

Public Health Association of Nova Scotia

Proposed Resolution 1 – Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada

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Presented and approved at the 2007 Annual General Meeting

Whereas Core Competencies are the set of skills, knowledge and abilities necessary for the broad practice of public health that transcend the boundaries of the specific disciplines in public health and reflect a public health approach to health issues. ¹

Whereas Core Competencies can benefit the people who work in public health by:

- providing guidelines for the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes required by individual practitioners in public health
- supporting the recruitment, development and retention of public health practitioners
- providing a rational basis for developing curricula, training and professional development tools
- improving consistency in job descriptions and performance assessment
- supporting the development of discipline and program specific sets of competencies. ²

Whereas Core Competencies can benefit public health organizations as they utilize Public Health Accreditation Standards to examine and improve the quality of services they provide. ³

Whereas the Public Health Agency of Canada is leading the introduction of core competencies for public health practitioners in Canada in response to the work of the Federal/provincial/territorial advisory and task groups that developed a pan-Canadian framework to strengthen public health capacity (*Building the Public Health Workforce for the 21st Century*, 2005) and a draft set of Core Competencies for Public Health practice in Canada as one of the foundation building blocks in the framework. ¹

Whereas the Nova Scotia Department of Health (DOH) and Nova Scotia Health Promotion (NSHP) undertook, in 2006, an external review, assessing the current capacity, strengths, limitations and opportunities and to position Nova Scotia to build a stronger, viable public health system services and as a result has adopted twenty-one actions for system renewal (pages 1 and 22). ⁴

Whereas the provincial *Renewal of Public Health in Nova Scotia* report concludes that the success of renewing Nova Scotia's public health system will ultimately depend on the extent to which a sufficient and competent workforce is achieved (page 43).⁴

Whereas the federal Naylor report (National Advisory Committee of SARS and Public Health) states "No attempt to improve public health will succeed that does not recognize the fundamental importance of providing and maintaining in every local health agency across Canada an adequate staff of highly skilled and motivated public health professionals. Our national aim should be to produce a cadre of outstanding public health professionals who are adequately qualified and compensated, and who have clear roles, responsibilities and career paths." ⁵

Whereas PHANS has been an integral partner, supporting the renewal of Public Health in Nova Scotia as a member of the reviews' Provincial Advisory Committee and actively contributed to the review by discussing key themes and their implications and providing recommendations for the conduct of the review.⁴

Whereas PHANS monitors social, political, economic and environmental developments that may influence public health; advocates for policy change on issues that affect health; responds to community health issues and concerns; raises public and professional awareness of health issues; encourages individual and community action; liaises with other voluntary agencies and government departments; and participates in government committees examining health policy.⁶

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Public Health Association of Nova Scotia (PHANS) endorse and support the work of the Public Health Agency of Canada to develop and maintain current and relevant core competencies for public health practitioners in Canada.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Public Health Association of Nova Scotia (PHANS) encourage the adoption and implementation of core competencies among Nova Scotia's public health practitioners and thereby to help strengthen the public health workforce in Nova Scotia.

¹ The Joint Task Group on Public Health Human Resources. *Building the public health workforce for the 21st century. A pan-Canadian framework for public health human resource planning*. October 2005. http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/php-ppsp/pdf/building_the_public_health_workforce_for_the_21st_century_e.pdf

² Public Health Agency of Canada. *Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada: Release 1.0*. September 2007.

³ Public Health Agency of Canada. Personal Communication. June 2007.

⁴ Department of Health/Nova Scotia Health Promotion. *The Renewal of Public Health in Nova Scotia: Building a Public Health System to Meet the Needs of Nova Scotians*. September 2006. http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/publichealth/content/pubs/07148_therenewalofphinnreport_apr06_en.pdf

⁵ National Advisory Committee on SARS and Public Health. *Learning from SARS – Renewal of Public Health in Canada*. Public Health Agency of Canada..2003

⁶ What PHANS does? www.phans.ca