



OCDPA BI-MONTHLY

Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance

GREETINGS!

The Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (OCDPA) would like to wish everyone Happy Autumn and hope that our readers had a great summer. REMEMBER: Fall is an excellent time to enjoy the outdoors, to stay active, and to eat Ontario's fresh fall produce.

HOW DO WE LOOK?

As you may already know, we are changing the face of our newsletter. Please give us some feedback on how we look! Email your feedback to ocdpa@opha.on.ca

Comings and Goings: Staffing

Maria Grant, Manager of the OCDPA, gave birth to a baby girl, Maya, in early June and is currently on maternity leave.



Acting Manager:
Shawna Scale

The Alliance has hired Shawna Scale as Acting Manager in Maria's

place. Shawna has a background in health promotion and community development and has previous experience with several local and provincial coalitions through her work with CPNP/CAP-C, Early Years and homelessness programs. Shawna is very excited to be involved with the Alliance and to be working at OPHA for the year.

Most recently, Hoi Ki Ding has been hired as the OCDPA's Project Coordinator. Hoi Ki has a background in re-

search and knowledge translation, with her most recent work within the Research Department at Baycrest. Hoi Ki is enthusiastic about her role, and in particular, supporting the Alliance with knowledge transfer and its dissemination process.



Project Coordinator:
Hoi Ki Ding

Note from the Chair

Greetings! I hope all of you enjoyed some vacation time this summer and had many opportunities to relax and enjoy the beautiful weather.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the Alzheimer Society of Ontario (ASO) as our newest partner. We are excited about their participation within our Alliance and look forward to their input at our meetings.

During the past 6 months the Alliance had several meetings with staff at the Ministries to discuss our mandate, current activities and priorities. The Ministries value our work and seem interested in seeing that the Alliance and its system plan succeed.

The Alliance proactively appealed to all 4 major political parties in Ontario to take immediate action on chronic disease prevention. Please refer to the "OCDPA in Politics: Advocacy" section on page 3 for more information.

Connie Utrecht

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What's Happening Now: Current Projects

Building on our 7 priorities, the OCPDA is involved in the following projects and directions for 2007:

Tobacco to HEAL:

This project will look at the successes of Ontario's Tobacco Strategy and, similarly, apply learnings to Ontario's Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy. By interviewing field experts and specialist working in Tobacco, Nutrition and Physical Activity, and asking them to review, critique and compare the Ministry of Health Promotion's Smoke Free Ontario and HEAL strategies, the OCDPA hopes to look at opportunities for advancement and action to support and enhance the HEAL strategy and its outcomes.

Common Messages:

The OCDPA partners will be working on developing a platform of common messages related to CDP. Funded by the Ministry of Health Promotion, we see this as an opportunity to work together to develop a common messages platform that can be used by OCDPA members and by those working in the CDP community. We will keep you posted on this project as it evolves.

Integrating chronic disease prevention at the local level:

This activity was identified as a priority for the Alliance to address in the next year, and planning is currently underway to develop this priority into action. We are looking to our membership to see where current linkages exist in local health planning or activity (our current focus is LHINs), and how

the OCDPA could utilize and build upon these pre-existing linkages to support consistent and coordinated CDP activities and messages across Ontario. We hope to recruit staff from all 14 LHINs and provide them with training and resources in order to act as an official OCDPA designate within their local region and area.

Briefings on Chronic Disease in Ontario:

We are currently developing short briefing notes on the major chronic diseases in Ontario, their prevalence, common risks and preventive measures. We intend to expand this to specific priority populations (i.e. seniors, aboriginals, ethno-specific groups, women and children), as well as common risk factors.

Knowledge Exchange

Primer to Action: Social Determinants of Health is an electronic resource for community workers and volunteers to explore how the social determinants of health impact chronic disease. Widespread evidence demonstrates that the social determinants of health (SDOH) are major underlying causal factors influencing population and individual health, including

chronic disease. *Primer to Action* was written and designed as a practical resource for health professionals, lay workers and activists, in their capacity as staff, volunteers or community members to explore and *take action* on six health determinants: Income, Employment, Housing, Food Security, Education and Inclusion. It offers concrete suggestions for change in

the community, the workplace and the broader society. This collaborative project was funded by its partners, the Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance, Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse and the Canadian Cancer Society - Ontario Division. *Primer to Action* is available at www.ocdpa.ca and www.opc.on.ca.



OCDPA in Politics: Advocacy

With the Ontario election in full swing, the OCDPA has sent letters to each of Ontario's 4 major political party leaders and their health critics to stress the importance of chronic disease prevention and call for immediate investments in this area through increased funding, policy development and program implementation. The letters recommended 9 actions to immediately focus on, and urged the political parties and leaders to integrate these actions into their party platforms and plans, if elected. Below is a summary of our 9 recommendations:

1. Require that healthy food/beverage choices be part of any contract between a food/beverage vendor and a publicly funded venue.
2. Develop, enforce and evaluate province-wide policies and standards for healthy eating and physical activity in schools.
3. Develop daily physical activity standards and guidelines for all schools in all grades.
4. Ensure access to nutritious food for all Ontarians, particularly for those most vulnerable and living in poverty.
5. Ensure adequate access to supplies and medication for persons with chronic diseases who are receiving social assistance or are living below the poverty line.
6. Control overall alcohol consumption and promote low risk drinking guidelines.
7. Provide financial incentives for workplaces to implement or continue with programs to encourage healthy practices among employees.
8. Increase investment to promote comprehensive healthy eating and physical activity strategies.
9. Continue with and expand targeted, strategic, well-resourced mass media campaigns to promote healthy eating and active living.

We would appreciate members to forward letters to Premier McGuinty and the Ministers of Health and Health Promotion in support of these actions.

Communications

The Alliance is currently engaged in a branding and communications project in order to bring attention to chronic disease prevention and Ontario's need for an

integrated, coordinated and well-invested system. In order to do this, we are working with professionals in the communications area to produce a brochure that

will to expand the OCDPA's visibility in the community and push for investments in chronic disease prevention and a system to address it.

The OCDPA sent out letters to Ontario's 4 major political parties urging them to take immediate action and invest in chronic disease prevention in the province.

OCDPA Member Showcase

The OCDPA would like to increase communication among our members! This section will regularly feature an OCDPA member and their work in relation to chronic disease prevention.

In this issue, we have the privilege of interviewing Linda Stewart, the Executive Director of aPHa, and asking her a few questions about the work of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies.

Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aPHa)

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aPHa is a non-profit organization that provides leadership to boards of health and public health units in Ontario.

The Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aPHa) is a non-profit organization that provides leadership to boards of health and public health units in Ontario. The Association works with governments and other health organizations, to advocate for a strong and effective public health system in the province, as well as public health policies, programs and services that benefit all Ontarians. aPHa is dedicated to reducing the incidence and burden of chronic disease through primary prevention and early detection.

Questions & Answers

OCDPA: *What is aPHa involved in for your projects/activities that relate to chronic disease prevention. If there are many, please highlight 2-3 priorities.*

Linda: aPHa is involved in many areas of advocacy that impact chronic disease prevention. In general, we advocate for healthy public policy that impacts the population as a whole. This past summer, we encouraged government to fund the recently approved HPV vaccine that prevents genital warts and cervical cancer. When Premier McGuinty announced \$300 million for this vaccine in August we weighed in on the controversy that followed, strongly supporting the use of the vaccine for Grade eight girls. Also over the summer, aPHa worked with Toronto Public Health and health units across the province to advocate for the inclusion of the cost of healthy eating when setting the minimum wage and social assistance rates. We all know that poverty is one of the largest barriers to healthy eating and overall good health and those living around or below the poverty line do not have the resources to eat a healthy diet. We know they get sick more, and develop more chronic diseases. Fighting poverty and other social determinants of health is a strong focus of our Association.

OCDPA: *How long has aPHa been a member of OCDPA? How long have you (Linda) been involved with OCDPA?*

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Linda: alPHa has been a member of OCDPA for three years, first as an affiliate member and now as a full member. I have had the pleasure of participating in the Alliance for two and a half years.

OCDPA: *What is significant of being an OCDPA member and what is alPHa's interest in the Alliance?*

Linda: Belonging to the Alliance provides an important opportunity to understand chronic disease from a systemic perspective. It also brings together resources and expertise that can have a significant positive impact on chronic disease prevention. alPHa wants to be at that table because our members, the Public Health Units across Ontario, deliver many programs and services aimed at preventing chronic disease. Public Health Units also work closely with NGOs at a local level. alPHa's membership in the Alliance allows us to develop equally strong relationships at the provincial level.

OCDPA: *Linda, what is your role in the Alliance and what have you been involved in?*

Linda: As an affiliate member I participated on the Alliance's Advocacy sub-committee and had the opportunity to work closely with colleagues from NGOs. I am honoured to be the current co-chair along with Connie Uetrecht, Executive Director of the Ontario Public Health Association.

OCDPA: *What would you like to see the government to focus on in relation to chronic disease prevention?*

Linda: I would like to see the government work closely with the Alliance to develop a system for chronic disease prevention as described in our paper, *Thinking Like a System: the Way Forward to Prevent Chronic Disease in Ontario*. There is excellent work happening across the province that could have a stronger impact through the development a chronic disease prevention system that is fully integrated into government policies, programs and services. This concerted effort would ensure the on-going prevention of chronic disease.

OCDPA: *Please tell us an example of personal practice that you do for your own health/well-being in relation to chronic disease prevention?*

Linda: I wish I had a great example of primary prevention in my own life, but, like many, the best I can do is provide an example of secondary prevention. I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia two years ago. A friend who was concerned about my aches and pains recommended yoga. I had tried yoga in my twenties and it hadn't worked for me. I preferred much faster paced exercise. I was skeptical that I would stick with it, but I tried. That was over a year ago. Now, I'm up to three ninety-minute classes a week. I have learned to manage stress better and seen tremendous improvement in my flexibility. Would yoga have prevented my chronic condition if I'd done it all my life? I can't say, but I can say that it is an important part of managing my condition and probably always will be. It doesn't cost the healthcare system anything for me to do it and it makes me feel great.

**"The fact that almost two-thirds of Ontarians over 45 suffer from one or more chronic diseases is an alarming call to action."
- Linda Stewart**

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Executive Director
of ALPHA:
Linda Stewart

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OCDPA: *Is there anything that you would like to say to other members or readers?*

Linda: The fact that almost two-thirds of Ontarians over 45 suffer from one or more chronic diseases is an alarming call to action. We know that this fact drives at least 60% of Ontario's health care costs, but the larger concern should be the impact on quality of life. Let's all work together to make a chronic disease prevention system a reality.

Special Thanks!

Thank you for all your support! The OCDPA website is a useful resource which assists health professionals in their planning of chronic disease prevention programs and in their research on chronic disease-related initiatives. Since the launch of our website earlier this year, we have received

a lot of positive feedback and a great number of people have used our resources. In the months of August and September 2007:

- The total number of web hits on the OCDPA website was 20,153;
- The number of usage on the OCDPA Directory (a searchable database of Chronic Disease Prevention Initiatives) was 70;
- The total number of downloads for OCDPA's resources was 1303.



CDP in the Media: Healthy Weights

Healthy weight is the new fashion FAB!

There was a stir in the fashion industry last year when the regional government of Madrid, Spain, banned skinny models from appearing on the catwalk (the model must have a Body Mass Index of 18 or over). Since then, global fashion shows, including Milan and London have adopted similar 'healthy weights policies' for models walking on the runways. Healthy weights is the new fashion trend.

Beauty is skin deep: Parents are asked to talk to their kids about healthy attitudes before the media does!

Over the past year, you may have noticed a number of innovative ads addressing children's attitudes to body image, exercise, eating, etc. The City of Toronto's recent social marketing campaign is exemplary, as is Dove's Campaign For Real Beauty. And Dove has done it again! It has created another short video, entitled

"Onslaught", which ponders the mass marketing of beauty products and processes to achieve the 'perfect look'. The ad, created by a Toronto communications firm, features a young girl and takes us through the mass of marketed messages that she comes in contact with over her day. The video, launched on October 3rd, has received wide cheers from women's organizations and widespread media attention.

www.campaignforrealbeauty.ca

There is a clear and growing message that parents should not only talk with their kids about healthy living, but they must go further and become a role model for healthy living.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
www.ocdpa.on.ca

Working Towards a **Chronic Disease Prevention System** For Ontario

The Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance is a collaborative of leading health-related organizations working together to focus on chronic disease prevention and healthy living in a comprehensive manner.

Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance

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Do You Have Something To Say? Send Us Your Story!

To increase information sharing and provide opportunities for our members to showcase upcoming events, etc., the OCDPA is inviting readers to submit articles, stories or ideas for our newsletter. Interested persons should forward their ideas and submissions to ocdpa@opha.on.ca.

The Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment (CPCHE) is looking for support and contributions to their final National Policy Consultation process on children's environmental health, to be released on November 23rd. OCDPA members are asked to forward any position or policy papers related to the environmental health of children (fetus, infant, older) and/or women (pregnant, child-bearing, breastfeeding) to bethanne@socialinnovation.ca. Please submit by October 31st, 2007, and thank you for your assistance.



Upcoming Meetings

Partner Meeting

November 13, 2007

1-4pm

OPHA Boardroom

Members Meeting

January 16, 2008

1-4pm

OPC

180 Dundas Street W.

Suite 1900