



“The OPHA Conference paved the perfect road for me to transition from theory to practice.”

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Ontario Public Health Association's 60th Anniversary Conference

Being part of something bigger than yourself really makes you feel alive, especially when you are among those who share the same passion. As a graduate student in the Master of Public Health program at the University of Waterloo, attending the Ontario Public Health Association's 60th Anniversary Conference paved the perfect road for me to transition from theory to practice. The conference was held at the Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre, November 1st to 4th, 2009. I had the opportunity to meet with and learn from the most dedicated individuals in the field.



Past and present students from the University of Waterloo's Master of Public Health program

The conference featured keynotes and messages from the most prominent public health leaders across Canada: including the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long Term Care; the Honourable Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion; Angela Longo, Deputy Minister of Health Promotion; and Monika Turner, Director of the Public Health Practice Branch at the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care.

Key messages focused around Health Equity, Innovation, Collaboration, Knowledge Exchange and the Public Health Workforce. The conference also featured the most current

experts at the forefront of the H1N1 pandemic—GlaxoSmithKline and the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (OAHPP). The importance of working with partners was also emphasized for effective public health policy and practice to take place.

It was an honour to be recognized at the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) conference as an award recipient for the OPHA 60th Anniversary Student Video Contest.



OPHA's Student Video Essay Winners, Carly Heung and Kenny Wong

OPHA's first ever student video/essay contest corresponds to their 60th Anniversary theme, "Building for the Future". Students in public and community health were given the opportunity to showcase their ideas, interests, and perspectives on public health issues through a traditional essay or a video. It was my pleasure to have had the opportunity to collaborate with Kenny Wong, a graduate student in Epidemiology at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health, on our winning video, which illustrated how public health is part of our everyday lives, even though it may not be obvious.

There is no better time than now to enter the field of public health as OPHA just celebrated their 60th anniversary and the CPHA is preparing for their 100th. I look forward to a valuable networking opportunity at the Canadian Public Health Association Conference taking place June 13th to 17th, 2010 at the Sheraton Centre downtown Toronto. The conference foresees over 2,000 attending delegates. Dr. Vivek Goel, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, anticipates the CPHA Conference to be the largest in the history of public health in Canada. I will definitely not miss this great opportunity to learn from the top leaders of today so that I can help build a stronger tomorrow. Please join me in congratulating OPHA and CPHA for their great success.