



Association of Local  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
Agencies

# Distinguished Service Awards

June 19, 2025



# 2025 Award Recipients



## Sue Perras

Sue Perras is passionately committed to public health. She has served as a Board of Health (BOH) member for over 17 years. Sue is an engaged and supportive member of alPHa and its Board of Health Section. She served on the Porcupine Health Unit BOH for 16 years as the municipally elected Councillor (and during her tenure as Mayor) for Smooth Rock Falls. Since her entire career was in banking management, it was natural for her to sit on the BOH Finance Committee to provide oversight, and to ensure accountability. In later years, Sue became the Chair of the Board. Throughout the pandemic Sue's leadership as Chair was steadfast. In this role, she liaised regularly with the Medical Officer of Health. Despite the criticism some of the public displayed against the public health measures implemented, Sue took a bold stand and was featured in the media for supporting public health measures, and especially the vaccine campaigns. When the province offered local public health agencies the opportunity to explore merging, Porcupine Health Unit and Timiskaming Health Unit successfully merged to form Northeastern Health Unit. If you ask Sue about this, she will proudly and enthusiastically tell you they are "trail blazers and full steam ahead!" Sue serves on the merged BOH as a provincial appointment. Sue maintains that as a BOH member, it is important to look outside of the board, and that is where she says that alPHa has always come in. She will tell you that alPHa has provided education, insight on provincial legislation for public health, and networking opportunities with BOH colleagues from across the province. In fact, we know Sue has attended almost every alPHa event for the past 17 years (in-person and virtually).



## Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang

With a fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Medical Specialty Certification in Public Health and Preventive Medicine), Dr. Wang has served in local public health in Ontario with the Region of Waterloo Public Health and Paramedic Services from 2004 until 2017 as Associate Medical Officer of Health, and as Medical Officer of Health since 2017 (acting Medical Officer of Health until 2020). Dr. Wang's contributions have included leadership within the COMOH Section as a member of its Executive and within alPHA's Board since 2018. During this time, she has served as COMOH Section Vice Chair (2022-2023) and Chair (2023-2024), and since 2024 has been the Vice Chair of alPHA. She has also served as a member of the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health's Public Health Leadership Table and as a member of the Ontario Health's Clinical Council, both since 2022. Dr. Wang's commitment to public health medical practice is demonstrated by her participation four times in the last eight years on the Examination Board of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Public Health and Preventive Medicine). Her contributions also include having been an Assistant Professor (Part-Time) in Post-Graduate Medical Education with McMaster University since 2008. These have been challenging years to provide peer leadership, addressing the pandemic of a century and attending to the sensitivities in its aftermath as society and the public health community have commenced recovery. Dr. Wang has demonstrated in her leadership political astuteness and integrity in raising and addressing challenging public and population health needs. She has been successful in fostering unity among our peers in public health as well as demonstrating sensitivity both to the needs of the public health community and to the constraints and realities that we face. In addition, Dr. Wang has always been supportive to those she works with, providing words of encouragement and acknowledgment often and when most needed for us to continue together with our challenging mandate in public health. She has also demonstrated commitment to strategic thinking in our work, holding us to our collective goals and intentions. Finally, Dr. Wang has been tireless in her commitment to strengthening local public health.



## Nancy Kennedy

Throughout Nancy Kennedy's distinguished 36-year career, she has made a valuable contribution to public health dentistry and to public health overall. Since 1989, she has overseen five public health dental clinics, including one specifically for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, with a total of 33 dental chairs providing essential services. Under Nancy's leadership, these clinics have become vital hubs for accessible dental care for vulnerable populations. She has skillfully coordinated multiple dental programs, including Ontario Works (Adults), Ottawa Children's Aid Society, Healthy Smiles Ontario, the Community Denture Program for OW/ODSP clients, the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Plan, and the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program for Indigenous clients, ensuring that those who need it most receive comprehensive and equitable care. In recognition of her leadership, Nancy has twice been awarded the City of Ottawa's City Manager's Award of Excellence. Her efforts to secure \$12 million in capital funding for the expansion and renovation of dental facilities have significantly improved the City's infrastructure, ensuring that essential services are available to even more residents in need. Nancy has also been a champion of collaboration, fostering partnerships with local oral health professionals to ensure continuity of care for low-income populations. A testament to her innovative approach was the rapid mobilization of emergency dental services in response to the arrival of Syrian refugees in Ottawa. By coordinating with local dentists, Nancy facilitated access to urgent dental care for refugees, a crucial service at a time of immense need. In addition to these achievements, she demonstrated exemplary leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic as the lead for the Ottawa Voluntary Isolation Centre. Nancy's ability to manage complex, high-pressure situations while maintaining a focus on community health highlights her exceptional service and resilience.



## Loretta Ryan

Loretta Ryan's integrity, professionalism, and work for the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) is nothing short of excellent. She provides unwavering, outstanding, principled and dedicated leadership to the association's members, staff, and to key public health stakeholders and partners. Her leadership, particularly with regard to government relations and tactical planning, knowledge sharing, and raising alPHA's profile is outstanding. Loretta has effectively and actively engaged Boards of Health, Medical Officers of Health and Associate Medical Officers of Health, and Affiliate members. She has also advanced the profile and positions of alPHA and Ontario's public health agencies by working with the offices of the Premier of Ontario, Ontario's Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, and Chief Medical Officer of Health, along with staff from the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario, Ontario Health, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, and other key provincial decision-makers and policy influencers. Additionally, she has revised and modernized the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (Ontario) Operating By-law, Strategic Plan, governance and operational policies, and procedures and protocols for the association to comply with all legal requirements under Ontario's Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. Furthermore, Loretta provides executive leadership and manages the business of the association in accordance with the By-law, Strategic Plan, and policies and procedures in keeping with the Board of Directors' priorities, strategic objectives, and their governance role, doing so with innovation and great commitment. She also exceeded milestones and timelines working with legal counsel and alPHA volunteers and staff on the review of the outdated alPHA Constitution, resulting in creating the new Operational By-law. Loretta kept the alPHA Board of Directors, Executive Committee, membership, and staff engaged and informed of these reviews through reports, consultations, sessions and workshops at events. Loretta works tirelessly on behalf of alPHA and is a key public health leader who is deservedly and whole heartedly recognized for the alPHA 2025 Distinguished Service Award.



## Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award reflects the commitment of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies to recognize the significant contributions made to public health in Ontario by board of health members, health unit staff, and public health professionals.

Eligibility of the award is open to any of alPHA's members, including medical officers of health, board of health members, members of Affiliate organizations and, occasionally, individuals outside the Association.

The Award is given to those individuals who have demonstrated exceptional qualities of leadership in their own milieu, achieved tangible results through long service or distinctive acts, and shown exemplary devotion to public health at local and provincial levels.

Previous Distinguished Service Award recipients can be found [here](#).

Congratulations to our 2025 Distinguished Service Award recipients!



PO Box 73510 RPO Wychwood Toronto, ON M6C 4A7  
(416) 595-0006 | [info@alphaweb.org](mailto:info@alphaweb.org) | [www.alphaweb.org](http://www.alphaweb.org)  
Follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter) [@PHAgencies](https://twitter.com/PHAgencies)