

Public Health Association of Nova Scotia

Resolution 1 – Skills Enhancement for Public Health (Approved)

Submitted by Sharon Samland, MScN, DOHS, RN. and Marie McCully Collier, BN, MAE

Presented and approved at the 2007 Annual General Meeting

Whereas the ability to understand and use health information is the foundation for effective public health practice in Canada.¹

Whereas the Skills Enhancement for Public Health program, an internet based series of continuing education modules developed and managed by the Public Health Agency of Canada, was created to help public health practitioners across Canada develop and strengthen the skills needed to meet the core competencies for public health.¹

Whereas applying these skills will result in sound evidence-based decision-making and planning at the local level to protect and maintain the health of the public.¹

Whereas the Skills Enhancement for Public Health program can benefit public health organizations as they utilize Public Health Accreditation Standards to examine and improve the quality of services they provide.²

Whereas the Skills Enhancement for Public Health program is recognized as an important component of the pan-Canadian framework developed by Federal/Provincial/Territorial advisory and task groups to strengthen public health capacity (*Building the Public Health Workforce for the 21st Century*, 2005) (page 4).³

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 (page ix).⁴

Whereas the Nova Scotia Department of Health (DOH) and Nova Scotia Health Promotion (NSHP) has adopted twenty-one actions for system renewal (pages 63 to 65).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, maintain and deliver the Skills Enhancement for Public Health program for public health practitioners in Canada.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Public Health Association of Nova Scotia (PHANS) encourage Nova Scotia's public health organizations and practitioners to participate in the Skills Enhancement for Public Health program and thereby to help strengthen the public health workforce in Nova Scotia.

¹ Public Health Agency of Canada. Skills Enhancement for Public Health "Building a Solid Foundation for Public Health Practice". On-line at spc.gc.ca/sehs-acss/about_e.html

² Public Health Agency of Canada. Personal communication. June 2007.

³ 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

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_therenewalofphinsreport_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