

## **Elena Hasheminejad, OPHA's Sheela Basrur Student Award**

The late Dr. Sheela Basrur, Ontario's former Chief Medical Officer of Health, left an impressive legacy as a champion for a strong and dynamic public health system. OPHA created the Sheela Basrur Award to honour her vocation and life work. This award acknowledges a student who is currently enrolled in a public health related field and echoes the leadership, values and aspirations of Dr. Sheela Basrur.

OPHA is pleased to present the Dr. Sheela Basrur Award to Elena Hasheminejad. Elena exemplifies a public health professional dedicated to enhancing her practice of public health nursing at York Region. Elena is completing her Master of Education at Yorkville University while serving as a Clinical Course Director at York University for their Nursing Program.

Her nominator has been impressed by her passion and work ethic. Elena first connection to OPHA was as a volunteer to review the OPHA position paper on recreational cannabis use. She was already the co-chair of the Public Health Unit Collaborative on Cannabis. Her role as co-chair allowed her to organize regular meetings with representatives from all 36 public health unit to consolidate responses to the impending provincial and federal cannabis legislation. Elena suggested that the Public Health Unit Collaborative and OPHA Cannabis Task Group work together to accomplish the same goals and objectives. Soon afterwards, Elena joined OPHA Cannabis Task Group as Co-chair with her nominator, Michelle Suarly. With their leadership the group represented OPHA to invitations to present findings to the

Provincial Government, offered seats at the table to discuss provincial legalization regarding recreational cannabis use, and recommend changes to the Ontario Public Health Standards of Practice.

More recently, when the Task Group was invited to testify as a witness at the House of Common's Standing Committee on Health, Elena was the first to volunteer to prepare a testimony and to attend the committee itself, serving as a second witness on behalf of OPHA. At the meeting, Elena was able to articulate key messages and provide thoughtful answers to questions posed by Members of Parliament. Our testimony was successful because of her professionalism and grace.

Given her track record, there's no doubt Elena Hasheminejad will continue to bring new and innovative ideas to her team, health unit and public health sector through her academic pursuits, passion for public health and commitment to making a difference.

Congratulations Elena!

## **Helen Doyle, Winner OPHA's Legacy Award**

OPHA's Legacy Award recognizes outstanding contributions by an OPHA member to our Association as well as to the public health sector in Ontario.

This year, OPHA is pleased to present this award to Helen Doyle, an extraordinary individual, volunteer, leader and advocate for environmental health.

Helen recently retired as a manager at York Region Health Services where she served for over 30 years. While I will speak in a minute to Helen's impressive contributions there, allow me to first describe how she made a difference at OPHA.

Helen has been a long time OPHA member and has chaired our environmental health workgroup for the last five years. In that role, she has influenced provincial policies and legislation on issues ranging from climate change, the built environment, air quality to healthy housing. From preparing responses to Environmental Bill of Rights postings, participating in the Ontario Environmental and Occupational Carcinogen Workgroup, meeting with Ministers and senior officials, working with the province on the new public health standards to the implementation of the Toxic Reduction Act. More recently, Helen has been appointed as Co-Chair of the Toxics and other Harmful Pollutants Issue Table for the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Collaborative.

Helen is a trailblazer, jumping on board with new initiatives such as Eco-health Ontario, the Rentsafe project with the Canadian

Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment and now OPHA's project on health and climate change messaging.

At York Region, Helen was instrumental in establishing its Building Healthy Communities Work Group, Built Environment and Health Action Plan, Corporate Clean Air Strategy and more!

Helen peers are appreciative that Helen has been such a terrific mentor and a friend, providing advice and expertise to many of her colleagues as they worked through the wide array of issues that arise in environmental health.

We're pleased that Helen continues to contribute her expertise by serving as volunteer with OPHA and championing the issues she is so passionate about - climate change, the built environment, healthy ecosystems and healthy housing.

Helen we want to honour and thank you for your outstanding contributions to OPHA and the public health sector in Ontario by bestowing you with OPHA's Legacy Award.

## **OPHA 2018 Award of Excellence, Alex Berry**

It is my pleasure to recognize Alex Berry as the 2018 recipient of the OPHA Award of Excellence. This award is given in recognition of Alex's outstanding leadership, contributions to public health, innovation and capacity building, especially related to continuous quality improvement or CQI for short. Given the theme of this workshop, we thought it would be very a propos to present this award to Alex today rather than at OPHA's annual fall forum.

Alex has been the Manager of the Foundational Standards and Communications teams at Northwestern Health Unit for the last four and half years. While Alex's achievements have been many from leading strategic planning, research and knowledge exchange to emergency preparedness, his contributions in continuous quality improvement have really stood out.

Over the past year, Alex developed and established a CQI system for the Northwestern Health Unit. He created and led an internal CQI committee to ensure CQI principles are woven throughout the health unit's processes to improve the quality of its programming. In addition, Alex initiated a process for risk management and excellence and was the driver behind the health unit's achievement of Excellence Canada certification.

Along with leading change at the local level, Alex has been making his mark at the provincial level too. Through co-leading Public Health Ontario's Locally Driven Collaborative Project on CQI, he's been engaging staff from 30 health units in activities ranging from a literature review to measuring and reporting on the state of continuous quality improvement in Ontario's health units. Various Medical Officers of

Health and their staff have remarked that Alex's innovation and engagement skills have contributed to the success of the LDCP project and the strong partnership of the project team. He is viewed by others as a critical thinker, thoughtful and empowering leader.

While some find CQI challenging, Alex has excelled in making this topic easy to understand, highlighting its relevance to public health work and ultimately improving the quality of public health processes and programming.

Alex Berry has also assisted other local agencies in developing their foundational and communication systems by sharing resources and policies, mentoring staff, participating in staff recruitment and in the North West Local Health Integration Network quality improvement committee. In addition, Alex is leading a collaborative partnership among seven health units on a climate change vulnerability assessment.

Alex's Medical Officer of Health describes him as being a joy to work with whose personality energizes his co-workers and audience. Using his excellent facilitation and change management skills, he's been effective in driving cross-organizational projects, sharing his passion for CQI and creating opportunities for others to get involved.

I am delighted to be able to bring a spotlight to this exceptional work and honour Alex by conferring him with OPHA's Award of Excellence.