



Ontario Dietitians in Public Health



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Diététistes en santé publique de l'Ontario

Annual Report 2022-2023

ODPH Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles

Our Vision

Ontario Dietitians in Public Health are recognized and valued as leaders in public health nutrition working to promote the health of Ontarians.

Our Mission

To advance public health nutrition through member and partner collaboration in order to improve population health and health equity locally and provincially.

Our Guiding Principles

Member driven, member engaged:

We value member input and strive to ensure all members have an opportunity to participate.

Evidence informed:

We build on best practices by using current high-quality evidence (research, context, experience) to ensure our work in public health nutrition is relevant and credible.

Comprehensive health promotion:

We believe in the health promotion principles embedded in the Ottawa Charter, which grounds the work that we do in public health nutrition.

Health equity:

We work to reduce the socially produced, unfair and unjust disadvantages that undermine health so that all populations have equitable access and opportunities to reach their full health potential.

Indigenous engagement:

We all have a collective role to play in learning, understanding, and redressing the ongoing colonialism and becoming allies for Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge that to develop meaningful relationships we need to understand the impact colonization and dispossession has and continues to have on Indigenous peoples.

Message from the Executive

ODPH has enjoyed another very productive year.

Many RDs returned to nutrition work during the 2022-2023 membership year and workgroups resumed during the summer and fall of 2022 following Covid related deployments for most members.

Our dedicated workgroups expertly prepared letters and reports; completed evidence reviews and contributed to research; launched campaigns; actively participated in provincial and federal government consultations. We have demonstrated our commitment to our profession through the creation of three new Communities of Practice this year, the Public Health Advisory in Dietetic Training Ad-Hoc Group as well as collaboration of multiple workgroups on issues of shared importance.

Our role and united voice is more crucial than ever to both promote and advocate for public health nutrition and improve public health. We cannot succeed without the help and commitment of our members. ODPH encourages members to provide input into relevant issues and participate actively, within their capacity.

In these changing times, we are committed to continued advancement and promotion of public health nutrition with our key stakeholders across the province. Working together, we make a difference!



ODPH Workgroups

ODPH's workgroups and communities of practice bring together Registered Dietitians from across the province to collaborate, learn, advocate and create resources that support meaningful change in public health nutrition. These groups work toward improving Ontarians' food literacy, increasing access to healthy food, raising awareness of food insecurity and enhancing food environments where we live, work, learn, and play.

Please see the appendix to this annual report that highlights specific work accomplished by the ODPH Workgroups:

- Body Diversity and Health Equity
- Child Care
- Family Health Nutrition Advisory
- Food Insecurity
- Food Literacy
- Food Systems
- School Nutrition
- Anti-Racism Community of Practice
- Eating Disorder Community of Practice
- You're the Chef Community of Practice

For more information about these workgroups and how to become involved, visit www.odph.ca

We are pleased to announce that

Marcia Dawes

&

Lauren Kennedy

are the recipients of the

2022-2023

ODPH Peer Recognition Award

Marcia and Lauren display exemplary commitment to public health nutrition locally and provincially and are leaders in their respective ODPH workgroups.

Both members demonstrate exceptional leadership in the advancement of public health nutrition.

Financial Statements

REVENUE	
Membership	13,165.00
New deposits to WG	1450.00
Interest and Other	0
TOTAL	\$14,615.00

EXPENSES	
Website maintenance and updates	1468.00
Book keeper	904.00
Teleconferencing	6.42
Gifts	353.95
OPHA Membership	2000.00
Insurance	2345.76
Clerical (Simple Survey)	339.00
Bank and membership processing fees	822.01
Workgroup expense invoices	3578.71
Honorariums	200.00
TOTAL	\$12,017.88
Operations Account BALANCE (cash in bank as of July 20,2023)	\$71,364.59



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ODPH is the independent and official voice of Registered Dietitians working in public health agencies in Ontario.

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Summary of ODPH Workgroup, Community of Practice and Liaison Group Activities

Body Diversity and Health Equity Work Group (BDHEWG)

The BDHEWG focuses on shifting the paradigm from a weight-centric health promotion approach to one that addresses the systemic injustices that result from weight bias, stigma, and discrimination. Weight bias, stigma, and discrimination intersect with other forms of discrimination and systems of oppression, including, but not limited to, colonialism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, classism, ableism, and sexism. The BDHEWG explores these intersections as well and provides recommendations for public health action.

Key activities included: training by Dr. Gail McVey on the Eating Disorders Ontario – Prevention [EDO-P](#) project for BDHEWG and School Nutrition Working Group (SNWG) members; created an advocacy letter template; updating Position Statement (anticipated release by end of 2023) and accompanying scenarios and resources; and updating *A Tool for Every Educator* in collaboration with SNWG.

Advocacy letter were sent to the following organizations: Canadian Pediatrics Society re: Canadian pediatric practice guidelines for obesity management; Diabetes Canada re: Diabetes Canada clinical practice guidelines in support of Weight-Inclusive Dietitian in Canada (WIDIC); Public Health Agency of Canada re: weight messaging in a post-partum guide for new parents with FHNAG; Health Canada re: inaccuracies in food guide history; and the Ontario Human Rights Code re: including weight bias in the Code with Ontario RDs.

Childcare Working Group (CCWG)

The CCWG consults and collaborates with the child care sector and aims to provide leadership and insight on translating best practices and evidence into action to nurture optimal growth and development for learning eaters. A provincial survey was launched by the CCWG in Winter 2020 to help identify initiatives to support licensed child care settings (home and centres) in building menus and creating supportive nutrition environments that meet current recommendations. Results of the survey are shared in [the Ontario Child Care Settings Needs Assessment Report](#).

To reconnect with the child care sector post-pandemic and to announce the upcoming revision of our child care resources, [ODPH Child Care Nutrition Resources Frequently Asked Questions](#) was developed.

CCWG collaboration with external partners included: [Health811](#) (Health Connect Ontario) to promote ODPH's child care resources; partnership with Public Health Ontario to ensure revised CCWG guidelines align with Provincial/Territorial Guidance Document Nutrition Standards for Child Care; and a contact was identified at the Ministry of Education, Child Care and Licensing Branch for collaboration on the review and dissemination of updated child care resources.

Family Health Nutrition Advisory Group (FHNAG)

FHNAG advances public health nutrition among Registered Dietitians supporting the Healthy Growth and Development section of the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) 2018.

Key accomplishments for the FHNAG included: revision of the nutrition section of the Injoy Prenatal Education Platform; working collaboratively with Food Allergy Canada to advocate for the Ontario Drug Benefit Program be amended to include young children with a medical diagnosis requiring the strict avoidance of standard soy and milk proteins; establishment of a Protein Working Group to address the lack of clarity in Canada's Food Guide on consumption of milk for children 0-6; involvement in revision of Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants by Health Canada; participation on Health Canada's Formula Shortage Communications subgroup; supporting Nutri-eSTEP CIHR grant submitted by Dr. Janis Randall-Simpson; participated in ODPH's response to Health Canada's consultation on "Restricting food advertising primarily directed at children"; and collaboration with the BDHEWG on a joint letter to the Public Health Agency of Canada regarding their messaging on postpartum weight loss.



Food Insecurity Workgroup (FIWG)

The FIWG provides opportunities for knowledge exchange, collaboration and coordinated advocacy among members working towards effective responses to the problem of household food insecurity (HFI).

A key undertaking for the FIWG was the roll-out, virtual training and pilot testing by 27 PHUs in 2022 and 32 PHUs in 2023 of an updated Ontario Nutrition Food Basket (ONFB) costing tool and methodology developed by the Monitoring Food Affordability in Ontario (MFAO) Subgroup. This included collaboration with PHO on a quantitative analysis of ONFB item availability used to adapt the costing tool for 2023. Reliability and validity testing of online food costing was presented at the DC Conference in September 2022 and in a poster presented at the International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity conference in June 2023.

A number of advocacy efforts were carried out including a [letter](#) to the Premier and other provincial ministers about HFI and the importance of income-based solutions; a [submission for the 2023 Ontario budget consultation](#) calling for higher social assistance rates; a [backgrounder](#) and [resolution](#), Monitoring Food Affordability and Inadequacy of Social Assistance Rates, accepted unanimously by the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) resulting in [correspondence to the Minister of Health](#); and a [response to the Federal government's announcement](#) about the Local Food Infrastructure Fund.

New or updated resources were shared to support member communications and planning: [What is Food Insecurity and How Can Municipalities Help](#); [ODPH No Money For Food Is Cent\\$less webpage, infographic and letter template](#), and an [environmental scan](#) of income advocacy actions by PHUs.

The FIWG participated in a panel [presentation](#), "Household food insecurity: an urgent public health problem" at the Championing Public Health Nutrition Conference in June.

A subgroup with the goal of exploring anti-racist approaches to household food insecurity data reporting was initiated.

Food Literacy Workgroup (FLitWG)

The FLitWG provides opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and advocacy for members with a focus on food literacy programming and resources.

Bi-monthly meetings include a journal club and roundtable sharing of new programs and services related to food literacy. Members are also looking for connections between food literacy and work being completed by other ODPH workgroups. A key activity was updating of FLitWG Current & Emerging Work.

Several FLitWG members have been involved in the Locally-Driven Collaborative Project (LDCP) with Public Health Ontario to develop and test a Food Literacy Measurement Tool. This project is now complete, and members are developing a user guide for the tools (there is a 50-item tool and a shortened tool) and will be planning some knowledge exchange with ODPH members in the future.

Food Systems Workgroup (FSWG)

Goals of the FSWG include: enhancing knowledge and capacity of FSWG members to work effectively towards sustainable and just food systems through evidence informed practice; advocating for public policies that support sustainable and just food systems; ensuring clear communication and consistent messaging by encouraging collaboration among FSWG members and all ODPH members; being recognized as public health experts on food systems by external organizations and groups and be called upon as partners or consultants on matters (e.g., government consultations) related to food systems; and collaborating on cross-cutting messaging with other ODPH workgroups and the Executive committee.

Advocacy activities include a [response](#) to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy regarding the Implications of Bill-23 – More Home Built Faster Act and a [Response](#) to the review of proposed policies adapted from A Place to Grow and Provincial Policy Statement to form a new provincial planning policy instrument. Additional accomplishments included creating an inventory of relevant resources for sharing among members;



creating ongoing summary document of Food Policy Council work and PHU involvement; in collaboration with the FIWG, providing letter of support on a SSHRC Connections grant on basic income in the food system; and conducting evidence reviews (topics are plant-based dietary patterns, land use planning, and governance) with the purpose of informing how public health can take action within the components of the food system with consideration for the health, social-cultural environmental and economic outcomes.

Healthy Eating in the Recreation Setting Workgroup (HERSWG)

The overall vision of the HERS Workgroup is to support communities in creating comprehensive healthy food environments in recreation settings throughout Ontario.

Key activities and accomplishments included an updated scan on HERS work by PHUs and sharing of current resources related to HERS work including health unit resources.

Some members participated in consultations on *Health Canada's Food-Guide Friendly Principles for Recreation Settings* in fall 2022; a communications plan to promote this and supporting resources after their anticipated release later in 2023 has been proposed.

Due to declining participation in the workgroup with recreation settings not being prioritized by PHUs and inability to recruit a replacement chair of the workgroup, the HERS Workgroup was inactivated as of September 1, 2023.

School Nutrition Working Group (SNWG)

The SNWG advocates for comprehensive healthy eating environments in Ontario schools. It plans, supports and shares nutrition initiatives to improve the nutritional health of students.

Key activities or accomplishments for the year included: participation on [Coalition for Healthy School Food](#) and Ontario chapter that support establishment of a National School Food Program; creation of a Food Neutral sub-group to update SNWG Key Messages to align with the food neutral approach and developed a Project Charter in collaboration with BDHE and FLitWG; updating the Literature Review from BC Teach Food First; creating food neutral, grade specific lesson plans for "You're the Chef" (YTC) and broadening scope beyond Health & Physical Education to other core curricula such as Math, Science, Language; completed major updates to improve functionality and security of [BrightBites](#); and participated as a partner on Sustain Ontario's [Food is Science](#) project.

Advocacy and consultations included: ongoing advocacy to Ministry of Education (MEDU) to have PPM150 reviewed and updated; a [letter to Federal Ministers](#) for consultation on building a pan-Canadian school food policy that included co-chairing and participation in national group interview; a [letter to CODE-COMOH](#) to follow-up with 2021 recommendations for SNPs; participation in a charette at University of Toronto informing development of Nutrition and Food Literacy Canada and work to integrate nutrition and food literacy into teacher training and K-12 curricula; participation in MCCSS consultation as part of the provincial SNP program review and sent an advocacy letter; and contributed to ON Food Literacy Working Group's proposal to MEDU with recommendations for next steps for Food Literacy and School Food in Ontario. Revised resource *School Lunch Your Kids Will Munch* in English and French.

Public Health Advisory in Dietetic Training Ad-Hoc Group

This group was formed to address concerns about the paucity of education related to public health nutrition in undergraduate, graduate, and dietetic practicum programs. The recent changes in the [Integrated Competencies in Dietetic Education and Practice \(ICDEP\)](#) necessities opportunity for dietetic trainees to acquire relevant competencies and complete public health nutrition work at an introductory level as well as the ability to transfer skills and knowledge among different settings.

Two UofT MPH Nutrition and Dietetics students with support from three ODPH members created an Orientation [Manual](#) and [Modules](#) for practicum/ graduate students and newly hired public health dietitians.

The goal of the resource is to enhance dietetic practicum students' preparedness for and performance during their



placements by improving their understanding of public health and public health nutrition. It is also anticipated the resource will be used in undergraduate dietetic education settings as an introduction to public health practice and for new hires in PHUs as a comprehensive overview of public health. The orientation manual is available on the Members Only side of the [ODPH website](#) while the materials are piloted over the next year.

Two second year MPH students worked with an ad-hoc ODPH group led by Heather Thomas to better prepare students for public health placements; the result was the development of *Population Public Health – Dietetic Practicum Orientation Package* available to ODPH members at:

<https://www.odph.ca/membership/workgroups/orientation-resources>.

Anti-racism in Dietetics Community of Practice

The purpose of the Anti-Racism in Dietetics Community of Practice is to create a space that fosters connection, learning, and support to achieve our vision of using an anti-racist lens of practice in all ODPH areas of work. Folks will be able to learn and unlearn in relation to anti-racism while also discussing how we can apply these learnings to advocate for systemic change in the work we do.

This work also requires an understanding of [intersectionality](#) which describes the ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and other forms of discrimination “intersect” to create unique dynamics and effects.

The objectives of this CoP include: continuous learning and knowledge-seeking regarding racism in public health nutrition, which does not exclusively rely on BIPOC as an educative source (e.g., discuss case scenarios and other relevant resources); employ the best possible evidence, where possible; identify gaps in evidence; support partner organizations’ knowledge dissemination activities; and liaise with and advise other ODPH workgroups to enhance understanding of racism in public health nutrition practice and apply this to their work (e.g., developing resources, guest speakers). A student project in collaboration with UofT MPH Nutrition & Dietetics students is being explored for fall 2023.

Eating Disorder Prevention Community of Practice

The Eating Disorder Prevention Community of Practice was established in January 2023. Its purpose is to create a space that fosters connection, learning, and support to achieve our vision of using a health promotion and eating disorder prevention lens of practice in all ODPH areas of work. This will be achieved with the following objectives: exchange evidenced-based resources; transfer our acquired knowledge and lived experience; discuss case scenarios and use a strength-based approach to analyze them; and liaise with [EDO-P](#) (Eating Disorders Ontario-Prevention) to align with the provincial strategy. Topics of discussion have included: workplace weight loss initiatives; intersection between mental health nutrition messaging and food neutrality; policing school lunches; and PHU healthy eating policies.

Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)

alPHA is a not-for-profit organization that provides leadership to boards of health and public health units in Ontario. As a member of alPHA, ODPH is one of seven Affiliate organizations on the Board of Directors alongside COMOH and Board of Health Sections. ODPH brings forward nutrition-related issues for Board discussion and action and provides input into alPHA decisions on a variety of public health issues.

Carolyn Doris, Manager, Peterborough Public Health joined the alPHA Board as ODPH’s representative in May 2023. Being an Affiliate Organization of alPHA provides ODPH an important opportunity to have a voice in public health. ODPH thanks Kerry Shubert Mackey for her contributions and leadership to both ODPH and alPHA during her tenure. All the best to Kerry!

alPHA’s 2023 Annual General Meeting was held in person in June. ODPH’s resolution was successfully passed regarding [Monitoring Food Affordability and Inadequacy of Social Assistance Rates](#). Other resolutions of interest to



ODPH members were related to advocating for a national student nutrition program and housing/homelessness as a public health issue.

Over the last number of months, alPHa's Board of Directors has been completing a Strategic Plan which is expected to be launched in early 2024. Another priority for the Board has been work related to compliance with the Not For Profit Organization's Act (ONCA).

Graduate Nutrition Programs

University of Toronto [MPH Program, Nutrition and Dietetics](#) resumed in-person teaching in fall 2022. Most practicum placements also resumed in-person. Twenty-one students graduated this year; 29 students have finished their first year; and 26 students will be starting the program in fall 2023.

The Associate Director of the Nutrition & Dietetics stream of the MPH program continues to foster relationships with public health RDs to become more involved with the MPH program in terms of preceptorship, guest lectures, and providing advice on how our program can better prepare graduates for public health dietetics. U of T is exploring an online and part time option for their [Advanced Standing Program](#), a one-year MPH for RDs with at least 5 years' experience in the field.

Public Health placements for students in the [Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program](#) (NODIP) have returned to near-normal post-pandemic. Most RDs continue to work in a hybrid model and nutrition programming has resumed, which allows for a greater variety of learning activities. NODIP rolled out the new (2020) [Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice](#), which included some minor changes to the Population Health Promotion performance indicators and learning activities.

Eight public health units are supporting placements for 9 Brescia students in the 2023-2024 academic year, including 2 practice-based research projects. Brescia has also implemented the [Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice](#) this year.