

ORIENTATION OVERVIEW

The online, provincial Public Health Nurse (PHN) School Health Orientation resource provides Registered Nurses with the critical information and resources needed to work as PHNs in Ontario's school system. Using the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), Protocols, and Guidelines, and a comprehensive school health approach, these PHNs will support the health, safety and well being of students, parents and school staff and administration, in the long-term and more immediately when schools reopen within the COVID-19 context.

ORIENTATION PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

New Public Health Nurses working in Ontario's schools will:

1. Work within key legislative and regulatory frameworks, and understand how they apply at the local level within the health unit, school nurse program, and the school system.
2. Understand key concepts and frameworks of public health science and consider how they can be applied to all aspects of school health nursing.
3. Use a comprehensive school health approach and engage in partnerships with the education system and school community to maximize their impact.
4. Understand the process of school community assessment and outline areas of need that may be identified during a community assessment, particularly within the current COVID-19 context.
5. Outline key aspects of COVID-19 and utilize this knowledge to inform clear communication, health teaching and all other activities related to prevention, case and contact management, monitoring, assessment, testing, surveillance, reporting, and documentation.
6. Understand, establish, and monitor infection prevention and control practices in general and as they have been tailored in the schools system for COVID-19.
7. Consider the impact of the social determinants of health on the school community, promote cultural safety, and apply a health equity and a trauma-and-violence-informed approach in the school setting.
8. Outline considerations and processes in prioritizing schools and identifying potential priority populations within school settings.
9. Utilize child and adolescent health knowledge and apply principles of engagement in anticipating, preventing, and managing needs and challenges.

ORIENTATION FORMAT & TIMING

This online orientation curriculum is offered in five modules. Learners are expected to review the objectives, access the resources, and with support, reflect on content learned and how it could be applied in school health nursing. Priority resources within all modules are to be reviewed within the first two weeks of employment and essential resources over the following two weeks. Additional resources are included for reference as needed. It is anticipated that individual health units will provide organization-specific orientation including areas such as health & safety, employee wellness, privacy, and local community resources. They will also provide coaching, and opportunities for dialogue, team-building, and networking.

SCHOOL PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE ORIENTATION 2020

PROVINCIAL ORIENTATION CONTENT OUTLINE

The school-focused PHN role is complex and requires expertise in a broad range of skills and health topics. During this time of COVID-19, the knowledge and skills needed are even more significant. Many of the newly-hired nurses will not have experience working in the public health sector, and will also be new to school health nursing. The orientation materials are intended to support the new nurses in orienting to public health, comprehensive school health, COVID-19 and infection prevention and control, social determinants of health and health equity, and child and adolescent health. Each of these areas has significant literature, theory, and resources available; this orientation will provide an overview and introduction to each area.

OVERVIEW OF ORIENTATION MODULES

MODULE 1: Introduction to Public Health

This module introduces the PHN to Ontario's public health system, including guiding legislative and regulatory frameworks, and to public health science with a particular focus on how they apply to school health nursing. This module addresses Objectives #1 & #2 above.

MODULE 2: Comprehensive School Health

This module introduces the PHN to school health and the importance of partnerships between the public health and education systems with a focus on how principles of public health are utilized in assessing and working with the school as a community, recognizing special considerations related to COVID-19. This module addresses Objectives #3 & #4 above.

MODULE 3: COVID-19 and Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)

This module introduces the PHN to key content related to COVID-19 and infection prevention and control, with a particular emphasis on the school setting. Information in this module will equip PHN's to function in the current, unique context of school re-opening. This module addresses Objectives #5 & #6 above.

MODULE 4: Social Determinants of Health and Health Equity

This module addresses key concepts of social determinants of health, health equity, cultural safety and trauma and violence-informed approaches as critical considerations in assessing and supporting a school community. In addition, the module focuses on how these key concepts are used when prioritizing schools within a catchment area, determining areas of focus within each school, and identifying priority populations.. This module addresses Objectives #7 & #8 above.

MODULE 5: Child and Adolescent Health

This module is focused on child and adolescent health with particular attention to principles of engagement and key community resources. Information will also address those challenges facing students, their families and educators related to COVID-19, school reopening, and the need for specific health protocols and education modifications. This module addresses Objective #9 above.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In response to the provincial announcement of an investment of 500 school-focused nurses to support school re-opening in Ontario, a work group with representation from the Public Health Chief Nursing Officers Network, Association of Ontario Public Health Nurse Leaders, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, and Public Health School Health Manager's Network was formed to develop this resource. Appreciation is extended to the representatives and consultant involved, for the expertise and time contributed to support new school nurses and, ultimately, the health of those within Ontario's school communities..