


alPHa

Association of Local
PUBLIC HEALTH
Agencies

Building On Our Strengths Member Update

November 18, 2016

alPHa's current strategic plan covers the period 2014 to 2016. The plan was set after surveying alPHa members for input on priorities. The resulting 2014-2016 strategic plan, *Building on Our Strengths*, was introduced to members in February 2014. The plan was described by 5 areas of focus for alPHa and was strongly positioned on supporting member boards of health and local public health units.

The following is an update on activities related to the plan.

Area of Focus 1 – Promoting Members

alPHa will support its members to be better understood and valued by municipal and provincial governments.

Approach: alPHa will engage its members in a strategy to:

- build the local public health unit story
- get the news out through a communications plan

Activities

1. For the 2014 municipal election,
 - a. alPHa created a 2-page flyer designed to inform municipal candidates about local public health and encourage interest in participating on a board of health.
 - b. alPHa created a second 2-page flyer that gave them more information about their role in supporting the health of citizens in their community, as well as encouraging interest in participating on a board of health.
 - c. Both of these documents were provided to members for local distribution.
2. A Public Health Advocacy Working Group was established with participation from member health unit policy and communications staff. The working group met 6 times by teleconference and developed a templated approach on specific issues related to alPHa's resolutions. One-page templates were designed to briefly inform intended audiences (select provincial politicians and government employees) about the issue, public health's role in the issue, evidence about return on investment and an "ask" from public health. The issues identified at the time were:
 - a. Call for a Provincial Alcohol Strategy
 - b. Call for an Early Childhood Development Strategy
 - c. Call for a Health in All Policies Approach
 - d. Call to Publicly Fund Gardasil Vaccine for Grade 8 Males
 - e. Call for Reintroduction of the Private Members Bill 162
 - f. Focus on Physical Literacy
 - g. Call for Reintroduction of Bill 131: Youth Smoking Prevention Act

The material in the templates was useful in aPHa advocacy and the templated approach needs to be taken forward to resolutions passed in June 2016. Next steps include:

- Renewing the committee
- Reviewing the content for current relevancy
- Selecting new issues as needed
- Developing content for new issues and refining content for remaining issues

Area of Focus 2 – Representing Members

aPHa will focus on representing its members in responding to member resolutions and public health sector issues where a collective voice best serves the membership as a whole, e.g., issues that impact the structure and funding of the public health sector and public health units.

Approach: aPHa will

- represent its members through the development of strong relationships with stakeholder representatives
- focus its work on member resolutions and public health sector issues that impact the structure and funding of the public health sector and public health units
- enhance member advocacy on public health issues through supporting the alignment of member voices as appropriate
- provide a public health voice at provincial government and other stakeholder consultations and special meetings
- represent its members on committees and working groups

Activities

1. aPHa successfully advocated against the proposal in the *Patients First Discussion Paper* to move funding for local public health under the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs).
2. aPHa President appeared before the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly to provide comments on impacts for Local Public Health related to the Patients First Act, 2016.
3. aPHa has been invited to provide members to a number of committees, for example, committees reviewing the Ontario Public Health Standards, the Public Health Expert Panel, the Public Health Work Stream and the AMO Public Health Task Force.
4. aPHa has continued to maintain strong relationships with key partners, for example, the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), Public Health Ontario (PHO), and the provincial government, both political and staff levels.
5. aPHa has clarified its role as supporting a strong and sustainable local public health system in Ontario.
6. aPHa has clarified and narrowed its focus to advocating for member resolutions as well as areas that have impact on the structure and operations of local public health.
7. aPHa has encouraged member-lead development of advocacy efforts with support from aPHa as necessary in areas where the issue is of specific interest to a member group.

Area of Focus 3 – Supporting Members

alPHA will ensure that members are aware of proposed legislation and matters that are of interest to public health units.

alPHA will facilitate the sharing of member positions, resolutions and discussion documents to encourage broader support for member issues among alPHA membership.

Approach: alPHA will monitor and share information with members about:

- legislation introduced at the provincial level
- government consultation processes regarding policy directions and proposed legislation
- proposed local by-laws
- local board of health resolutions
- local health unit policy work
- affiliate organization advocacy work

Activities

1. alPHA has established the “Current Consultations” page on its web site where information is posted about government consultations. Members are informed and provided links through email and alPHA’s “Information Break” newsletter.
2. alPHA has established a web page for posting existing and proposed health promoting local by-laws, categorized by social determinants of health. A survey and on-line review have been conducted to collect initial by-laws to populate the page. Next steps include:
 - Establishing an ongoing process to collect existing and proposed health promoting local by-laws
 - Establishing a regular communications process for alPHA members
3. Processes to identify and share health unit policy work and affiliate organization advocacy work is ad hoc at present and needs to be better established.

Area of Focus 4 – Connecting Members

alPHA will work with Board of Health Section and COMOHO representatives to coordinate networking opportunities for these member groups.

Approach: alPHA will coordinate on behalf of its members:

- an annual conference and annual general meeting
- 1 or 2 face-to-face meetings annually for Board of Health Section and COMOHO members in addition to section meetings at the annual conference
- web-based approaches to networking and sharing of information

Activities

1. alPHA has held an annual conference each year.
2. alPHA has worked with the BOH Section and COMOHO to identify topics of interest for face-to-face meetings and 2 meetings per year have been held.
3. alPHA has established web-based approaches for the sharing of information wherever possible, for example providing work space for working groups to post information.

Area of Focus 5 – Enriching Members

alPHA will provide professional development to support excellence in public health leadership and public health unit management and governance.

Approach: alPHA will focus its professional development on enhancing the skills of members in the areas of leadership, management and governance. Professional development will be delivered through the annual conference, webinars and face-to-face meetings.

Activities

1. alPHA enlisted the help of a governance expert to create an outline for board of health orientation and ongoing professional development. This outline was distributed to members and was used as the basis for eLearning modules.
2. alPHA created a governance toolkit for boards of health and senior managers. The toolkit includes examples of policies and other tools gathered from member boards of health. The toolkit can be accessed by all members through alPHA's website.
3. alPHA has coordinated training for board of health and senior management members in the area of risk management. A working group has been established and work is ongoing. alPHA's web site now contains a set of pages to provide resources to health units engaged in developing local risk management processes.
4. For board of health members, alPHA has created opportunities for input into the skills-based boards work lead by the Institute on Governance on behalf of the provincial government.
5. alPHA provided secretariat support to the Records Management Working Group. The working group developed an eLearning module on records management that has been made available to all members.
6. alPHA has begun the creation of eLearning modules for boards of health. Two draft modules exist and work is underway to develop modules related to risk management. Next steps include:
 - a. completing the drafted modules
 - b. completing the risk management modules

alPHA's 2014-16 Strategic Plan can be found at www.alPHaweb.org under "About Us".