

Facilitating Knowledge Transfer for Evidence Informed Public Health In Ontario



OPHLA and Public Health

The Ontario Public Health Libraries Association (OPHLA) is a community of information professionals who work in partnership to:

- Facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange
- Promote the strategic use of evidence-based public health interventions
- Maximize the capacity for providing information services and resources to Ontario's public health units
- Share best practices
- Advocate for the importance of supporting Information Professional positions in public health units

Promoting Knowledge Transfer and Evidence-Based Practice

OPHLA recognized the changing public health environment and the continuing need to advocate on behalf of all health units for equal access to public health information to support evidence-based practice.

To practice evidence-based decision making, organizations require:

- Systems for finding and acquiring information
- Professionals skilled in searching, evaluating, storing and disseminating information
- Knowledge workers and decision makers skilled in appraising and utilizing the information to inform the decision-making process

Access for All

To address the gaps in availability of evidence, OPHLA:

- Identified three key public health bibliographic databases
- Obtained provincial funding for the provision of these resources to all public health units through the Public Health Ontario's portal
- Became the portal's primary partner and has subsequently designed its taxonomy, index and metadata
- Designed customized tutorials for end users with no in-house library support

Tools for All

OPHLA has created, and continuously maintains a website with up to date public health knowledge tools such as:

- Current open access public health journal list
- Updated inventory of public health databases
- Credible sources of public health grey literature
- List of evidence-based public health information providers
- Web search tools for public health professionals

Outcome Effectiveness

The Information Professionals of OPHLA play an integral and direct role in developing systems and services to execute the practice of knowledge exchange for the public health care system by establishing processes to effectively collect, manage and disseminate information.

The Association's advocacy efforts and success in creating a "virtual" library have raised the profile of information professionals and increased the capacity for public health knowledge exchange in the province.