

# **Strategies for Integrating Public Health Core Competencies in a Local Public Health Organization**

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# Hamilton Public Health Services

- Sits within City of Hamilton municipal structure
- Mixed urban/rural population (500,000+)
- 4 operating divisions - 600 full and part-time employees
- Unionized (ONA, CUPE)



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# Building a Core Competencies Strategy

- Sept 2007 – PHAC releases *Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada: Release 1.0*
- Core Competencies aligned with Hamilton Public Health Services strategic plan (2007-2010):

***Goal E “Be recognized as public health experts in the community”***

***Goal F “Recruit, develop and retain a competent, flexible workforce”***



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# Building a Core Competencies Strategy

- Core Competencies projects portfolio
- Project management model – multiple initiatives/levels
- 2007/2010 lenses:
  - Knowledge and awareness
  - Building (on) capacity
  - Assessing workforce readiness
  - Strategic collaboration



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# Results!



- 50% + workforce engaged
- 12 active projects
- Key resource partnerships developed
- Evidence of integration
  - Policy
  - Programs
  - Processes
  - Professional Development

# Key Approaches

- Broad workforce involvement
  - e.g. Introductory Learning Events
- Identify innovators and recruit “Early Adopters”
  - e.g. Core Competencies Reference Group
- Support “Workforce-Driven” ideas
  - e.g. Food Safety and ID Teams adaptation of IOB learning module linking CC’s to learning objectives
- Engage managers (gatekeepers and catalysts)

# Key Approaches

- Be responsive to emerging workforce environment
  - e.g. Emerging project - Health Human Resources Skills Inventory mapped to areas of core competency
- Integrate core competencies as part of professional development and learning expectations
  - e.g. Learning and Professional Development Staff Funding policy linked to demonstration of CC development
- Leverage new capacity by reaching out to others
  - e.g. Partnership with OPHA, 4 health units: competency-based performance management for public health toolkit



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# Why are Public Health Core Competencies Important to Nurses?

- Public Health field is evolving
- Provide direction for skills, knowledge and attitudes
- CHNAC Learning Needs Assessment results



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## How Has Hamilton PHS Engaged PHN's?

- Competent to the Core Competency Workshops
- Nursing Practice Development Committee
- BScN Nursing Student Orientation
- Faculty invited to Core Competency Workshops



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# Implications for Nursing Practice

- Leadership Development
- Competency Based Approach to Performance Management
- Continuous Learning



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# Challenges and Opportunities

## *Clinician Level*

- Professional Reticence to develop new skills
- Reinforce skills, PHAC Skills Online Modules, Census data learning module

# Challenges and Opportunities

## *Organizational Level*

- No road map to fast-track integration of new sets of knowledge and skills across disciplines
- PHS Core Competencies Strategy; engage PHN's directly in workforce-driven initiatives
- Knowledge exchange, conferences, networks, joint initiatives



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# Challenges and Opportunities

## *Community Level*

- Academic partners lack understanding of pre-entry workforce and clinical expectations of PHN's
- Participate in School of Nursing Think Tanks, nursing curriculum committees

# Key Nursing Leadership Opportunity

- Nurses conveyors of new information and skills
- Nursing leadership opportunities:
  - Advancement of a competency-based organization
  - Affect change at the at clinical, organizational, corporate and community level



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