



PHANS

Public Health Association of Nova Scotia

P.O. Box 33074, Halifax, NS B3L 4T6

Public Health:

Healthy Community, Healthy Environment, Healthy Economy

A (Very) Brief History of PHANS

Although the Public Health Association of Nova Scotia was formed in the late fifties or early sixties, it was first registered as a society in 1973. This overview focuses on our activities from 1989 onward.

1989-1999

The decade from 1989 to 1999 was bracketed by milestones in health reform and PHANS was involved every step of the way. During the years following the Royal Commission on Health Care, PHANS became a credible independent voice for health system reform—a credibility born of hard work and persistence.

PHANS was represented on nearly every Task Force, Committee and Commission related to health reform that was struck during this decade. We had members on the Task Force on Primary Health Care, the Ministerial Task Force on Physician Policy Development, the Task Force on Nursing, the Blueprint Committee, the Provincial Health Council and the Working Group on Midwifery Regulation.

PHANS offered critiques of nearly every document the bodies produced and met with every Minister of Health to state our positions on all aspects of health system reform. PHANS also made presentations to the Law Amendments Committee regarding the Act to Establish Regional Health Boards (Bill 95) and participated on a review committee to revise this legislation.

PHANS also participated in joint efforts to influence health reform—for example the Think Tank on Health System Reform.

During this decade, PHANS also devoted considerable effort to defining and explaining the role of public health and its relationship to health promotion and disease prevention. PHANS worked to help government decision-makers in departments other than health—for example, environment, education and agriculture—to understand the concepts of population health and the determinants of health, and how these are affected by decisions and initiatives that occur far from the health department. One of the most intense and effective of these PHANS initiatives was our critique of the Provincial government's "Government by Design" document. PHANS' analysis—titled "Nova Scotia's Health Goals, Determinants of Health and Government by Design"—was

circulated extensively among government departments and Regional Health Boards.

PHANS furthered this initiative in May 1995, by organizing a major intersectoral conference—“Sickness, Health and the Economy”—that was attended by over 100 participants from federal, provincial, regional and local governments.

PHANS In addition to its work on public health and health reform, PHANS lobbied and advocated for an amazing variety of issues. A partial list includes:

- Heart Health
- Smoking
- AIDS
- Child Health
- School Health Education
- Sex Education
- Cervical Screening
- Gambling
- Environmental Illness
- Affordable Housing
- Environment and Health
- Nutrition
- Infant formula contracts at the Grace
- Availability of condoms in schools
- Loss of medical Officers of Health
- User fees
- Liberalized sale of alcohol
- Support for the Provincial Health Goals
- Accountability and Transparency of Regional Health Boards
- Home Care
- Primary Health Care Projects
- Poverty reduction
- Smoke free vehicles
- Early child development supports and services
- Building public health capacity

2000-2008

For a few years at the end of the last decade and the beginning of this one, PHANS had a period of decreased activity. However, the organization regrouped and has continued to be active in pursuing our mission to advocate for policy change. This partial and preliminary list of some of our activities gives a flavour of where PHANS has put its resources over the past few years:

- Opened a website and list serve to better communicate with its members, key public health stakeholders and the general public (2001)

- Accountability Framework, which began as our submission to the Romanow Commission (2002)
- Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy committees (2003)
- Election Primers for 2003 and 2006 elections
- VOICES Grant with MicMac Friendship Centre, to define what the idea of “health” meant to the community to develop a framework for measuring progress toward that goal (2004)
- Comment on gaming strategy, tobacco strategy (2004)
- Public Health Roundtable (2004)
- Working with Doctors NS and Health Charities to push for and participate in the Independent Review of Public Health (2004-5)
- Participation in the development of National Health Goals (2005)
- Health Literacy Consultation (2005)
- Public Health Capacity Framework – initial development, and joining with CPHA, NL, NB, PEI and Manitoba to get Health Canada funding to further develop and refine the framework (2005)
- Presenting a paper on the process of developing the Capacity Framework at CPHA’s Conference in Ottawa (September 2005)
- Website development (2003 & 2005)
- Many letters to comment on or respond to government initiatives and strategies
- The Renewal of Public Health in Nova Scotia: building a public health system to meet the needs of Nova Scotians (2005 and ongoing)
- A Survey of PHANS Members – their expectations, involvement and satisfaction with PHANS (2006)
- Supporting Resolutions made by PHANS members to support Skills Enhancement for Public Health and the Core Competencies for Public Health (2007)
- Supporting a Resolution made by PHANS members to support Prevent Violence Canada (2007)
- Supporting the Annual Canadian Public Health Association Conference "Reducing Health Inequalities through Evidence & Action" when it was held in Halifax June 01 to 04, 2008
- Increasing membership in PHANS (from 69 in 2004 to 114 in 2008)

PHANS has a long history of advocacy and volunteer engagement in Nova Scotia. It has been and continues to be, an organization with few physical assets whose activities are dependent on the talent, resources and energy of its Board and members.

PHANS Presidents

1973: E. Margaret Bentley (Peggy)

1974: Mr. C. Edward Tupper

1975: Miriam J. Hayman (Bunny)

1976: Mr. Gerry A. Reno
1977: Mr. Ralph E. J. Ricketts
1978: Mr. Ralph E. J. Ricketts
1979: Mr. Michael Mac Phee
1980: Mrs. M. Grantham
1981: Mr. Sandy Morrison
1982: Mr. Steven R. Kenny
1983: Mrs. Elizabeth Lambie
1984: Dr. David Mac Lean
1985: Dr. David Mac Lean
1986: Mr. Merv Ungurain
1987: Ms. Janet Braunstein
1988: Ms. Janet Braunstein
1989: Ms. Sharon MacIntosh
1990: Vacant
1991: Dr. Lynn McIntyre
1992: Dr. Lynn McIntyre
1993: Mike Marentette
1994: Mike Marentette
1995: Marjorie Willison
1996: Marjorie Willison
1997: Todd Leader
1998: Todd Leader
1999: Todd Leader
2000: Todd Leader
2001: Susan McBroom
2002: Susan McBroom
2003: Susan McBroom
2004: Florence Tarrant
2005: Andrea Hilchie-Pye
2006: Andrea Hilchie-Pye
2007: Marie McCully Collier
2008: Marie McCully Collier