President's Message

I would like to extend a large “thank you” to everyone who responded to the recent national survey conducted by the Public Health Leadership Network. The purpose of this national survey was to understand the uptake and utilization of the Public Health Leadership Competencies and the Organizational Readiness for Change Assessment (ORCA) tool. The survey results will be used to design various knowledge translation dissemination strategies for use by public health disciplines, including environmental health.

There were 197 responses from persons who self-identified as part of the environmental health discipline. The 155 completed responses represented 38% of the overall completed responses received from all public health disciplines surveyed.

Seventy percent (70%) of Environmental Health survey respondents identified themselves as “front line workers” versus holding a manager or supervisory position. In addition, 40% of all respondents have worked less than nine years in the field. I am hopeful these numbers are indicative of an early interest in developing leadership competencies amongst the persons we are entrusting the future of environmental public health!

Regardless of where we are in our career, it is important to embrace the concept that being a leader is not defined by the position one holds within an organization. Not everyone wants to be, can be, or will be in a managing or supervisory role during their career—but everyone can find an opportunity to lead. This is reflected in the definition of leadership from the Public Health Agency Canada (PHAC): *Leadership is described in many ways. In the field of public health it relates to the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of their community and/or the organization in which they work. It involves inspiring*

people to craft and achieve a vision and goals. Leaders provide mentoring, coaching, and recognition. They encourage empowerment, allowing other leaders to emerge (2010).

Related to the topic of ongoing competency development, as of April 1, 2017 the Public Health Agency of Canada is no longer supporting the delivery of Skills Online and will be reallocating resources toward improving their emergency preparedness and response capacity. Consequently, the proposed Skills Online Module on Public Health Leadership will not be completed as planned. It is our understanding efforts are being made to identify an alternate site to offer these important courses formerly available through the Skills Online portal. Further information regarding these changes can be found at SkillsOnline.ca. The information on the website indicates it will remain open for several months to allow access to your previous courses and will allow registrants to continue with their self-directed online courses. For more information, contact publichealthpractice@phac-aspc.gc.ca.

Many of you have taken the courses offered through Skills Online and it has been an excellent source of professional development hours required by CIPHI's Continuing Professional Competency program. CIPHI has been in partnership with Skills Online since 2002 and is grateful for the support and contributions of the dedicated staff at PHAC we had the pleasure of working with over the years. We wish them well as they refocus their efforts to address new public health challenges and hope our paths cross again soon.

Have a safe and relaxing summer.

Ann Thomas
National President CIPHI