The Role of the Family Physician Office in Public Health:

or “Getting to know your Medical Health Officer”

or “For the Health of it....”
Learning Objectives:

The participant will be able to:

• Actively contribute to protecting and promoting the public’s health.
• Utilize effectively and efficiently public health supporting resources.
• Engage in community activities that benefit population health.
Disclosure 1

- Paul Hasselback
- No financial affiliations with any content of the presentation.
- “Employee” of Island Health.
- Delegated authority by order-in-council through the Public Health Act to contribute to the improvement of health and wellbeing of residents of the area.
Disclosure 2

Financial Support

- No current conflicts to declare.
- Not a supplier or user of illicit substances.
- Not known to be infected with Hep B, C, HIV or Tb.
Disclosure 3
Mitigation of Biases

“Biases” are inherent to the description of the role of the Medical Health Officer

6. Communication, Collaboration and Advocacy for the Public’s Health: MHOs are a primary source of information on public health matters for a range of audiences and utilize their knowledge of communities to develop and shape strategies with partners to mobilize action to identify inequities in health and build healthy public policy to reduce them.

8. Professional Practice: MHOs fulfill a number of professional roles, including that of educator, the development and translation of public health knowledge, the maintenance and improvement of their own expertise in public health practice, and ethical conduct.

- Informing other health care providers regarding public health issues.
Public Health and Preventive Medicine/Medical Health Officer

- Nebulous part of undergraduate training.
- Depending on your view, the enlightened side or the dark side of medical business.
- Sometimes shrouded in controversy (and mystique).
- Perhaps, not as well understood as it could be, and perhaps misperception as “easy”, “not hard work”, “fewer hours”.
- Employed by Island Health. Appointed by Cabinet. Accountable to PHO, Board and CMHO.
- Requires multiple personality disorder to fulfill role.
Roles you Probably Knew

• Communicable disease control.
• Immunization.
• Healthy child development.
  – Focus of Public Health services
Roles you Might Know

• Health Protection (food, drinking water, air quality, built environment).
• Chronic disease prevention (smoking reduction, healthy eating, increased physical activity).
• Injury control.
• Health promotion (determinants of health – poverty, equity, community development).
• Harm reduction (illicit drugs, overdoses).
Roles you May not Have Realized

- Health status reporting.
- Population health assessment (environmental impact, policy impact, communities).
- Health and Disease Surveillance.
  - Emerging diseases
- School Medical Officer.
- Health care administration.
- Disaster and Emergency Management.
• Public Relations
  – Media
  – Politicians and governance bodies

• Health Surveillance and Assessment
  – Epidemiology
  – MHO reports
  – Technological support and data access
  – Evaluation

• Partnerships
  – Health care workers in all roles
  – Coalition support and development
  – Communities
  – Government relations

• Professional Practice
  – Consultation
  – Legal authority and powers

![Graph showing prevalence of low-income based on LIM (after tax) for population under 6 living in private households](image)
Public Health

• Public health is the organized response of society to promote, protect, improve and restore the health of individuals, specified groups or the entire population.

• It is a combination of sciences, skills m, and values that function through collective societal activities.

• It is more than a set of programs and services.
You are an Integral part of Public Health System

Day to day interaction with patients.

– “doing population health, one person at a time.”

– Healthier behaviour adoption.

• Emerging disease detection.

– Eyes on the ground.

• Supporting outbreak investigation and intervention.
Roles you Might Consider Playing

• Leadership in health sector on population health issues.

• Leadership in community where most population health issues need to be addressed.

• Occasional service to underserved communities.
  – Lower SES, addicted, HIV/Hep C positive, remote, Aboriginal,
Helpful Hints

- Public health staff are part of the health care team surrounding joint patients/clients.
- Their inquiries are judicious and try to respect your time. The respect should to be reciprocal – staff are restricted in hours of work.
- Public Health in Canada is a strong coalition – Many (but not all) recommendations are aligned nationally, and align with US.
- We live in BC, Canada and follow provincial/national recommendations.
Helpful Hints

• It is okay to ask questions.
  – 600 Physicians in Central Island (300 in Nanaimo).
  – 275,000 residents, even more visitors.
  – One PHPM specialist/Medical Health Officer
    • Most Physicians will only occasionally see public health related clinical issues.

• Email paul.hasselback@viha.ca
• Phone 739-6304 or direct 755-7944
• Contact office for presentation
Travelling CME – let me know
Pearls and Perils in Public Health 2016

Paul Hasselback MD MSc FRCPC
Medical Health Officer
UBC Clinical Associate Professor
U Victoria – Affiliate Clinical Associate Professor
Paul.hasselback@viha.ca 250.739.6304
Prevention begins
“Right From the Start”