

January 2012
Volume 3, Issue 1

Inside this issue:

Thoughts from Ruta	1
Making Progress	2
Angela Jurich	2
2011 PHABC Conference	3
2011 PHABC Conference Continued	4
Announcements	4
Postdoctoral Scholar Position	5
Upcoming Conferences	5

Thoughts from Ruta

RePHS: It's just past the half way mark and what a ride! I can't help but reflect on how much we have achieved over the last three years. At risk of presenting a vastly incomplete list of accomplishments, our team has: developed a historical overview paper of public health in BC and ON; conducted comparisons of public health policy documents in our two provinces; collected and analysed phase I data; disseminated results at various conferences and meetings; completed a concept mapping study on the meaning of evidence; and created and disseminated slide decks and summaries of results to decision-maker co-investigators to share widely. We are now close to completing data collection for Phase II. It is frightening as I think about how much more there is to do, however, it is important to celebrate and reflect on our achievements to date. How have we managed to get here? From my perspective, three themes explain our success to date: **vision - commitment - and support.**

Vision: The vision for RePHS was seeded by our forward thinking leaders - Marjorie MacDonald, Trevor Hancock and Bernie Pauly. This vision has pushed us beyond our comfort zones regarding what we research, how we research, and with whom we conduct our research. Our leaders have built an impressive and chal-

lenging program of research to explore public health policy reform in our two provinces using conventional as well as unconventional methods. It is interesting to note that RePHS is running parallel to the primary health care reform movement occurring in Canada. If we consider a broad definition of primary health care, we can leverage our RePHS work and share our results within this broader context. Our primary health care colleagues can learn from RePHS about how to engage with decision-making partners on research teams and how to study complex health systems using novel approaches. The RePHS vision has also propelled us in Ontario, under the leadership of Anita Kothari and Sandra Regan, to apply for and successfully obtain a CIHR Meeting Planning and Dissemination grant to begin to develop a public health research agenda for Ontario. Thank you to our BC leaders for their inspiring vision.

Commitment: Having the pleasure of acting as the academic lead in Ontario and attending BC teleconferences, I have been incredibly impressed by the commitment shown by the entire RePHS team including our academic co-investigators and in particular our decision-maker co-investigators. Despite having to manage ongoing challenges in your public health work or the demands of your academic careers, everyone's commitment has been evident through

ongoing attendance and participation at teleconferences and in-person meetings, as well as contributions to support the work. The size of the RePHS team certainly adds complexity, but the work to manage this is greatly offset by your invaluable input that helps to ensure that the results are meaningful and make a difference. Thank you all for your commitment to the RePHS team and this research.

Support. None of our accomplishments to date would be possible without the support of our tremendous research staff including: the calm, resourceful, and dedicated RePHS research coordinator Diane Allan; the quiet, capable, and incredibly organized mother of three and ON research coordinator-Danielle Hunter, our tireless research assistants Rebecca Spark, Cara-Lee Coghill, Laura Tomm Bonde, and Dana Gore, as well as reliable administrative support from Luiza Souza and Joanne Leeming. Finally we have very much appreciated the enthusiastic support from our graduate students, Megan Kirk and Shannon Turner, and undergraduate students, Gaellen Kalles, Christine Gagnon, Melanie Blair, and Aruchana Srikandarajah, who have supported us along the way. Thank you. You all keep the wheels turning, remind us when we need to turn, and help us navigate through the complex and exciting journey of RePHS.

We welcome submissions to future newsletters! Please send event listings, research highlights, funding announcements, etc. to dallan@uvic.ca

Check us out online at:
web.uvic.ca/~cphfri



RePHS is funded through a CIHR Emerging Team Grant

Making Progress

Phase 2 data collection is underway in both Ontario and BC. We anticipate data collection to continue into the first couple months of 2012.

A concept mapping exercise on equity will take place in Spring 2012.

Plans are underway to conduct a social network analysis later this year. The focus of this analysis will be on public health/primary care collaborations. A teleconference has been scheduled for January 30 to discuss the details of the social network analysis.

A draft of the publication strategy has been developed and is now being reviewed by both Ontario and BC teams.

The September 22 and 29 BC webinar videos are now available online at http://web.uvic.ca/~cphfri/research_projects/emerging_team_grant.htm. Please scroll to the bottom of the page to find the links.

Rural Health Policy - Angela Jurich -

After receiving my undergraduate nursing degree from Laurentian University in 2010, I enrolled in the Master of Science in Nursing (MScN) program at the University of Western Ontario. Although I have not yet practiced as a Registered Nurse, once completing my MScN, I plan on entering into the field of public health nursing. I am currently working on my thesis under the supervision of Sandra Regan, who introduced me to the RePHS project after learning of my interest in rural public health policy. When I was trying to decide on a focus for my thesis, Sandra suggested the possibility of conducting a secondary analysis on a portion of the RePHS data.



Having grown up in rural Northern Ontario, I am aware of the effect “place” and “space” can have on one’s health. Limited health services and human resources, inclement weather conditions, and the need to travel long distances to obtain health care are characteristic of the rural community in which I live. As an undergraduate nursing student, I worked at a nursing home as an assistant to the Nursing Director of Care. In this role I was required to continually organize and update the agency’s policy documents, sparking my curiosity in the field of health policy. In my first year of graduate studies I was fortunate to take two courses on health policy where I then developed a keen interest in the topic. With my academic preparation in health policy, my personal experiences with rural living, and my desire to work in the area of public health, I am interested in examining how “place” is incorporated into rural public health policies. Thus, for my thesis I aim to understand how the characteristics of place-based policy are discussed and addressed in relation to the development and implementation of the Ontario Public Health Standards

related to chronic disease prevention policies. This thesis-based study will analyze data collected from the three rural Ontario health units in the first phase of the RePHS study.

I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in and utilize data from the RePHS project for my thesis work. I believe this to be an important area of research and I am grateful to be a part of such an exciting project. If anyone has any questions about my research, feel free to contact me at

Please note that the Core Public Health Functions website has moved. The new link is:
www.health.gov.bc.ca/public-health/

2011 Public Health Association of BC Conference

The Public Health Association of BC held its 2011 Conference in Richmond BC on Nov. 27-28th entitled, “*The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion: Critical Engagement from a Health Equity Perspective.*” Conference Co-Chairs were Marjorie MacDonald (Principal Investigator on REPHS and newly installed President of PHABC) and Paola Ardilles (BC Mental Health and Addictions Services, Education and Population Health). Within the two major policy interventions that provide the focus for REPHS (i.e., the BC Core Public Health Functions Framework and the Ontario Public Health Standards) health promotion is a core public health strategy and health equity is a critical lens through which public health programs are conceptualized. The focus of the PHABC conference was therefore very timely as we approach the mid-way point in the REPHS program of research.

The conference celebrated, almost to the day, the 25th anniversary of the release of the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion, a foundational document that guides much of public health practice. The conference planners wanted to take a critical perspective on the Ottawa Charter to answer a series of key questions: 1) Has the charter succeeded in helping to address health inequities and if so, how? 2) What is the future potential for the Charter’s principles, strategies and action areas; 3) What new elements need to be considered to improve on the Charter’s foundation; and 4) How do the new emphases on the social determinants of health and globalization fit with the Charter’s framework? The conference was organized around the key action areas of the Ottawa Charter: Building Healthy Public Policy, Creating Supportive Environments, Strengthening Community Action, Developing Personal Skills, and Reorienting Health Services.

In the opening plenary, David McQueen (Past President of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education, and former Associate Director for Global Health Promotion, National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion in the US) questioned whether the vision of the Charter had been achieved particularly in the area of health inequities and suggested that what has occurred in the wake of the Charter could not necessarily be attributed to it. He argued that the Charter and its enactment in practice have not dealt with two important things. First, we have not sufficiently addressed the challenge of developing evidence in support of health promotion effectiveness. Second, despite the emphasis on equity in the Charter, health inequities are increasing around the globe. McQueen identified new areas of focus in health promotion that include the importance of attending to context, complexity, equity, and partnerships, all of which are central to the REPHS program of research. Overall, he did not disappoint us with respect to providing a critical perspective on the history and impact of the Ottawa Charter. Yet, he reminded us that there remains strong belief among many that the concepts and principles of the Charter endure and will continue to provide a guide for practice into the future.

In the second and third plenary sessions, speakers were invited to discuss some challenges and successes they have experienced in the context of their work in these action areas. Charlotte Reading and Trevor Hancock both from the School of Public Health and Social Policy at UVIC respectively spoke on *Creating Supportive Environments for Aboriginal People and Healthy Public Policy, Government Action, and the Physical Environment*. Mary Collins (Executive Director BC Healthy Living Alliance), Mary Clifford (Acting Leader, Aboriginal Community Development/Engagement, Vancouver Coastal Health), and Leslie Varley (PHSA Aboriginal Health Program Director) spoke on the Charter action areas of Community Action, Personal Skills, and Reorienting Health Services, bringing encouraging stories of successful practices to address health equity in these areas, while also making us aware of the challenges that remain before us. Interactive discussion sessions followed each of the plenary sessions and the audience did not disappoint us in raising critical challenges to how the Ottawa Charter principles have or have not been enacted, but also shared their successes in trying to implement Charter principles.

A variety of innovative formats were used ideas and strategies for addressing health inequities through the five action areas. These included World Café Discussions, Oral Presentations, Rapid Fire Poster Presentations, Poster Walk-About sessions, and Graduate Student poster sessions.

Many of our CPHFRI and REPHS team members were involved, including PhD student Wanda Martin who facilitated, along with Erika Mundel, a World Café discussion on Provincial Food Policy. The final closing plenary by John Raeburn (Adjunct Professor, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand) also provided some critical reflections on what he believes is a misplaced emphasis on healthy public policy to the detriment of building community action. John repeated his plenary address following the conference in a talk at the University of Victoria, followed by a panel discussion that included Trevor Hancock, Irv Rootman, and PhD student Megan Kirk. A report of John’s talk and the panel discussion will be included in the next CPHFRI newsletter so I will not provide more details on John’s presentation here.

Continued on next page.



Continued from page 3

Overall, the conference succeeded in its objective to provide a forum for dialogue, discussion and critique on the Ottawa Charter, and the evaluation feedback was very positive. PHABC was, however, challenged on the fact that despite strong content on aboriginal health promotion in the conference, we have not attracted many aboriginal public health practitioners to our conference, or for that matter to our membership. This observation provides the impetus for PHABC to address this disparity within our organization and, as the new President of PHABC, I commit to doing my best to improve our record on this important issue. — Submitted by Marjorie MacDonald

Most of the plenary and oral presentation power points or notes can be accessed on the PHABC website at <http://www.phabc.org/modules.php?name=Content&comp&pa=viewdoc&cid=28>

Announcements

PHABC Appointment: Marjorie MacDonald was appointed as the new President of the Public Health Association of BC for a two year term, beginning November 2011 until November 2013. Marjorie acknowledges that she will have very large shoes to fill in replacing Ted Bruce, a REPHS knowledge user, as president. Ted steps into the Immediate Past President position on the board. Shannon Turner, a CPHFRI doctoral student and fellowship holder, was elected as a member-at-large. Congratulations to all returning and new board members. PHABC looks forward to its continuing partnership with REPHS. Please visit www.phabc.org for more information about PHABC.

Candidacy Exams: Two of our PhD student members of REPHS and CPHFRI are currently writing their doctoral candidacy exams – Laura Tomm Bonde and Shannon Turner. We wish them well in the process and look forward to a successful outcome.

Public Health and Primary Care Project: One important research question in the REPHS program of research deals with Public Health and Primary Care collaboration. For this component of our research, we draw on the concurrent work of the “Strengthening Primary Health Care Through Public Health and Primary Care Collaboration Study” funded by CHSRF and led by Ruta Valaitis, Ontario Academic Lead for REPHS. Marjorie MacDonald and Sabrina Wong, also REPHS team members, are the BC Leads on this project. Recently, that team had two publications accepted, now in press, that report on the results and methodological approach for a scoping review of the literature on public health and primary care collaboration. These are listed below. The technical report of this project can be found at the following website: <http://strengthenphc.mcmaster.ca/images/stories/Publications/scoping%20literature%20review%20rev%20ap%2021%2009.pdf>

Valaitis, R., Martin Misener, R., **Wong, S., MacDonald, M.,** Meagher-Stewart, D., Austin, P., Kackzorowski, J., **O,Mara, L.** & Savage, R.(in press). Methods and technologies used in a scoping literature review of primary care and public health collaboration. *Primary Health Care Research & Development*.

Martin Misener, R., **Valaitis, R., Wong, S., MacDonald, M.,** Meagher-Stewart, D., Kackzorowski, J., **O,Mara, L.,** Savage, R., & Austin, P. (in press). A scoping literature review of primary care and public health collaboration. *Primary Health Care Research & Development*.

CIHR MPD Grant: Anita Kothari, Sandra Regan, John Garcia, Heather Manson, Linda O'Mara, and Ruta Valaitis received funding from CIHR for their project 'Accelerating Public Health Systems Research in Ontario: Building an Agenda.' The following is a summary of their project:

In the wake of SARS, Ontario has been engaged in a major public health systems renewal process. This age of restructuring provides a prime opportunity to strengthen, implement, and evaluate the public health services that play an important role in the delivery of public health programs. The purpose of this proposal is to hold an invitational Think Tank. We propose to bring together a group of key stakeholders with an interest and expertise in public health systems research to engage in discussion and debate about research priorities at the provincial level and develop a long-term research agenda. An environmental scan to identify external opportunities and challenges will be carried out in advance of the meeting. As well, an on-line survey will be conducted with an array of stakeholders to take into account broad input on public health systems research priorities. Both the scan and the survey findings will be distributed to participants as preparatory material for the Think Tank. Our team is composed of researchers from three Ontario universities, six public health units, a governmental Ministry and Public Health Ontario. We believe that the activities described in this proposal will be successful, and subsequently taken up for the longer term, precisely because the political climate related to public health restructuring is eager for rigorous models of collaboration and capacity building. We anticipate a high level of sustainability given our previous working relationship, the strong support from the relevant Ontario Ministry, the individual health units, and Public Health Ontario, and the roles that members of the research team continue to play in the public health system (i.e., related to research, policy, teaching, and practice).



Postdoctoral Scholar Position Innovations in Knowledge Translation Science Research

We are pleased to announce a postdoctoral scholar opportunity in the field of Knowledge Translation (KT), an interactive process of knowledge exchange between health researchers and knowledge users. Given that the health system is broad in scope it is important to systematically investigate how definitions and applications of knowledge translation might differ by setting and focus. Community-based organizations, including public health departments, community health centres, civil sector organizations and local authorities face a distinctive set of challenges and concerns related to engaging in the knowledge translation process, suggesting a unique perspective on knowledge translation in these settings.

The postdoctoral scholar will work closely with two supervisors with programs of research related to community settings. Dr. Anita Kothari has been involved in testing KT interventions in public health practice, Ontario Early Years Centres and homecare. Her work is based on the premise that KT is a social process involving interaction among knowledge users, where knowledge is broadly defined. Based on intervention studies examining the health-care response to violence against women and children, Dr. Nadine Wathen has conducted KT studies in the area of family violence, gender and mental health. Please see http://www.uwo.ca/fhs/bio/profile/kothari_a.html, <http://publish.uwo.ca/~nwathen/>, and <http://www.prevailresearch.ca/> for additional information.

One position is available. The scholar will be involved in a number of new and on-going related projects, leading to opportunities in the areas of project management, conference presentations, grant writing, manuscript development, etc., depending on his or her training objectives. Time will also be allocated for the scholar to develop her or his own program of research (to be negotiated).

Available funding for one year: \$40,000, starting in July 2012, September 2012 or January 2013.

Expectations:

The accepted scholar(s) will be expected to complete progress reports every 6 months and meet with supervisors regularly; it is assumed that the scholar(s) will reside within driving distance of London, Ontario. They will also be expected to hold national or provincial funding or be in the process of applying for external funding.

Application:

Please send a covering letter, names of three references and a copy of your CV by email to Drs. Anita Kothari and Nadine Wathen. The deadline for applications is June 1, 2012. Candidates will be interviewed shortly thereafter by telephone. More information about postdoctoral studies at Western is available at: http://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral/prospective_postdocs.htm.

Email: akothari@uwo.ca AND nwathen@uwo.ca

Upcoming Conferences

- Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada Fourth pan-Canadian Conference: Ottawa, ON, February 8-10, 2012
- World Conference on Tobacco or Health: Singapore, March 21-24, 2012
- World Congress on Public Health: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 21-29, 2012
- 6th National Community Health Nurses Conference, Toronto, May 14-16, 2012
- Canadian Association of Health Services and Policy Research Conference, Montreal, May 29-31, 2012
- Canadian Public Health Association Conference, Edmonton, June 11-14, 2012
- American Public Health Association Conference, San Francisco, October 27-31, 2012 (abstract deadline February)
- European Public Health Association Conference, Malta, November 8-10, 2012