



## **President's Report**

**Prepared for: 46<sup>th</sup> Biennial Meeting of the PHA NBPEI**

**January 19, 2021**

**Submitted by Allison Holland, President**

The Public Health Association of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island (PHA NBPEI) is a volunteer-run organization of professionals working in various fields related to public health and population health. Our organization aims to improve the health of NB and PEI populations through advocacy, education, and leadership.

This president's report is prepared for the 46<sup>th</sup> Biennial meeting of the PHA NBPEI. It covers a reporting period of 2 years and 8 months, June 2018 - January 2021. Traditionally, a president's term would be only 2 years, lining up with our biennial meetings, but due to COVID-19, our biennial had been delayed extending this term by 8 months. The report shares main highlights from this term including; our Basic Income initiative, our work with CPHA and CNPHA, COVID-19 and our work on ACEs and Self-Healing Communities.

### **Basic Income Initiative**

At the beginning of my term as president, the Board of Directors had announced at the 2018 biennial meeting that they wanted to explore the correlation between income and health with a particular focus on basic income as a public health issue. Through our actions of *advocacy*, *leadership* and *education*, the board members wanted to play a role in facilitating a conversation on basic income within NB and PEI, focusing on its potential impact on population health. The association set out to achieve the following objectives:

- To build understanding around the concept of basic income
- To build understanding around the various models of basic income
- To showcase how basic income models, function in other jurisdictions
- To build understanding around what basic income means for population health
- To advocate for governments, NGOs and our communities to join us in this conversation
- To contribute to the current, national conversation around basic income

To help us gain insight into the current context in NB, at the 2018 Fall board meeting, members were joined by 2 representatives from New Brunswick's Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, to learn more about NB's poverty reduction strategy and other work being done by this organization. At this same meeting, the board was also joined by Armand Bannister, a representative of the Basic Income New Brunswick Network to learn more about past work done on basic income within the province.

Early in 2019, an opportunity arose for the PHA NBPEI to partner with the PEI Working Group for Livable Income to host a workshop in Charlottetown. The workshop was titled, *Children's Health: What Does Income Have to do With it?* One of our PEI board members, Ryan Murray, was part of the working group who planned the event and the PHA NBPEI cost shared the expenses for the event with the PEI Working Group for Liveable Income. The workshop took place on February 5, 2019 and began with a talk from Dr. Heather Morrison, Chief Public Health Officer for PEI, on findings from *The PEI Children's Report*. The second half of the event was a facilitated workshop focused on the question, *could a basic income guarantee be a solution to childhood deprivation?* The PHA NBPEI was promoted at the event. Over 50 Islanders participated in the workshop and it was a success.

In February 2019, a Basic Income working group was created with members of the PHA NBPEI board, Christine deJong, Ryan Murray and myself, along with Armand Bannister, the representative from the Basic Income New Brunswick Network, and Nathan Taylor a subject matter expert from Dalhousie University. The purpose of this work group was to organize a workshop that was modeled off a similar session offered during the 2019 CPHA national conference in Ottawa titled, *"Basic Income, an Idea whose time has come."* Material was also used from "The BIG Experience," a multimedia story telling experience designed to help audience members understand and relate to the idea of a basic income. Our workshop was held in Moncton on June 7 and approximately 100 people registered for the event; half were from the health sector, a quarter from NGOs and a quarter were interested members of the public. The workshop was facilitated by Ryan Murray, Nathan Taylor and myself. A full summary report from the workshop can be found on the PHA NBPEI website at: <http://www.nbpeipublichealth.com/basic-income.html>

During this period, while we were working on Basic Income, the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation of NB began consultations as part of the renewal of NB's poverty reduction strategy, which we saw as an opportunity for advocacy. A brief was submitted on behalf of PHA NBPEI in April of 2019. Three members of our board, Christine deJong, Lona Taylor and Ryan Murray prepared the brief. It explained various elements of a basic income guarantee, shared research, and outlined how the corporation could play a role in advancing the work around basic income.

### **CPHA and Canadian Network of Public Health Associations**

Throughout my term, the PHA NBPEI continued to be a member of the Canadian Network of Public Health Associations (CNPHA), a network of all provincial PHAs in Canada; the network is facilitated by CPHA. 10 meetings of the Network have taken place during my term, usually attended by myself and on occasion, other board members. The network is established to help keep provincial associations aware of work being done at the CPHA level as well as to provide an opportunity for the provincial associations to network and learn from each other. As a member of this network, PHA NBPEI receives one free registration to the annual CPHA National Conference every year. During my term, 3 of these have taken place:

- CPHA 2018 in Montreal- attended by Allison Holland
- CPHA 2019 in Ottawa - attended by Ryan Murray
- CPHA 2020 Virtual (the intention was for one of our board members Charlotte Riordon to attend but the face-to-face event was postponed due to COVID-19 and eventually turned into a virtual event)

One piece of work I wish to highlight from our partnership with CPHA is on the position statement *Racism and Public Health*. CPHA had asked all provincial associations to provide feedback on, and support for, the creation of this position statement. The statement states that:

*“The Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) recognizes that we are all either overtly or inadvertently racist and that the influence of this racism affects the health of individuals and populations. As an Association we commit to eliminating any racist processes within the Association and advocating for the elimination of racist and oppressive systems, laws, regulations and policies in Canada’s public institutions and society in general. CPHA acknowledges that, throughout its history, the Association has been slow to respond to systemic racism. CPHA further acknowledges its role in maintaining the underlying structures and attitudes that have resulted in racist behaviour within the Association, and among the public health and governmental structures it wishes to influence. One such example was the Association’s slow response in speaking out on the federal government’s failure to adopt Jordan’s Principle. The statement also outlines various reforms CPHA is committed to. You can view the full statement here:*

<https://www.cpha.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/policy/positionstatements/racism-positionstatement-e.pdf>

## **COVID-19**

All association planning came to a halt in March of 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the postponing of our biennial meeting (originally planned for June 2020). During the early days of the pandemic, the PHA NBPEI received messages via our social media and email regarding the virus and public health regulations, prompting the board to hold a special meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss our response. The board wanted to clarify what our association’s role was and wasn’t during the COVID-19 response and came up with this language:

*The Public Health Association of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island is not responsible for the monitoring of infectious disease or outbreak management. If you are in New Brunswick and are experiencing symptoms of Coronavirus, please call 811. If you are not experiencing symptoms, go to [www.gnb.ca/coronavirus](http://www.gnb.ca/coronavirus) for more information. In PEI please visit <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/covid-19> for more information.*

This language is shared in response to any messages we receive that are deemed part of outbreak management and is also on the main page of our website.

PHA NBPEI did want to play a role in messaging and taking our lead from CPHA, we focused messaging on three areas:

- Being a positive voice of evidence-based information on social media;
- Being a champion of #COVIDkindness by supporting high-risk individuals in our communities
- Encourage our family, friends and colleagues to follow the advice of public health officials and modelling healthy behaviours.

Various campaigns dealing with these 3 areas of messaging were promoted using our social media platforms.

## **ACEs and Self-Healing Communities**

In early 2020, the Board had decided to focus our efforts on the topic of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Self-Healing Communities. Two presentations on these topics were given to the Board. However, before planning could begin, the COVID-19 pandemic started and put a pause on this work. We returned to planning for this topic in September 2020. The board began with a facilitated session to design a *Theory of Change* framework to help clarify where we wanted to go with this effort. Our intended impact that emerged through this activity reads as follows:

***Through education***, we intend to build understanding with our partners and the public around the potential impact adverse childhood experiences have on life long health and the benefit strengthening protective factors in families, communities and society will have on us all.

***Through leadership***, we will encourage our partners to incorporate actions to address the potential impacts of adverse childhood experiences and to strengthen protective factors in their practices.

***Through advocacy***, we intend to bring the prevention and mitigation of adverse childhood experiences forward as a fundamental public health priority.

A working group was formed in September of 2020 with our Board and representatives from Horizon Health Network's Brain Builders Lab Team and the Saint John Self-Healing Communities Team. It was decided to offer an eLearning event (given COVID-19) and 2 experts in this field were recruited to present. This eLearning event took place prior to our biennial meeting. Follow up events have been planned to develop further engagement around this issue and to mobilize communities. For our next step, it is the board's desire to do advocacy work to move this issue forward as a fundamental public health priority.

## **Conclusion**

My experience during this time as president for the association has been rewarding. I enjoyed developing relationships with fellow board members and want to thank each and everyone of them for their dedication to this work. I also enjoyed the various projects we worked on together and enjoyed developing connections with CPHA and the other provincial associations.

During my term, as an association, we continued to struggle with membership. These are similar challenges being experienced by many PHAs throughout Canada, especially small ones such as ours that don't have any permanent funding sources or paid employees (all volunteer based). Also, our Board of Directors struggles to recruit and retain representation from PEI.

Even with these challenges, I believe the association during this term has been purposeful and effective in advancing the work of public health and population health within our provinces and I believe there are many opportunities for the association to continue to have an impact in the future.

After today, I will move into the role of Past President and I look forward to supporting the transition to our new President.

***Respectfully Submitted***

***Allison Holland***

***Outgoing president PHA NBPEI***