**Happenings of OPHNL – Issue #2, 2019**

I am pleased to provide an update on the progress OPHNL has made on our strategic priorities to-date:

 **Relationships:**

We would like to acknowledge the recent government announcement to establish 10 regional public health entities and new regional boards of health with a common governance model by 2020-21. In addition, the government plans to adjust provincial-municipal cost sharing of pubic heath funding in 2019-21. We recognize that there are some significant changes to the public health system and as an association we will be advocating and collaborating with relevant partners to ensure that we can collectively express our concerns and plausible solutions. At the same time, we would like to recognize that public health nursing provides evidence-based, client centered and much needed upstream health promotion and disease preventions programs and services. And we need to continue to message the importance of the contributions of public health nursing to staff in our respective health units.

I am available to hear your input and ideas on advocacy efforts. Please reach out to me at hamida.bhimani@york.ca, to share your thoughts. We will keep you apprised of our advocacy efforts and solicit your input along critical points in time. As a reference document, please find attached the link to the expert panel report commissioned by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in 2017: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/public_health_panel_17/expert_panel_report.pdf>

OPHNL has also been active in the advocacy front with a specific focus on mental health and addictions. We have advised Christine Elliott, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, that public health nurses are prepared and well positioned to engage in mental health promotion and prevention efforts with community members and our partners with the aim to identify localized solutions. We have also provided input in response to the Premier’s Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine, Chaired by Dr. Rueben Devlin. The first report issued by the Premier’s Council discussed mental health and its impact on the health of Ontarians and the overall health and social services system. To focus our advocacy efforts, our input to the Premier’s Council has aimed to describe the role that public health nurses play in the areas of mental health promotion and harm reduction and an offer to engage with the Council on this important issue.

Dr. Michelle Acorn, the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer remains apprised of our advocacy efforts. We would like to thank our members in providing input on the advocacy letters that were recently developed and these can be found on OPHNL’s public site at the following: <https://ophnl.org/member-resources/>

**Systems Levels Impact:**

The RN Prescribing Workgroup has initiated its efforts to design a thoughtful and well-informed approach to implementing prescribing in the practice of public health nurses.

The objectives of this workgroup include the following:

* To provide expert advice for better client outcomes through RN Prescribing in public health nursing practice.
* To provide public health input into the development of training, implementation and evaluation.
* To identify common practice issues or concerns for OPHNL to address with the College of Nurses of Ontario.
* To identify stakeholders who could positively influence RN Prescribing in public health including those who could assist with capacity building.

Recently, the workgroup had a meeting with Roseanne Jabbour, Strategy Consultant at the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO). She apprised the group that changes to the Nursing Act, 1991 to allow for RN prescribing is well underway. The final draft regulation for submission to their Council is posted on the CNO website. After submission to Council, it will be sent to Ministry for review and approval.

The link to CNO website is as follows: <http://www.cno.org/globalassets/1-whatiscno/council/meetings/2019/council-package---march-2019---web.pdf> (pages 31 - 45). This draft includes the feedback from the February consultation organized by CNO.

Next steps include a review by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care of the draft regulation. The CNO will receive and incorporate Ministry feedback and then draft and circulate bylaw. Eventually, permits will be set up on the public register for RNs who are authorized to prescribe. The CNO will depend on employers to put into place what is needed for safe implementation at point of care.

**Foster a Highly Competent and Innovative Workforce:**

The Highly Competent Workforce workgroup recently met to review their Terms of Reference and are defining their purpose as follows: To provide Public Health Nursing Leaders a wide venue for knowledge exchange, relationship building, problem solving, mentoring, and build their capacity related to all aspects of leadership.

With its renewed focus, the group is moving away from developing an online interactive module on nursing orientation to public health practice.

Instead, the workgroup is aiming to develop a Community of Practice for nursing leaders, which will hold one of its meetings at our fall 2019 AGM. In order to inform the design of the Community of Practice, we would like members to complete the following short survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/CommunityofPractice2019>

I would like to encourage our members to take the time to participate in this important survey to help us design a relevant Community of Practice which meets your leadership development needs.

**Marketing and Memberships**

To date, we have 117 registered members of OPHNL. I would like to thank members for your support and patronage.

We are very excited inform you that OPHNL is producing a series of promotional videos to demonstrate the value of public health nurses and their significant contribution to the health care system and to the well-being of Ontarians. We are seeking members to join the Public Health Nursing Promotional Video Working Group to assist with this project. We hope to recruit members working in the various program standards to ensure a good representation of the valuable work done in the health units across the province. If you are interested in becoming a member, contact Sandy Zidner @ sandy.zidner@toronto.ca or Chantal Riopel @ Chantal.riopel@porcupinehu.on.ca .

We are also seeking a videographer for the project.  If you have worked with or are aware of a reputable videographer, could you please send the name and contact information as well as links to their products if available to Sandy and Chantal.

I want to express my sincere gratitude for your support and leadership. OPHNL members are having a positive impact working collectively regionally, in our workgroups and on our executive and with stakeholders across the province. Thank you to the entire executive and our members for your contributions in helping shape and propel our association forward in these changing times!

Sincerely,

Hamida Bhimani

OPHNL President

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