

START UP

November 2008

Welcome to START UP

This newsletter will update you on new developments as we build Ontario's first public health agency, the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion.

For additional background information, we invite you to visit the Agency's web site at www.oahpp.ca.



Ontario

Agency for Health
Protection and Promotion

MESSAGE FROM VIVEK GOEL, PRESIDENT AND CEO



VIVEK GOEL

Since joining the Agency on July 1, 2008, the Board of Directors and I have been keenly aware of the need for our organization to actively take its place within the public health and health care environment. For that reason, we have not waited until all our processes and structures are completely in place before starting to engage and launch some of the work we know needs to be done.

It has been a challenging time but we are excited about the numerous early opportunities to make a contribution - from producing clinical guidelines for physicians dealing with listeria, to assembling outbreak response teams to support facilities with *Clostridium difficile* outbreaks, to lending epidemiologic support to public health units dealing with e-coli.

Our goal is to begin taking action to make meaningful change while at the same time, building our organization and laying the groundwork for the ongoing, iterative strategic planning process that we will use in the months and years to come. I invite you to find out more about our progress.

- Transition of the Ontario Public Health Laboratories
- Strengthening Infection Control Measures in Ontario
- Creating our First Strategic Framework and Recruiting Strategic Planning Sub-Committee Members
- Celebrating the Life of Dr. Sheela Basrur
- Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach Activities
- Leadership Appointments

In closing, I am pleased to inform you that the public health agency, working with friends, colleagues and corporations across the province, has created the Sheela Basrur Centre to honour Dr. Basrur's legacy and pursue her passion for public health renewal. On November 27, 2008 the Centre will launch its Outreach Program at a fundraising event at The Carlu in downtown Toronto. We hope that you will show your support by attending the event, making a donation and/or exploring sponsorship opportunities.

TRANSITION OF THE ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES

We are pleased to announce that on December 15, the Ontario Public Health Laboratories (OPHL) will transfer from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Agency.) The Agency has been working extensively with the Ministry to ensure all back office functions and processes are in place to ensure a smooth and seamless transition for both employees and clients.

The transfer represents not only a new governance structure for the laboratories, but also an opportunity to continue the process of strengthening lab capabilities in the province by integrating testing, surveillance and research. The result, over time, will be central resources to support communities during outbreak and non-outbreak situations.



For organizations that use the services of the OPHL, it will be business-as-usual following the transfer. The Agency will be conducting extensive consultations, as part of its strategic planning process, before any changes are made.

The Agency looks forward to having OPHL employees join its growing organization as it continues to build capacity for scientific expertise and knowledge exchange.

CREATING OUR FIRST STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

In the last issue of Start Up, we shared some highlights of our first Strategic Framework that is currently under development. The intent is to balance longstanding needs identified in multiple reports and emerging high-priority issues. We have benefited from the prior work of the Capacity Review Committee, the Agency Implementation Task Force and reviews of the Ontario public health laboratory system. We have also benefited from many individual and group discussions over the last year as we have built the Agency and developed the priorities for this first plan. The Agency will be incorporating government input and priorities into the framework and will be consulting with stakeholders across the province.

Our plan is to release the Agency's first strategic planning framework and initial operational plan in the coming weeks following up with the formal release of our first annual strategic plan in the spring of 2009.

CALL FOR MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE AGENCY – GET INVOLVED!

The Board of Directors of the Agency is striking a Strategic Planning Sub-Committee. The committee, which will be comprised of both board and non-board members, will provide advice on the content and priorities of the rolling three-year strategic plan for the Agency. For more information about the committee and how to make a nomination or apply, please visit the *What's New* section of our web site at www.oahpp.ca

STRENGTHENING INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES IN ONTARIO

On September 26, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care David Caplan announced several new initiatives to strengthen infection control measures in Ontario. As some activities will be led by the Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, Vivek Goel, President and Dr. Michael Gardam, the Agency's incoming Director of Infectious Disease Prevention and Control participated in the news conference. The news release and backgrounder are available on our web site at www.oahpp.ca



THE ANNOUNCEMENT REFERENCED THE FOLLOWING AGENCY INITIATIVES:

Research on Effective Use of Antibiotics

The Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Agency) is working with the Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada and infectious disease expert Dr. Allison McGeer, of Mount Sinai Hospital, to support hospitals in the most effective use of antibiotics. This work is important because prolonged exposure to certain classes of antibiotics presents a real risk for C. difficile associated diseases to emerge.

Infection Control Resource Teams

The Agency is establishing and managing Infection Control Resource Teams (ICRT) to provide rapid, on-site assistance with outbreak investigation and management in hospitals. The teams will be assembled and deployed to support facilities and local public health units in outbreak situations when the Chief Medical Officer of Health determines that a need exists.

At other times, teams may be deployed at the request of a facility to provide expertise, training and tools to improve the facility's capacity to prevent or better manage hospital-acquired infections.

OTHER INITIATIVES UNDERWAY TO STRENGTHEN INFECTION CONTROL IN ONTARIO:

Partnering to Evaluate Community Surveillance Approaches for C.difficile

As part of our ongoing efforts to build a bridge between valuable work underway at the University of Guelph and the Agency, we are pleased to be collaborating with Dr. Scott Weese and his team in undertaking a pilot study to evaluate approaches to community surveillance for C.difficile (CDAD). The study will enroll family physicians in the Wellington Waterloo area to attempt to gauge the baseline community level of CDAD and to better understand strain-types for CDAD found in the community.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Longwoods Breakfast with the Chiefs

Vivek Goel spoke at the November 18 Longwoods Breakfast with the Chiefs, which took place at the University of Toronto. Vivek gave a brief history of public health and talked about the role of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion in the renewal of public health in Ontario.

Critical Care Canada Forum

The public health agency was a sponsor of the Critical Care Canada Forum - held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre from November 11 to 13. The Agency hosted and organized a concurrent session on Disaster Modelling. The session was an early attempt to bring together experts in the field, to examine how we can collaboratively build more advanced modeling capacity within the province.

2008 HealthAchieve Convention and Exhibition

Agency staff hosted an exhibit at the 2008 HealthAchieve Convention and Exhibition on November 3 and 4 in Toronto and it was a pleasure to have the opportunity to discuss the role of the Agency and meet current and prospective Agency partners.

Public Health Summit

The Agency organized a half-day session at the Public Health Summit – a joint initiative of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies and the Ontario Public Health Association - which took place on October 28, 2008, in Niagara Falls. The session featured a presentation - by Vivek Goel and Drs. Natasha Crowcroft and Heather Manson - on the Agency's start-up activities and strategic planning process. The Agency also sponsored guest speaker Dr. Roger Ulrich (Beal Professor of Facilities Design, Texas A&M University) who spoke about Evidence-Based Design for Healthy Hospitals and Communities

Gairdner Foundation Public Lecture

On October 21, 2008, Vivek Goel participated as part of a panel at the Gairdner Foundation Public Lecture on Human Papilloma Virus and Cervical Cancer. Fellow panelists included Andre Picard and Joan Murphy. The master of ceremonies for the event was Anna Maria Tremonte and the keynote speaker was Gairdner and Nobel Laureate Professor Harald zur Hausen. The Agency also co-sponsored the Gairdner Foundation Special Symposium on Vaccine Development for Cancer and Infectious Diseases.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF DR. SHEELA BASRUR

On October 17, friends, colleagues and health care workers gathered at Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto to celebrate the life and contributions of the late Dr. Sheela Basrur. Thank you to all of you who participated, providing a fitting tribute to the life and legacy of this remarkable woman. We invite you to visit the Sheela Basrur Centre web site to view the web cast and photos of the celebration and to support the Centre, which was created to continue Dr. Basrur's legacy of public health renewal in Ontario.



KEY APPOINTMENTS

Ontario's Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Increases Capacity to Improve Public Health in Ontario

Bios and photos of all appointees are available on the Agency's web site at www.oahpp.ca

Board Appointments

Dr. David Walker, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, is pleased to announce that Dr. Alan Meek and Ronald Yamada have joined the board as new members.

Agency Leadership Appointments

The Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion continues to build its capacity to support improvements to Ontario's public health system across a number of fronts, including outbreak prevention and control, surveillance and epidemiology, health promotion, chronic disease prevention, injury prevention and occupational and environmental health. A key part of that process is the development of the organizational infrastructure to support the Agency, including recruitment of our leadership team.

Dr. Vivek Goel, the Agency's President and CEO is pleased to announce the following leadership appointments:

Medical Appointments

- Dr. Michael Gardam, Director of Infectious Disease Prevention and Control
- Dr. Natasha Crowcroft, Director of Surveillance and Epidemiology
- Dr. Heather Manson, Senior Medical Advisor to the President

Other Leadership Appointments

- Sonya Corkum, Vice President of Knowledge Exchange and Communications
- Norm Rees, Chief Financial Officer
- Ted Capstick, Chief Human Resources Officer
- Jim Tom, Chief Information Officer



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