

What is Public Health

Public health is the science of protecting, promoting and improving the health of people and their communities. It does this by:

- Promoting healthy lifestyles and behaviours and environment
- Advocating for healthy public policy and legislation
- Preventing disease, disability and injury
- Protecting health through inspections of drinking water systems and restaurants
- Monitoring communicable diseases, outbreaks and environmental hazards

Here are some examples of public health in action in your local community:

- Local response to COVID-19 pandemic
- Schoolchildren immunization
- Keeping tobacco products out of children's hands
- Parenting support and education
- Investigation and prevention of outbreaks of food-borne illnesses
- Free dental service for eligible people
- Inspections of restaurants, pools, beaches, and wells



Why Public Health Matters

Simply put, public health keeps people and communities healthy, saves lives and saves money. Public health programs and services prevent health problems from occurring in the first place and help prolong healthy lives, which reduces the need to draw on expensive and increasingly scarce resources of the health care system.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario's 34 local public health agencies have been at the forefront of the ongoing response.

Local public health has been key in preventing COVID-19 transmission, hospitalizations, and death through enactment and enforcement of public health measures, case and contact management, outbreak management, infection prevention and control, communication of credible advice to the public, coordination with local and provincial partners and leadership of the vaccination campaign.

aPHa

Association of Local
PUBLIC HEALTH
Agencies



Supporting Ontario's local public health units and their boards of health to achieve a strong and effective public health system across all communities.

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Who We Are

Established in 1986, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA) is the non-profit organization that provides leadership to Ontario's public health units and their boards of health.

ALPHA works closely with the senior leadership of its member health units, including board of health members, medical and associate medical officers of health, and senior public health managers in each of the following public health disciplines:

- nursing
- inspection
- dentistry
- nutrition
- epidemiology
- health promotion
- business administration

ALPHA represents the interests of member public health units and lends expertise to members on the governance, administration and management of public health units and their boards of health. The Association also works with governments and other health organizations, advocating for healthy public policy and a strong, effective and efficient public health system in Ontario.

What We Do

Through policy analysis, discussion, partnership and advocacy, ALPHA's members and staff act to promote public health policies that form a strong foundation for the improvement of health promotion and protection, disease prevention and surveillance services in all of Ontario's communities. ALPHA also provides member benefits such as group plans, networking opportunities, and recognition, to name just a few. Here are key activities that we engage in as the voice of Ontario's public health units:

Advocacy – ALPHA communicates on behalf of members on public health matters to government and decision-makers. It also develops and disseminates positions and reports on key public health issues and relevant legislation.

Communications – We keep members informed on the latest news and events as well as emerging issues.

Education – ALPHA holds timely and informative sessions on matters affecting the governance and delivery of public health programs and services.

Representation – ALPHA representatives participate on key public health working groups and committees.

Members of ALPHA

Membership is open to all Ontario public health units and their boards of health.

Representatives from member public health units include:

- board of health members
- medical and associate medical officers of health
- senior public health managers in nursing, inspection, dentistry, nutrition, epidemiology, health promotion and business administration

ALPHA's members also comprise of the following Affiliate Organizations:

- Association of Ontario Public Health Business Administrators (AOPHBA)
- Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario (APHEO)
- Association of Supervisors of Public Health Inspectors of Ontario (ASPHIO)
- Health Promotion Ontario (HPO)
- Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry (OAPHD)
- Ontario Association of Public Health Nursing Leaders (OPHNL)
- Ontario Dietitians in Public Health (ODPH)

