OPHA ALCOHOL WORK GROUP

**Terms of Reference**

**Preamble:**

Workgroups are the main way for members and other interested volunteers to engage in specific advocacy issues within the context of the mission and goals of the OPHA. The OPHA Board approves funds and other resources to assist workgroups as part of its annual budget approval process. Workgroups generate interest in and address specific community and public health issues. As well, workgroup members research, formulate position papers and examine implications and actions for OPHA in collaboration with the Board.

**Mission:** To strengthen the public health voice regarding the health and safety impact of alcohol-related policy.

**Purpose:**

* Make recommendations to the OPHA executive with respect to alcohol issues;
* Seek opportunities for OPHA to participate in advocacy with respect to alcohol, at all levels of government;
* Provide information and recommendations to Ontario public health units so they can also take advocacy positions; and
* In concert with other provincial organizations and networks (e.g. Public Health Ontario, CAMH, MADD Canada, OSBN) keep the importance of alcohol use and its impact “on the public agenda”.

**Guiding Principles:**

The cornerstones of healthy public policy related to alcohol are threefold:

* Effective controls on alcohol

Controls on the physical, economic and social availability of alcohol are not only good for public health; they are good for public finances.

* Supportive environments

Policies, programs and other initiatives should strive to foster self-esteem; promote healthy living; strengthen the ability of individuals; families and communities to care for one another; and help prevent and reduce alcohol related harm.

* Inclusive decision making

Policy discussions should acknowledge the unique health and social consequences of alcohol consumption, as well as the economic impact in the province. Current and future decisions need to be made in an environment that welcomes public discussion, considers a wide range of community groups and facilitates the development of policies that enhance public health and safety.

**Meetings:**

* Monthly meetings (excluding July and August)
* 10 meetings annually, primarily by teleconference
* Approximately 1-1.5 hours in length
* One face to face meeting if funds allow

**Membership:**

* OPHA members at large
* Representatives from Public Health Departments across Ontario and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.
* Members may also include other individuals or groups who have an interest in alcohol misuse and associated harms, and/or healthy public policy related to alcohol.
* Other members will be recruited on an as needed basis.

**Roles and Responsibilities of Members:**

Chair: The position of Chair will be reviewed annually and elected by the workgroup membership (term -January to December).

The chair is responsible for:

* + - * Developing meeting agendas
      * Presiding at all meetings
      * Communicating with OPHA

Secretary: Minute taking will be rotated alphabetically by surname among committee members for each meeting.

Minutes will be distributed electronically to the Chair, and then to committee members and the OPHA Executive Assistant in a timely manner.

Committee members:

* Attend and participate in all meetings (primarily by teleconference)
* Send regrets to Chair if unable to attend
* Share information and actions of the group with respective organizations and encourage them to take on advocacy issues where possible.
* Participate actively in committee work, taking responsibility for tasks equally.

Decision-making:

* + - * + Decisions shall be made by consensus of a majority of participating members of the workgroup.

Relationship to the OPHA:

* + - * + The workgroup is accountable to the OPHA for any funds provided through the OPHA budget.
        + All workgroup funds must be received, disbursed and reported on in a manner consistent with generally accepted accounting procedures and OPHA financial policies and procedures.
        + Any public positions, media releases, articles and publications must be consistent with established OPHA positions, and approved for release by the president of the OPHA or designate.

**Review of Terms of Reference:** These terms of reference shall be reviewed annually.

**Date of Last Review: February 2015**

**Contact:**

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