



Ontario Public Health Association
l'Association pour la santé publique de l'Ontario
Established/Établi 1949

Ontario Public Health Association

700 Lawrence Ave. W., Suite 310
Toronto ON M6A 3B4
Tel: (416) 367-3313 / 1-800-267-6817 (Ontario)
Fax: (416) 367-2844
Email: info@opha.on.ca
Website: www.opha.on.ca

Building Environmental Health Capacity Within Public Health

**Position paper and resolution adopted by the
Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA)**

Code: 2004-02 (RES)

Status: Active

Submitted by: OPHA Environmental Health Workgroup

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Resolution

WHEREAS, over the last decade, there has been a growing demand for specialized environmental health capacity within the public health sector to respond to existing and emerging environmental health concerns such as smog, heat waves, West Nile Virus and pesticides;

WHEREAS, at a provincial level, environmental health issues have traditionally been dealt with by the Ministry of the Environment, while at a local level, they are often dealt with by public health units and boards of health as directed by the Health Promotion & Protection Act;

WHEREAS, public health units that must deal with environmental health issues, are getting their funding, guidance and support from a provincial Ministry that has few resources with which to respond to environmental issues;

WHEREAS, the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines that are used by the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care and public health units to prioritize programs for funding, make almost no mention of air quality (except as it relates to environmental tobacco smoke) and very little mention of environmental health issues;

WHEREAS, an drafted Environmental Health Education, Promotion and Advocacy program (also known as the Healthy Environments Mandatory Program) was developed for inclusion in the Mandatory Guidelines in 1992, that was supported by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI) and the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OPHA advocate to the Minister of Health and Long-term Care and the Chief Medical Officer of Health to:

1. Strengthen and enhance capacity within the Public Health Division and across local public health units to identify, monitor, assess, prevent, mitigate or otherwise respond to threats to human health arising from a degraded and/or contaminated biophysical environment; and
2. Revise the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines to include Environmental Health as a program area that includes risk identification, monitoring, research, policy and program development and implementation, health promotion and cross-linking with other program areas by health staff with expertise in environmental health issues.

Implementation Plan:

- The OPHA Environmental Health Work Group seek a meeting with the Chief Medical Officer of Health to discuss the need to enhance environmental health capacity within Ontario's public health sector.
- The OPHA Environmental Health Work Group encourage other non-governmental organizations to demonstrate their support for increased environmental health capacity within the public health sector by sending letters supporting our position to the Minister and to the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- The OPHA Board of Directors ensure that the need for greater environmental health capacity is reflected where appropriate in submissions and reports prepared by the OPHA on broader public health issues.

Regarding resolutions, position papers and motions:

Status: Policy statements (resolutions, position papers and motions) are categorized as:

Active, if:

1. The activities outlined in the policy statement's implementation plan have not yet been completed; or
2. The policy statement addresses an issue that is currently relevant to public health in Ontario.

Archived, if:

1. The activities outlined in the policy statement's implementation plan have been completed; or
2. The policy statement addresses an issue that is not currently relevant to public health in Ontario or is not based upon the most current evidence. The statement remains the position of the OPHA until a new statement is adopted that effectively reverses or essentially negates all or major elements of an earlier statement. In this instance, the former supersedes the latter

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