

The Ontario Association of Public Health Nursing Leaders

Leading the Way for Public Health Nursing

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May 28, 2019

Ms. Ruth Schofield
Assistant Professor
1280 Main St. W., BScN Program
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McMaster University
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Dear Ruth,

On behalf of the Ontario Association of Public Health Nursing Leaders (OPHNL), I am expressing our support for your efforts in the development and implementation of a PHN post graduate certificate program that is accessible to Canadian nurses.

As you are aware our association has expressed concern regarding new graduate's preparation and ability in the implementation of entry-to-practice Public Health Nursing (PHN) competencies when entering in the workforce. In 2017, our association conducted a provincial survey with our membership to determine the readiness to practice of new graduates. Of the PHN leaders who responded, it was evident that a majority of respondents perceived that new graduates were not prepared for practice in most of the 21 competency statements outlined in the survey. Additionally, when asked about approaches to strengthen the readiness of students to work in Public Health, implementation of a post-degree certificate in public health nursing was selected by 61% of respondents. This strategy was only surpassed by strengthening the content of PHN theory and practice in undergraduate nursing program curriculum, something which may be difficult to accomplish with the competing priorities within the nursing education curriculum and as the scope of nursing expands.

Another area of interest and current pursuit of OPHNL members is to support public health nurses in prescribing. As we prepare for changes to the Nursing Act, which will allow registered nurses (RNs) to prescribe, we have proactively engaged in developing a provincial approach for public health nurse prescribing. We have four workgroups leading work in the areas of 1) education; 2) implementation considerations; 3) communication and 4) evaluation. We would like to recommend that as you prepare the postgraduate certificate in public health nursing that one of the key components of the curriculum includes preparation for RN Prescribing.

The mission of OPHNL is to promote and protect the health of Ontarians through excellence in public health nursing leadership. Our members are public health nurses employed at the management level in Public Health Units. We demonstrate progressive leadership and are supportive of advances in the preparation of nurses and nursing students to ensure the delivery of evidence based and skilled public health nursing practice. In this regard, we are supportive of the development and implementation of a PHN post graduate Certificate program that is accessible to Canadian nurses and would encourage you to reach out to our members to seek interest and participation in the design, development and delivery of this program as appropriate.

We wish you the best of luck in this endeavour and we look forward to hearing back on how this initiative is progressing. Should you wish to reach out to our association for additional support, please feel free to connect with me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "H. K. Bhimani". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Hamida Bhimani

