweb.org

Members of the PDSC are Jack Butt (Eastern Ontario), Bjorn Christensen (Niagara Region), Maria Harding (Thunder Bay). The Chair is Ellen Wodchis (Niagara Region).

See also page 3 for the Records Management Work Group

“...there are palatable options to improve the [healthcare] system...They include greater emphasis on health promotion...” ~ Don Drummond, Chair, Commission on the Reform of Ontario Public Services

Public Health Officer

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has made some changes to the program that provides alPHA with a full-time Public Health Officer. The program was originally to provide selected sites across Canada with a full-time permanent position.

PHAC is now doubling the number of program sites to approximately 50, but organizations interested in hosting a position will be expected to re-apply to be a host site. The re-application process will take place every 2 years. alPHA can expect to maintain the current position until March 2013 and will have to be successful in the new application process to maintain the position beyond that timeframe.

The expanded program will continue to address capacity gaps across the country and provide surge capacity during public health emergencies. See separate box on the PHO update on pages 3 and 4.

alPHA Activities cont'd

Meeting Requests: The October provincial election saw the appointment of Liberal MPP Dr. Eric Hoskins as the new Minister of Children and Youth Services. Dr. Hoskins is a family physician by training with a background in humanitarian efforts and a strong interest in child health and development. Recently, alPHA met with the Minister, who was receptive to public health's concerns regarding the new HBHC screening tool.

Health Unit Visits

alPHA Executive Director Linda Stewart had an opportunity to visit both Timiskaming and North Bay Parry Sound District Health Units in the fall. On October 27, she joined staff and board members at the Timiskaming Health Unit for their 60th anniversary celebrations where she presented a wall clock from the Association to mark the occasion. New medical officer of health Dr. Marlene Spruyt graciously gave Linda a tour of the health unit and surrounding area. The next day, Linda traveled to North Bay, where she spent the day with medical officer of health Dr. Jim Chirico, from whom she learnt much about local public health issues. Thanks go to the northern health units for their warm welcome and hospitality.

To view the Association's most recent advocacy letters, visit the Online Library on alPHA's web site (www.alphaweb.org/library.asp) and search under Letters.

Canadian Public Health Directory

The latest edition of the Canadian Public Health Directory was published at the end of October. The Directory lists the addresses for all public health offices in Canada and their sub-offices. It also lists key contacts including medical officers of health, public health nurses, public health inspectors, and health promoters. To purchase a copy, please download an order form at http://www.alphaweb.org/can_directory.asp. The next edition, the 2011-2012 Directory, is scheduled for release in late spring 2012.



Public Health Officer Activities

alPHA has been the host site for Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) Public Health Officer since 2010. Since March 2011, this position has been filled by Asha Sheikh, an epidemiologist, who has lent her expertise to several provincial projects.

During her time with alPHA, Asha has been working closely with several public health organizations such as Public Health Ontario (PHO), Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS), Ontario Society for Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH), various Public Health Units (PHUs), the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO), and the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).

Asha has been involved in projects including: the childhood healthy weights surveillance system in which she provided epidemiological support towards completion of a resource document developed for use by public health units. This document facilitates interested public health units to conduct obesity surveillance among grade schoolchildren. Asha has also been involved in the processes of knowledge exchange and transfer with PHO, which included editing a public health dictionary. This work is in preparation for the launch of a public health web-based survey of health unit activities to facilitate sharing, and access to province wide public health unit resources. (Cont'd on page 4)

alPHA Fitness Challenge: May 10

Mark your calendars and get ready for alPHA's annual Health Unit Employee Fitness Challenge on **May 10, 2012**. Staff across all health units will be challenged to engage in physical activity for at least 30 minutes on May 10. The winning health unit will have the highest percentage of staff participation and have completed the Fitness Form survey. The winning health unit will be presented with an award at alPHA's conference in June.



Records Management

The *alPHA Records Management Working Group* formed in December 2010 as a result of health units' interest in records management issues.

Last spring the working group surveyed health units on current records management practices and identified areas of common strengths, weaknesses and barriers. The data collected is also being used to inform the scope of the working group's activities and deliverables. The working group has identified three priority areas for action. These are the development of a common records retention schedule for health units, creation of a central repository for health unit RM best practices, and advocacy for provincial leadership on policy setting and organizational requirements on RM for Ontario health units. Work will begin in early 2012 on these priorities.

Members of the Records Management Working Group are Susan Bickle (HKPR), Randy Brown (Perth), Shelley Chamberlain (Durham Region), Tracey Dal Bianco (Toronto), Sandra Horney (Simcoe Muskoka), Ryan Huffman (Elgin-St. Thomas), Louise Lepage (Eastern Ontario), Marc Piquette (Sudbury), April Rietdyk (Chatham-Kent), Michele Singleton (Halton Region), Diane Vanecko (Niagara Region). The Chair is Susan Lee (alPHA).



Public Health Officer Activities cont'd

Asha's other major work includes a large project on assessing public health unit website accessibility with respect to recent disability legislation. This project has helped to shed light on the current state of accessibility in the province as well as provide a forum for knowledge exchange. In collaboration with RRFSS, Asha is analyzing public health data on the following health indicators: Falls, Emergency Preparedness, PAP Smears,

Colorectal Screening, Outdoor Air Quality, Web Site, Dental, Nutrition, and Positive Parenting Interaction. The project will allow for public health decision-making to be informed by valid, timely and relevant data. For OSNPPH, she is assessing the public health capacity of nutrition professionals across the province which will help identify gaps and needs currently faced by public health units.

Don't forget to register for alPHA's upcoming 2012 Winter Symposium, Promoting Public Health in Ontario--a conference on ideas to raise public health's profile. See page 5 for details.

alPHA Board Motions

The following motions were passed at the alPHA Board's meeting in December 2011:

- alPHA will request that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care initiate a discussion between the Ministry, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, and alPHA regarding out-of-hospital infection control policies and issues. The alPHA Board supports the deferral of the membership fee increase proposal and voting until further notice.
- The Board receives the new National Low Risk Drinking Guidelines for information and will inform the document's authors that the guidelines are a step in the right direction.
- The Board approves of the promoting public health theme for alPHA's February 2012 Winter Symposium.
- alPHA's Professional Development Steering Committee will continue to liaise with Public Health Ontario on public health professional development priorities and needs.

alPHA Board of Directors

Meetings with Key Provincial Officials

In December, Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health, presented to the Board on her 2010 annual report *Health, Not Health Care—Changing the Conversation* and provided an update on program initiatives within the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. She encouraged health units to speak to their communities about the need for healthy public policies, recommending her annual report and Sudbury District Health Unit's video *Let's Start a Conversation about Health* as tools for engagement.

At the same December meeting, representatives from the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority introduced their organization to alPHA's board members and spoke to the *Retirement Homes Act 2010*. The Act provides for the establishment of licensing requirements, rights of residents, care and safety standards, and procedures for complaints and enforcement for Ontario's retirement homes.

At the September 2011 board meeting, Bernie Blais, Chief Executive Officer, North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), presented on *Stay Up, Keep Up*, an integrated falls prevention project that is partnering LHINs with community agencies across Ontario, including public health units, to reduce falls among seniors. A framework and toolkit have been developed as part of the project's Phase I. Phase II, which focuses on implementation of the framework, is now underway.

Upcoming Meetings

January 27, 2012
April 13, 2012
June 10 and 12, 2012

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*Promoting leadership in public
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alPHa Board Update cont'd

Comings and Goings

alPHa would like to thank long-time board member **Valerie Sterling** (Toronto Board of Health) for all her contributions to the Association. Valerie stepped down in December following seven years of service on the alPHa board during which she held positions of President (2009-2011), Vice President (2008-2009), and Board of Health Section Chair (2007-2008).

Deborah Moore (Niagara Region) has replaced Gamil Shahein (Eastern Ontario) as the new APHEO representative on the alPHa board. The Association welcomes Deb and thanks Gamil for devoting time and energy to the Association's activities for the past two years.

Member News

Since 2009, **Tracy Allan-Koester** (Perth) has represented public health on the LHIN Collaborative (LHINC) Council. The Council advises LHINC on priorities that support the mandate of the Local Health Integration Networks and monitor the progress of LHINC's work. The LHIN Collaborative recently restructured with a newly expanded mandate and has created a System Strategy Council that will oversee the LHINC's strategic directions and activities. alPHa thanks Tracey for bringing a strong public health voice to the LHINC Council table over the years.

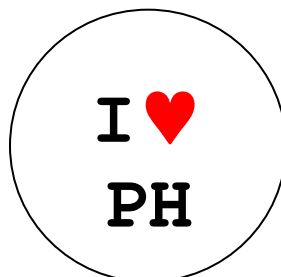
Larry Paine (Leeds, Grenville) joined the board of directors of the Ontario Council on Community Health Accreditation (OCCHA) in November 2011 as the new alPHa board of health representative. He replaces Patricia Coderre (Middlesex-London) who ably represented boards of health for the past three years. Many thanks to Patricia for her work at OCCHA.

This past fall saw several new medical officers of health joining COMOH's ranks. In November, **Dr. Rosemarie Ramsingh** joined the Porcupine Health Unit as Medical Officer of Health. **Dr. Kieran Moore** was appointed Associate Medical Officer of Health for Kingston Frontenac Lennox and Addington Public Health in September, and in August, **Dr. Gary Kirk** started his Associate Medical Officer of Health position at Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. A warm welcome to Rosemarie, Kieran and Gary to alPHa!

Datebook – Mark your calendars!

[alPHa Winter Symposium on Promoting
Public Health in Ontario](#)
February 9 & 10, 2012
Novotel Toronto Centre, Toronto

This year's theme will examine how public health can promote its work to garner greater public support. Section business meetings for board of health and COMOH members will also be held.



2012 alPHa Annual Conference

June 10, 11 & 12, 2012
Hilton Hotel and Suites Hotel, Niagara Falls, ON

The Association's annual event offers guest speaker presentations, Resolutions Session, presentation of the 2012 Distinguished Service Awards, and more. Look for upcoming details in the spring.