



# Ontario Dietitians in Public Health



Ontario Dietitians in Public Health  
Diététistes en santé publique de l'Ontario

## Annual Report 2024-2025

### 2025-29 Strategic Plan

### Message from the Executive

#### Our Vision

ODPH is recognized and valued as a leader in public health nutrition working to promote the health of Ontarians.

#### Our Mission

To advance public health nutrition through member and partner collaboration to improve population health and health equity locally and provincially.

#### Our Work Is...

##### **Member driven, member engaged:**

We value member input and strive to ensure all members have an opportunity to participate.

**Foundational to health:** We support a positive relationship with food to help prevent chronic disease and promote physical, mental and social well-being across the population from pre-conception through adulthood.

**Evidence informed:** We build on best practices by using current high-quality evidence (research, context, experience) to ensure our work in public health nutrition is relevant and credible.

**Health equity focused:** We work to reduce systemic and unjust disadvantages that undermine health so that all populations have equitable access and opportunities to reach their full health potential.

##### **Committed to Indigenous engagement:**

We all have a collective role to play in learning, understanding, and redressing the ongoing colonialism and becoming allies for Indigenous peoples.

ODPH is pleased to highlight our members' impact and contributions to public health this year. Working together to enhance efficiency and minimize duplication, our 127 registered dietitian members helped shape public policy and strengthen comprehensive health promotion programs.

ODPH translated nutrition research into practical information and created evidence-based resources, positions and messages to improve health equity and support healthy food and nutrition environments fundamental to the health of Ontarians, from pre-conception through adulthood.

ODPH developed a new [strategic plan](#) to set clear direction for the next 4 years, aligning efforts and resources to meet long-term goals and objectives. Membership has transitioned to Microsoft Teams to modernize our internal communication and documentation systems. Our new, public-facing website, [ODPH.ca](#), shares resources with policy makers, educators, community partners and government to advance public health nutrition practices. ODPH demonstrates fiscal responsibility and allocates resources efficiently to maximize impact.

We are recognized as credible leaders in public health nutrition. This year, external organizations including the Primary Care Dietitians Association, National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health, Coalition for Healthy School Food (ON chapter), School Mental Health Ontario, Sustain Ontario, Public Health Ontario (PHO), Ophea, TVO, and World Critical Dietetics conference sought our expertise. ODPH actively participated in provincial and federal policy consultations.

ODPH executive continues to build relationships and work with key partners, including ALPHA, PHO, Ministries of Health, Education, and Children, Community and Social Services, and Dietetic Education Leadership Forum of Ontario to promote efficiencies, leverage public health nutrition work, and support population health promotion learning among dietetic students.

It is evident by the vast contributions of our members how impactful, relevant and fundamental our collective food and nutrition work is to population health.



# ODPH Workgroups & Communities of Practice

ODPH brings together Registered Dietitians from across the province to collaborate, learn, advocate and create resources that support meaningful change in public health nutrition. Workgroups and communities of practice contribute to comprehensive health, working towards improving Ontarians’ food literacy, increasing access to nutritious food, raising awareness of effective policy responses to food insecurity, and enhancing food environments where we live, work, learn, and play. ODPH work and accomplishments span various topic areas:

- Body Diversity
- Food Systems
- Child Care
- School Nutrition
- Family Health
- Anti-Racism
- Food Insecurity
- Eating Disorder Prevention

For more information and to find resources, visit [odph.ca](http://odph.ca).

## Financial Statements 2024-2025

Opening Balance (July 1, 2024) \$85,585.83

ODPH is delighted to announce  
**Elizabeth Smith, RD,MPH**  
**City of Hamilton Public Health Services**  
 as the recipient of the  
**2024-2025**  
**Peer Recognition Award**

*Elizabeth is a passionate leader, mentor, and team player who has consistently combined vision with action. Her collaborative spirit, advocacy for evidence-based change, and persistence in driving policy improvements exemplify her commitment to public health nutrition and the dietetic profession.*

*We congratulate Elizabeth and thank her for her commitment to ODPH and her colleagues across the province!*

REVENUE	
Membership	16,200.00
Workgroup contributions	3,325.63
Interest and Other	3,3143.80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$22,669.43</b>
EXPENSES	
Travel (ICND)	1,964.37
Website/Teams	5,230.02
Exec Meeting Expenses	7,195.40
Accounting	904.00
Gifts	573.62
Honorariums	400.00
Insurance	2,377.08
Clerical (Simple Survey)	366.12
Bank Fees	173.14
Membership Processing Fees	636.87
Workgroup expense invoices	10,884.68
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$30,705.30</b>
<b>Net Surplus or Loss</b>	<b>-\$8,035.87</b>
<b>Total Assets</b> (cash in bank as of June 30, 2025)	<b>\$77,549.96</b>



ODPH is the official voice of registered dietitians working in Ontario’s public health system  
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 LinkedIn profile: [www.linkedin.com/in/ontario-dietitians-in-public-health](http://www.linkedin.com/in/ontario-dietitians-in-public-health)



# Summary: ODPH Workgroups, Communities of Practice & Liaison Group Activities

## Body Diversity Workgroup (BDWG)

The BDWG believes that all bodies have the right to exist as they are, free from social and political systems of oppression that designate certain bodies as more worthy, “healthy” and desirable than others. The purpose of the Body Diversity Workgroup (BDWG) is to advance action that dismantles the attitudes, behaviours and social systems that marginalize, exclude, and oppress people because of their body size. We do this by:

- addressing anti-fat bias through advocacy, education and policy change;
- endorsing a weight-inclusive approach to health and well-being; and
- providing tools, resources and supports for public health professionals to advance weight-inclusive approaches.

### **Key activities/accomplishments this year:**

- Developed resources to support the implementation of the *Towards a Weight Inclusive Approach to Public Health* position statement including:
  - Frequently Asked Questions Document to support members in addressing common questions and concerns; and
  - Health Care Provider Resources on weight inclusive care and weight science.
- Worked through French translation of the *Towards a Weight Inclusive Approach to Public Health* position statement. This included a consultation with Francophone RD's to reach consensus on approach terminology.
- Began development of weight bias training e-modules for public health staff.
- Continued collaboration with Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario (APHEO) to revise the Adult BMI core indicator.
- Presented to University of Toronto MPH dietetic students on weight stigma and advancing weight-inclusive care, in alignment with the new draft of the position statement.
- Presented on weight inclusive care to the Primary Care Dietitians Association.
- Corresponded with other public health dietitians and academics doing weight inclusive work in New Brunswick, Quebec, BC, the US and Australia.
- Supported member collaboration through implementation of the *Towards a Weight Inclusive Approach to Public Health* position statement recommendations in their public health units.
- Presented on weight inclusive care at the World Critical Dietetics Conference, February 2025.

## Child Care Workgroup (CCWG)

The CCWG consults and collaborates with child care partners to provide high quality public health nutrition resources that meet Ministry of Health (MOH) and Ministry of Education (MEDU) guidance, standards and legislation.

### **Key activities/accomplishments this year:**

- Collaborating with OPH to develop an eLearning course titled, Nutrition in Child Care Settings. This free, six-module training helps staff apply recommendations from the Child Care Menu Planning Practical Guide and includes content on responsive feeding and role modeling. The evidence-informed modules, reviewed by local child care staff, can be used for staff orientation and ongoing professional development, with a certificate of completion available.
- Prepared a dissemination plan for the eLearning course and related resources to align with the new ODPH website launch. This includes a postcard promoting the Practical Guide and other resources intended for public health inspectors to distribute during their routine inspections.



- Developed new resources as web content in both English and French: Celebrations, Fundraising, Responsive Feeding Practices Sample Policy, Foods Offered in our Child Care Setting Sample Policy. Resources pending review: Facilitating Family Meals, Food Literacy.
- Received a presentation by Kelly Ferguson and Karen Wismer on "Supporting a Positive Relationship with Food." They shared the findings of the food neutral survey completed in January as well as additional education on the implementation of a food neutral approach tailored specifically to child care settings. This work was also shared with the ODPH cross-workgroup collaboration on the food neutral approach.
- Several CCWG members participated in the [Celebrate Feeding](#) Delphi Study - "Defining responsive feeding in early learning and child care programs: A Delphi study".

### Family Health Nutrition Advisory Group (FHNAG)

The purpose of FHNAG is to advance public health nutrition as it relates to the perinatal period (preconception, pregnancy, post-partum) and early childhood (0-6 years of age).

#### Key activities/accomplishments this year:

- Advanced several key advocacy initiatives through formal letters and consultation submissions on emerging issues in nutrition and infant feeding, including:
  - [Response](#) to Health Canada's consultation on the regulatory modernization of foods for special dietary use and infant foods;
  - [Response](#) to the U.S. *Consumer Reports* article on infant formula contaminants;
  - [Feedback](#) on content for the *aboutbreastfeeding.ca* website; and
  - Correspondence with Health Canada regarding evidence-based powdered infant formula mixing ratios.
- In partnership with members of the FIWG and PHO, FHNAG also developed methodology and an infant formula costing tool to examine formula costs and their implications for access and equity.
- In the area of knowledge translation, FHNAG launched the [2025 Pediatric Nutrition Guidelines for Health Professionals \(Birth to Six Years\)](#) and created a new resource, [Eating Well During Pregnancy](#). Content from this pregnancy resource was further adapted into a Canadian-specific nutrition tile for the Injoy online prenatal platform, ensuring consistent and accessible evidence-based guidance for all Canadian Injoy users.
- FHNAG is providing leadership to the Ontario Adverse Childhood Experiences and Resilience Community of Practice by authoring the *Early Adversity and Feeding, Food and Nutrition* topic summary and contributing to the *Infant Feeding* topic summary, both of which will complement the Ontario Early Adversity and Resilience Framework.

### Food Insecurity Workgroup (FIWG)

The FIWG provides opportunities for knowledge exchange, collaboration and coordinated advocacy among members working towards effective responses to the problem of household food insecurity. The FIWG supports members to monitor food affordability by developing, updating, and disseminating the methodology a spreadsheet used to conduct the Ontario Nutritious Food Basket costing, and income scenarios with associated guidance for reporting on food affordability.

#### Key activities/accomplishments this year:

- Partnered with PHO to produce the first [provincial report and infographic](#) on Food Insecurity & Food Affordability in Ontario. A subgroup is creating a "Call to Action" to align with the provincial report and our [Position Statement and Recommendations on Responses to Food Insecurity, 2020](#).
- Eastern region members of the FIWG collaborated to release their food affordability monitoring data. Other PHUs used their local data to support advocacy to provincial and federal governments. Media coverage including [this](#) from Simcoe Muskoka. Additional local media coverage in Peterborough and Renfrew included newspaper stories and radio/TV interviews in follow-up to media releases.



- A subgroup created a Municipal Primer and presentation template to be used by FIWG members and partners to advocate at the municipal level for actions on household food insecurity.
- Partnered with FHNAG and PHO to develop methodology and an infant formula costing tool for examining formula costs and their implications for access and equity.

### Food Systems Workgroup (FSWG)

The purpose of the FSWG is to provide an opportunity for collaboration, knowledge exchange and advocacy among ODPH members working towards sustainable and just food systems.

Goals of the FSWG include:

- Enhancing knowledge and capacity of FSWG members to work effectively towards sustainable and just food systems through evidence informed practice
- Advocating for public policies that support sustainable and just food systems
- Ensuring clear communication and consistent messaging by encouraging collaboration among FSWG members and all ODPH members
- Being recognized as public health experts on food systems by external organizations and groups and be called upon as partners or consultants on matters (e.g., government consultations) related to food systems, and
- Collaborating on cross-cutting messaging with other ODPH workgroups and the Executive committee.

#### Key activities/accomplishments this year:

- Published the second of two evidence reviews titled *Municipal Land Use Planning Policies that Promote Equitable and Sustainable Food Systems* in October 2024 with support from NCCMT.
- Members reviewed and were formally acknowledged in the [National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health Food Systems Issue Brief](#) and [Food Justice Practice Brief](#).
- Submitted an [advocacy letter](#) in strong support of Bill 21 Protect Our Food Act in June 2025.

### School Nutrition Workgroup (SNWG)

The SNWG advocates for comprehensive healthy eating environments in Ontario schools. It plans, supports, and shares nutrition initiatives to improve the nutritional health of students.

#### Key activities/accomplishments this year:

- [BrightBites](#)

We are proud to have done a complete overhaul of [BrightBites.ca](#). Countless hours were spent creating fresh new content and an exciting layout for the revamped platform. A huge thanks to the team of RDs for their painstaking work and to all the PHUs who provided financial support to this project. BrightBites messaging aims to support schools in creating a supportive school food climate and in fostering positive relationships with food and bodies.

Presentations and webinars highlighting BrightBites messaging were given to the:

- Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition
- Student Nutrition Ontario Conference, and
- PHE Canada Forum.

- **PHO Evidence Review**

The review on ‘food neutral’ nutrition education was completed. It concluded that ‘there is a lack of evidence on the impact of food neutral approaches in interventions with school aged children and adolescents.’ However, as this is an emerging area, a [response document](#) was created to share recommendations for public health practice to continue to use neutral approaches to food and nutrition.

- **Survey of SNWG members**

A survey was done with SNWG members to determine the landscape of school nutrition work by Ontario PHUs. Main takeaway: 95% of respondents have a similar goal of promoting BrightBites messaging.



- **Advocacy and Consultations**

- Letters promoting BrightBites and offering to collaborate on resource review were sent to [Ophea](#) and TVO. A response was received from Ophea indicating that their team would be open to collaboration with SNWG.
- Discussions with School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) to identify language on their website not in alignment with BrightBites messaging. SMHO open to collaboration with SNWG.
- Meetings held with Ministry of Education (MEDU) highlighting the necessity to have PPM150 reviewed and updated and requesting their presence at SNWG meetings to foster collaboration.
- Collaborated with the ON Chapter of the Coalition for Healthy School Food to inform the Coalition's ongoing advocacy to increase government funding for the Ontario Student Nutrition Program.
- Represented ODPH at the Sustain Ontario - ON Coalition School Food Visioning Process (May -June 2025) and will continue to have representation on the ON Chapter's Advisory Committee.

### **Anti-racism in Dietetics Community of Practice (ARD CoP)**

The purpose of the ARD CoP is to create a space that fosters connection, learning, and support to achieve our vision of using an anti-racist lens of practice in all ODPH areas of work. Participants will be able to learn and unlearn in relation to anti-racism while also discussing how we can apply these learnings to advocate for systemic change in the work we do. This work also requires an understanding of intersectionality which describes the ways in which systems of inequality based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and other forms of discrimination intersect to create unique dynamics and effects.

The objectives of the ARD CoP include:

- Continued learning and knowledge-seeking regarding racism in public health nutrition, which does not exclusively rely on BIPOC as an educative source (e.g., discuss case scenarios and other relevant resources)
- Employing the best possible evidence, where possible; identify gaps in evidence
- Supporting partner organizations' knowledge dissemination activities, and
- Liaising with and advising other ODPH workgroups to enhance understanding of racism in public health nutrition practice and apply this to their work (e.g., developing resources, guest speakers).

#### **Key Activities/Accomplishments this year:**

- Exploring opportunities to expand on past student project re: Anti-racist practices within ODPH.
- Co-chairs presented to the Ontario Community Health Centre Registered Dietitians to provide a broad overview of the CoP, including its origins and resources discussed.
- Continuing to expand the types of resources discussed in meetings (e.g. videos and podcasts).

### **Eating Disorder Prevention Community of Practice (EDP CoP)**

Over the past year, the ED CoP has continued to foster rich, collaborative dialogue among its participants. Our discussions have spanned a wide range of topics related to prevention, capacity building, and system-level change. A growing number of health units have participated in Eating Disorders Ontario's (EDO) Foundational Training, which has sparked further conversation about how public health units across are engaging in eating disorder prevention locally. We were also fortunate to host two insightful guest speakers at our meetings. One elaborated on the concept of dissonance-based interventions and their role in eating disorder prevention strategies. The other was a primary care dietitian sharing her practical experience using a weight inclusive approach in client care. She highlighted the systemic challenges in accessing adequate care for disordered eating and eating disorders, underscoring the need for broader system change. Eating Disorder Awareness Week (EDAW) was a recurring topic of interest within the group. There is a clear appetite for greater collective action, and we are pleased to report members will be joining the national EDAW planning committee.



## Public Health Advisory in Dietetic Training (PHADT) ad-hoc group

The goals of the PHADT ad-hoc group are:

- To improve dietetic education to public health nutrition in undergraduate, graduate, and dietetic practicum programs; and
- To provide connection and support among RDs in public health in Ontario and dietetic educators.

### Key activities or accomplishments this year:

- Meetings. The ad-hoc group met 2 times (Nov 2024, May 2025) with 5 active members representing dietetic education programs and public health dietitians.
- Orientation Manual and Modules. Efforts were made to promote this resource to public health units and to Ontario university programs. Feedback has been collected. Revisions will be made after new OPHS and Core Competencies release.
- Group also served as the liaison and discussion space between ODPH and Dietetic Educators on relevant issues. The group discussed CDRE pass rates, new Accreditation body for dietetic education and training programs, OPHS revisions, RD workforce issues in Ontario, Student projects, among others.

## Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa)

alPHa is a not-for-profit organization that provides leadership to boards of health and public health units in Ontario.

alPHa's mission is to serve Ontario's local public health agencies for a strong public health system. As a member of alPHa, **ODPH is one of seven Affiliate organizations on the Board of Directors** alongside the Council of Medical Officers of Health and Board of Health Sections. ODPH can bring forward public health nutrition-related issues for Board discussion and action, along with providing input into alPHa decisions.

Carolyn Doris, Manager, Lakelands Public Health, acts as ODPH's representative to the alPHa Board. Meetings have allowed for building relationships with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Affiliate meetings allow for discussion on topics relevant to public health staff.

At the June alPHa meeting, ODPH's request to amend the [Ontario Early Adversity and Resilience Framework](#) resolution to reference the alPHa resolution introduced by ODPH in 2024 (A24-05, Early Childhood Food Insecurity: An Emerging Public Health Problem Requiring Urgent Action) was accepted. ODPH was also featured as part of an *On the Front Lines* panel discussion.

The alPHa Board continues to work together to implement the 2024-2027 [Strategic Plan](#). alPHa's [Public Health Matters](#) series highlights the value of public health.