



Ontario Branch Newsletter

Leading, Promoting, and Advocating for Environmental Health Professionals in Ontario

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WINTER 2022-23 EDITION

PRESIDENT & PRESIDENT-ELECT'S MESSAGE

*Lisa Fortuna, CIPHI Ontario Branch President
Shain Mergulhao, CIPHI Ontario Branch President-Elect*



*Lisa Fortuna
President, CIPHI Ontario Branch*

It is with much sincerity and warmth, that we provide you with an update on recent business from the Ontario Branch Executive Council (OBEC). As we attempt to embrace a colder season, the continuous fluctuations within our public health priorities, mandates, and capacity issues, coupled with upcoming potential government policy changes, we continue to work diligently and consistently in attempts to get back to a new normal and what that may look like for us all, including our team.

It is important to acknowledge that our workforce has not fully recovered from the last three years, and that's okay. Compassion, patience, and more kindness will be required collectively, and on an individual basis, as we enter 2023. We should feel proud of our accomplishments, unwavering commitment, and growth over the past year that has challenged us to become better professionals, human beings, colleagues, and friends.



*Shain Mergulhao
President-Elect, CIPHI Ontario Branch*

As many of you are aware, we are still waiting to hear about the past proposed restructuring of the provincial public health system, what that may look like post-COVID, and its potential impacts. We will continue to keep a close eye and work with our partners as more information comes to us.

The National Executive Council continued to focus on launching the National Advocacy Campaign with the marketing company, Be The Change. The campaign was launched in August, just in time to be showcased at the National Conference, and as a lead up to Environmental Public Health Week. The campaign was a great success, with early results indicating that there was an increase in awareness, both through social media and our ciphi.ca web traffic. The NEC will continue to work towards increasing awareness with the public, our potential students, and government partners.

Our focus in Ontario this year was to prepare for and host the first National Conference since 2019. The conference was postponed twice due to the pandemic and had to switch to a hybrid model to try to maximize attendance with the pandemic still going on.

Durham Region Health Department proudly hosted 270 in-person delegates, 161 virtual delegates, and 32 sponsors/exhibitors. The conference was an enormous success, both in terms of educational learning and social connections that have been sorely missed throughout the pandemic.

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President & President-Elect's Message, continued

We were very fortunate to be able to retain the same venue and keynote speakers from our original planning days in 2019, with the addition of Dr. Kieran Moore, who graciously and sincerely spoke to us to acknowledge the work and dedication of the public health inspectors throughout the pandemic and the importance of the profession. The planning committee worked very hard to ensure every person had the best possible experience. There were many lessons learned throughout the conference, with the added complexity of hosting both a virtual and in-person conference at the same time. As with any large event, there are always glitches, but the Durham team handled each one of them flawlessly and professionally. A huge thank you to Rachael McArthur and Sendi Struna, who led the Durham conference planning committee, and to all the members of the committee.

We continue to collaborate with our National CIPHI Executive and COPE equivalents to improve and further enhance the Professional Development Hours Program Model, as concerns were brought forward earlier this year. Please stay tuned for upcoming virtual sessions that will provide more clarity, communication, and support, along with new and refreshed changes that will be communicated.

Shain and Kari-Engle Carter, have continued to co-lead the National Education CIPHI Committee, bringing forward an array of virtual educational sessions focused on conscious leadership, emotional intelligence, career development, communication, health equity, de-escalation, burnout/vicarious trauma concepts, diversity, inclusion, mental health, wellness, and public health advocacy across Canada. The aim of this initiative is to provide equitable access to learnings across the country in this niche area making it affordable to all while increasing professional competence, confidence, capacity, and resiliency while creating a safe space for mutual connection, knowledge and experience sharing as we prepared for our future. As a thank you and gesture of good faith to our profession, we made these sessions available to both members and non-members to continue to learn and grow, in addition to the professional development opportunities offered by other public health organizations, while minimizing redundancy. We've had the pleasure of working with some of the best teachers and workshop facilitators in the industry to date! We launched this strategic initiative boldly in June of 2021, taking a big risk in the midst of working through the pandemic, and are thrilled by the successes, attendance, and customization with producing 27 sessions to date!

In October 2022, Shain Mergulhao, ON President-Elect, stepped down from the Executive Team and will not be assuming the presidency role due to personal reasons. She will also be stepping down as Co-Lead of this National Education Committee in December of this year.

We are, however, very pleased to announce that John Cannan will be taking her place and has been re-appointed. Besides sitting on numerous BOC panels and aiding with several BOC and CoPE appeals, John has served as the Health Promotion councillor from 2009 to 2015. He returned to the executive council as President-Elect in 2017 and was president in 2018 to February 2020, when medical issues sidelined him. John is grateful to be able to assist by assuming the presidential mantle again. John undertook this task with the knowledge that he is privileged to have such an experienced executive council to support him during these difficult and unprecedented times. Welcome back John!

We are also very pleased to announce that Ken Diplock has been appointed as President-Elect. Ken brings a wealth of public health experience and knowledge to the role. Ken previously served on the executive (2006-2013), including a term as branch president (2010-12), and we are very fortunate to have him return. Welcome back Ken!

Lisa Fortuna will now be transitioning into the Past President role, and we want to thank the membership for their continued patience and support through this transition time.

Our priorities in 2023 will include reviewing our committees to be determine how they can support the inspectors, continue to look at how we can support the National Advocacy Campaign in Ontario, and look for ways to help with recovery for the inspectors.

We would like to acknowledge our elite team of public health partners like: Conestoga College, Toronto Metropolitan University, ASPHIO Executive, Public Health Ontario Association and the Ministry of Health. Collaborating and maintaining strong relationships only fortify our professional voice, leadership, and advocacy efforts, as a whole.

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President & President-Elect's Message, continued

On a final note, we would like to sincerely thank the Ontario Branch Executive for their support throughout both our terms, and the National Executive and Education Committee. A special thanks to all our Ontario members for your strength, courage and demonstrated perseverance to date. Thanks to your voices, we are able to deliver. Stay well and safe through this holiday season, and we look forward to connecting in 2023!

Should you have questions or wish to share your thoughts, please contact us at communications@ciphi.on.ca.

Sincerely,

Lisa & Shain

Addendum: Public Health Pandemic Experiences

The previous June 2022 edition of the Ontario Branch Newsletter contained an abstract “Racism and harassment towards frontline workers: experiences of environmental health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic response”, submitted by Subrana Rahman. The complete published study can be found here: <https://pubs.ciphi.ca/doi/full/10.5864/d2021-022>.

CIPHI 2022 National AEC, 3 years in the making

Submitted by Sendi Struna & Rachael McArthur

September 11-14, Ajax, ON

When Durham Region submitted their bid in 2019 to host the 2020 CIPHI National Annual Educational Conference (AEC), little did we know that a global pandemic was on the horizon that would force us to delay the conference not once, but twice.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to pivot to remote work and taught us not only that it was possible, but that we could do it very effectively. With the uncertainty of the pandemic and possibility of continued public health restrictions and gathering limits, the decision was made to upgrade the national conference to a hybrid model that would allow us to host the conference safely, regardless of what the future held. The other benefit of hosting a hybrid conference, is that it increased accessibility to the National AEC to PHIs across the country that may otherwise not be able to attend in person for financial or personal reasons. We were proud to host delegates both in person and virtually from every province and territory in Canada. There were 161 virtual delegates and a total of 470 delegates, making it one of the largest National CIPHI Conferences ever!

We were fortunate to be able to retain some sensational keynote speakers. The Honourable Retired Lt. General Romeo Dallaire who led the UN Mission during the horrific genocide in Rwanda in 1994 spoke of ‘honourable injuries’ and resulting mental health challenges we all face when serving others, whether it be in the military or public health, and how we need to care for each other through compassion and support. Dr. Nicole Blackman spoke to us regarding the vicious treatment and systemic discrimination of our Indigenous peoples and helped us to understand the legacy impact this has on Indigenous people today. The final day of the conference wrapped up on a lighter note with Steven Patterson, host of CBC’s The Debaters, who had us all in stitches.

In addition to these inspiring dynamic speakers, the conference offered 35 educational sessions and 3 workshops that covered the whole range of public health topics from safe water and rabies, to climate change and emergency management. Workshops were also offered to help delegates develop their softer skills, such as EQ Leadership and honing our PHI skills. All educational sessions were live streamed and available to both in person and virtual delegates.

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CIPHI 2022 National AEC, 3 years in the making, continued

The AEC also provides an opportunity to honour individuals that have made a significant contribution to public health. Both National and Provincial awards were presented to deserving recipients. One of the most prestigious awards is the National Life Membership Award which was presented to Ken Gorman. Ken had a career in public health spanning 40 years. He is a humble but passionate advocate for our profession and has been instrumental in helping to create and shape many of our public health programs, standards, and guidelines as we know them today. Congratulations Ken!

The AEC also offers networking opportunities for delegates to connect with old colleagues, meet new acquaintances, and learn of new advancements from our sponsors and exhibitors, in the area of new products, technology, and resources. Planning committee staff recognized that the virtual audience would miss out on this important aspect and wanted them to be able to take part virtually in some way so they came up with *Live On Air with Ricky*. Ricky Huang, our new inhouse reporter, and Durham's AV talent team interviewed delegates, sponsors, and speakers during the networking breaks, and live streamed it for the virtual audience so that they could feel more connected to colleagues, if only passively.

We would be remiss if we forgot to mention the support received from our generous sponsor and exhibitors. They are vital partners of public health that provide essential knowledge, products, and services that we rely on in our day-to-day business. We are grateful for their partnership and continued engagement as we work together towards improving health outcomes for Canadians from coast to coast.

Over the 3 years it took to plan this conference, there was some doubt as to when and how it would unfold, but we are grateful for the support and faith of conference committee members, CIPHI, and all the people who attended and helped to make the conference a success and memorable one.

We look forward to seeing you next year at the 87th National AEC in St. John, New Brunswick.



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