

2015 Public Health Executive & Administrative Assistant Conference
Friday, February 6, 2015
Novotel Toronto Centre, 45 The Esplanade, Toronto

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

Public Health in Ontario

alPHA executive director Linda Stewart provided an overview of public health in Ontario, including the role of public health units. She spoke on the different types of board of health structures, of which the majority are fully independent or autonomous. She also reviewed the key players in the public health sector. In addition to health units, these include the Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care, Public Health Ontario, Public Health Agency of Canada, municipalities, and associations, among others.

[Click here to view the presentation by L. Stewart](#)

Newsrooms of Today – The Changing Landscape of Media

Carrie Beatty, a communications specialist at Niagara Region Public Health, presented on the role of social media in the health unit, its importance and how to leverage it as a news tool. In today's increasingly connected world, getting our public health messages heard can be a challenge. There are now many ways audiences are consuming media. Not only must attention be paid to traditional media (TV, print and radio), health units also now need to consider online and social media forms of communication. The advent of email and social media, in particular, has created a greater sense of urgency requiring faster response times to public health-related issues and events. It also has reduced the amount of time in which health units can be proactive on a "hot" issue. The prevalence of the Internet and its information, some of it credible and some not so credible, is yet another challenge. Nonetheless, health units must remain strategic when using social media as a news and communications vehicle.

Public health administrative assistants have a role to play in understanding how their health unit uses social media. They can also help provide communications staff timely or quick access to the individuals they support as these are often the content experts and ideal spokespeople on public health matters in the community. This is especially true during public health crises. Administrative assistants can also assist communications staff by flagging emerging areas or issues in their specific programs and departments.

[Click here to view the presentation by C. Beatty](#)

Sending a Clear Message

Andrew Scott, Manager, Regulatory Compliance, EMS, Niagara Region Public Health, gave a talk on how health unit staff can improve the communications flow within their health unit by sending clear messages. An initial group exercise showed how everyone makes assumptions in their communication attempts. The exercise also underscored the fact that there are often mixed messages and even high

rates of ineffective messaging when people communicate at individual and organizational levels. Communication lessons from Walt Disney as he built and staffed the famous theme park were explored. The key message that Disney had sent to all his employees, whether they were upper management or those working on the ground, was “We are ALL here to help.” Also unique for that time was Disney’s problem-solving process: identify the problem, identify the solution, plan the necessary changes that need to happen to solve the problem, and commit to the change. This meant that anyone who worked at the theme park was a leader, i.e. someone who can affect change, whether or not he or she held a leadership position.

Borrowing these concepts, public health administrative assistants were encouraged to make positive changes in their health units using the following steps:

1. Define your vision (determine what you want to change);
2. Communicate your vision through active communication; and
3. Put your vision in place by organizing and prioritizing, engaging and committing.

Key takeaways from this presentation for the audience were: Recognize yourself as a Leader; set aside time to work on your Vision; engage your MOH or manager to develop the vision of the future (using the worksheet below); use the information in this slide deck to guide your planning; and commit to the delivery and communication of your vision to targeted audience(s).

[Click here to view the presentation by A. Scott](#)

[Click here to download the Vision worksheet](#)

Going Paperless: Overview

IT consultants Arn Kashino and Eli Robillard from MNP Management Consultants gave an overview of the number of ways an office could paperless, or, at the very least, reduce its use of paper. It’s not possible for the work environment to completely paperless because of legal and legislative requirements. The two main definitions of paperless include the reduction of paper in the work environment and the conversion of paper into digital. There are many benefits to going paperless. These include automating processes and workflow; making data easily and securely transmittable, searchable and reportable; and saving storage space and money. It should be remembered that: “Paperless is what an efficient organization looks like--it’s not an end in itself. “

Yet despite the benefits, there are challenges, too, with going paperless, particularly in the area of readiness with respect to the organization (is staff motivated to go digital, is the IT staff ready), data (how well does staff know the size/shape of the content), and systems (what structures need to be in place to support this change).

In order for an organization to effectively reduce paper, it needs a shared vision of what success looks like, strong leadership support, early and frequent engagement of staff, clearly outlined business objectives, a plan to maintain it and keep it relevant, as well as an evaluation process to measure success.

[Click here to view the presentation by MNP](#)

Going Paperless: York Region Experience – Part 1

Christopher Raynor, Deputy Clerk, Corporate Services, York Region, identified two areas the Region has gone paperless in; namely, the management of meetings and electronic records. At Council meetings,

iPads have replaced agendas and backgrounders. The Region has also adopted an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system, the benefits of which include greater efficiencies and collaboration/sharing of information; ability to control versions of documents; and increased security, etc. However, email management remains a huge challenge for health units. One solution York Region has employed is creating an archival system for all electronic mail.

[Click here to view the presentation by C. Raynor](#)

Going Paperless: York Region Experience – Part 2

Sandra Norris, Manager, Technology Projects and Systems Support, at York Region Public Health provided an overview of the mostly Microsoft-based paperless tools used by the health unit and their key benefits. These tools include Lync, SharePoint, OneNote and RightFax. Lync is a virtual connection where people can share desktop applications, screens, and work together in real time (similar to Skype). It is ideal for webinars, regular meetings, and boardrooms that have been upgraded to support Lync meetings. Sharepoint is another tool that can hold all materials related to projects, and allows for web design, collaboration, content management, and the sharing/aggregating of business intelligence data. OneNote is a digital notebook that provides a single place to gather all of your notes and information, and can be synced to smartphones. RightFax is a centralized, computer based fax solution that provides faxing capabilities across an organization. Enterprise Notification System is a Canadian-hosted mass notification system which uses a variety of mechanisms such as email, fax, cell, phone, SMS, Facebook, and Twitter to reach a large group of people quickly. IDCD is a fax and email tool, and is effective in emergency situations when trying to assemble a group of people quickly.

[Click here to view the presentation by S. Norris](#)

alPHa Tools for Health Units

Susan Lee and Karen Reece from alPHa highlighted the two main tools alPHa provides to health units. These are its listserves and website. An online tour of the most relevant and useful parts of the website was conducted. Attendees were encouraged to review their own profile page on alPHa's website and send changes to Karen. They were also urged to make use of the "HU Admin Assistant" and "Board of Health AAs" discussion groups that have been created solely for executive and administrative assistants in Ontario's health unit.

Public Health Gone Viral

Representatives from three health units presented on their award-winning social media campaigns and viral videos that took top honours in the Canada Health Infoway Challenge.

Toronto Public Health

Shawn Yu, Supervisor, Multimedia Services (Digital Communications) at Toronto Public Health focused on his health unit's approach to social media and highlighted its social media campaign, condomTO. The social media strategy for condomTO was part of an overall broader strategy to build a healthy conversation around sexual health and condom use in the gay community. Using social media has not only allowed the health unit to be a trusted source of health information for the public, but it has also made access to this information very easy for many people. \

[Click here to view the presentation by S. Yu](#)

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

Christine Miller, Executive Assistant to the Medical Officers of Health, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit presented on her health unit's sexual health online campaign targeting men. Administrative staff can promote social media by encouraging its use in the health unit, evaluating it for continuous quality improvement, and discovering the most effective channels of communication.

[Click here to view the presentation by C. Miller](#)

Sudbury & District Health Unit

Rachel Quesnel, Executive Assistant to the MOH and Board Secretary, Sudbury & District Health Unit, introduced her health unit's viral video on childhood immunization. Produced for just \$465, the video has made a huge return on investment in terms of its reach, costs, and awareness raising. The prize money has been reinvested in the development of other social media projects.

[Click here to view the presentation by R. Quesnel](#)

*Note: All the above presentations in this summary can be found in **one** place on alPHA's website at <https://alphaweb.site-ym.com/?Presentations> However, to access them using this link, you will need to login to the alPHA website with your user ID and password.*