



***Strengthening Public Health Nutrition
Practice in Canada***

***Overview of work by the Pan Canadian Task
Force on Public Health Nutrition***

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**Ontario Public Health Association Conference
November 2009**



Pan Canadian Task Force on Public Health Nutrition Practice

- Established in early 2006
- Strategic guidance, expert advice and leadership to enhance public health nutrition practice in Canada.
- Leaders from public health nutrition from across Canada
- Funding support from the Public Health Agency of Canada. Funds managed by Dietitians of Canada

Laying the Foundation

Ministers of Health, June 2004:

- Agreed to a 10-year action plan to strengthen public health

Public Health Human Resource Task Group:

- Developed a pan-Canadian framework to strengthen public health capacity & ensure a competent workforce

Building the Public Health Workforce for the 21st Century

A Pan-Canadian
Framework for Public
Health Human
Resources Planning

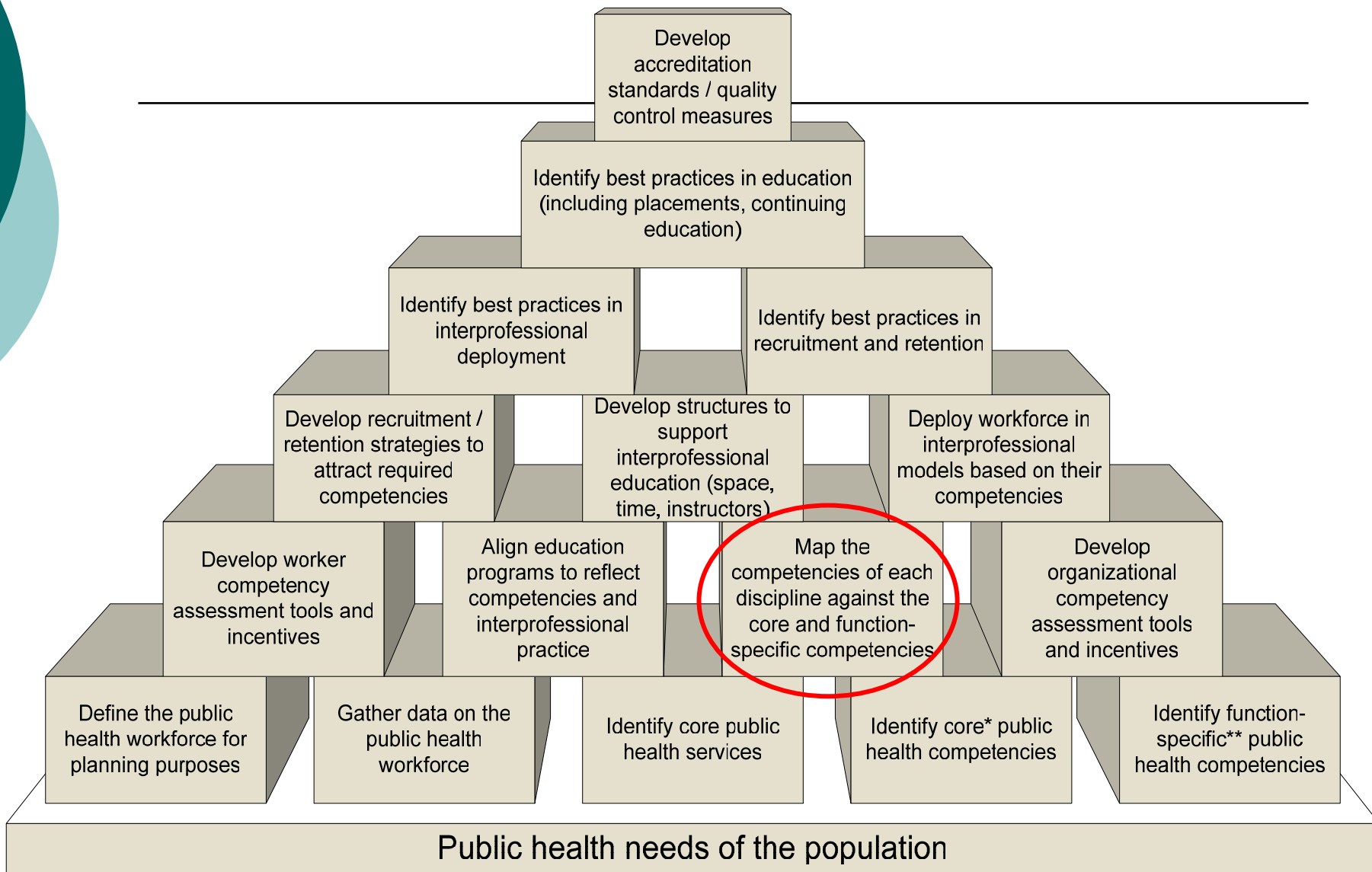
The Joint Task Group
on Public Health
Human Resources

Advisory Committee on
Health Delivery and
Human Resources

Advisory Committee on
Population Health and
Health Security



October 2005





Task Force Objectives

1. Define public health nutrition practice in Canada.
2. Investigate and report on the need for discipline specific public health nutrition competency sets/frameworks.
3. Explore an organizational structure that can provide leadership for public health nutrition practice issues in Canada.



Milestone Achievements

- ✓ Action Plan for the Task Force
- ✓ Situational Assessment
- ✓ Communications
- ✓ Competency Mapping
- ✓ Consultation
- ✓ Recommendations for Action
- Process Report (pending)



Purpose of Consultation

Generate Informed Dialogue on:

1. a definition of practice;
2. identified competencies; and
3. national leadership and organizational structure.



Guiding Principles for Consultation

- ❑ Inclusive
- ❑ Transparent
- ❑ Flexible
- ❑ Meaningful
- ❑ Rigorous



Participation in Consultation

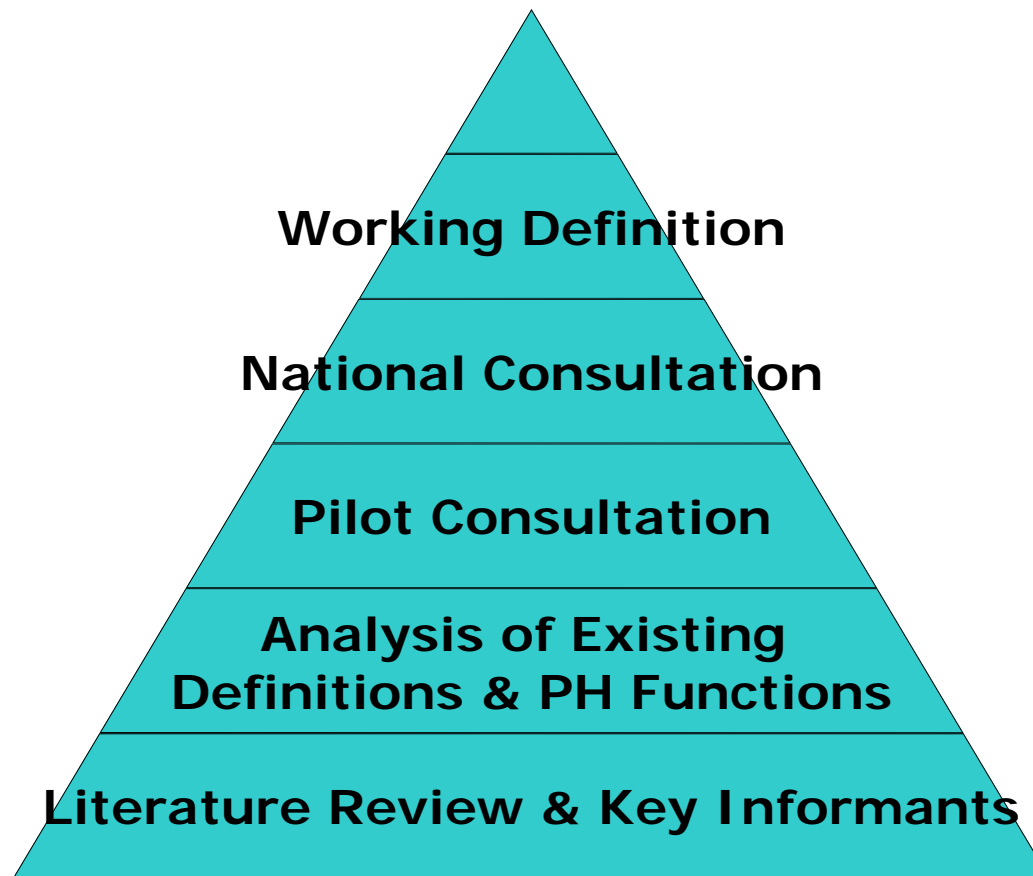
1. Pilot Consultation
 - 103 dietitians and educators (67 and 36 respectively)
2. National Consultation
 - 20 discussion groups
 - 297 completed surveys
 - 11 emails



Objective #1:

**Define public health nutrition
practice**

Process for Proposed Definition of Practice





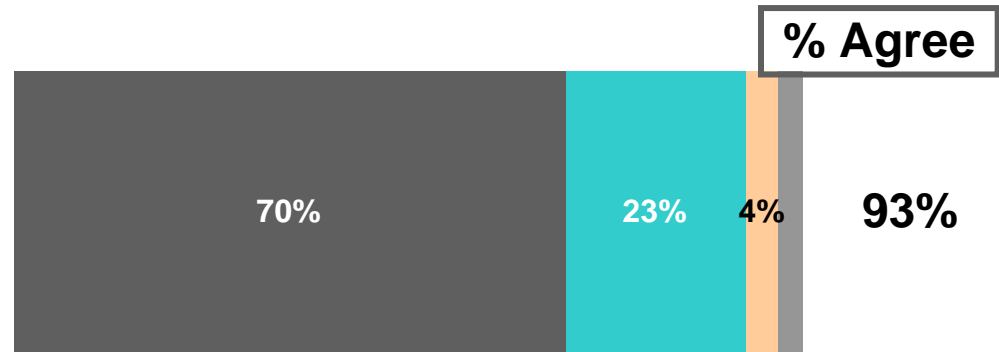
***Draft* definition presented for National Consultation**

Public health nutrition practice encompasses the promotion, protection, and improvement of nutritional health and prevention of nutrition-related disease in order to achieve best possible health outcomes.

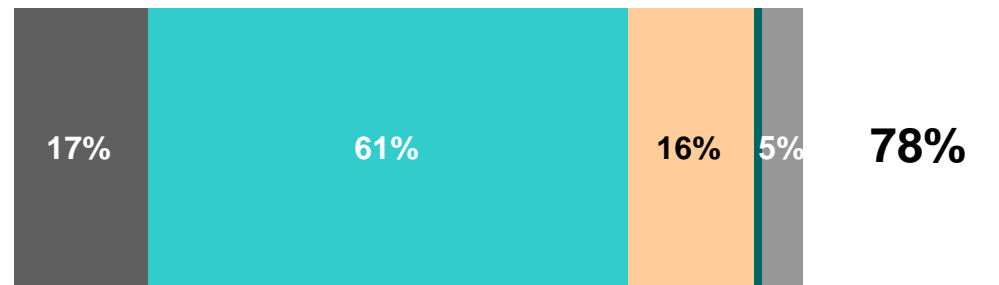
Using a population health promotion approach, activities focus on the interactions between the determinants of health, food systems and nutritional status.

How much do you agree that the proposed definition reflects:

the desired practice of public health nutrition in Canada?



the current practice of public health nutrition in Canada?



■ Strongly agree

■ Somewhat agree

■ Somewhat disagree

■ Strongly disagree

■ Don't know



Recommendation: Definition of Practice

- Use the following national definition of practice to shape the future direction of public health nutrition practice.

Definition

Public health nutrition practice requires the leadership of dietitians with expertise in nutrition, food systems and related public health sciences.

- Public health nutrition practice encompasses the assessment, promotion, protection and enhancement of nutritional health and well-being and the prevention of nutrition related disease.
- Using population health and health promotion approaches, strategies focus on the interactions among the determinants of nutritional health, food security, and nutritional and overall health.



Objective #2:

**Develop public health nutrition
competencies**

Existing Competencies

- *The Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada: Release 1.0 (2007)*
- *The Essential Competencies for Dietetic Practice (2006)* developed by provincial dietetics regulatory bodies
- *The Competencies for the Entry-Level Dietitian (1996)* and knowledge statements (1997) from Dietitians of Canada and
- Provincial and International Public Health Nutrition Competencies (Toronto, NS, US, UK, Australia)

Proposed Competency Set for Pan Canadian Consultation

**Core Competencies for Public
Health in Canada: Release 1.0**
+ Dietetic Competencies
(ie Dietitians of Canada & Provincial Regulatory Bodies)
+ 6 Additional Competencies

**= Public Health Nutrition
Competencies**

Evaluation of the six additional competencies

	Import- -ance	Scope	Clarity
determinants of a population's nutritional status	Very strong	Very strong	Very strong
knowledge of food systems	Very strong	Strong	Strong
food and nutrition surveillance and monitoring	Strong	Strong	Very strong
development of public policy	Strong	Strong	Strong
ethical resources	Less strong	Less strong	Less strong
environmental and ecological integrity	Less strong	Less strong	Less strong

COMPETENCY STATEMENT PRESENTED IN THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- Applies knowledge of food systems and how they affect nutritional status and health outcomes of individuals and populations **(48% very clear)**
- Demonstrates understanding of the inter-relationships between food practices and environmental and ecological integrity **(30% very clear)**
- Demonstrates understanding of the influence of economic trends and factors on the determinants of a population's nutritional status **(59% very clear)**
- Contributes to the acquisition of appropriate public (local, provincial, and federal) and ethical private resources for public health and food/nutrition policies, programs, and services **(30 % very clear)**
- Demonstrates understanding of federal, regional, state and local governmental structures, and the processes involved in the development of public policy, legislation, regulations, and delivery of services that influence food systems, food intake, nutritional status, and health of populations **(48% very clear)**
- Participates in food and nutrition surveillance and monitoring as it relates to food and nutrition for the purposes of planning, policy analysis, program evaluation, and trend forecasting **(56% very clear)**

COMPETENCIES RECOMMENDED FOR INTEGRATION INTO THE UPDATED DIETETIC COMPETENCIES

Demonstrates understanding of:

- food systems and sustainable food practices as they relate to and influence population health
- how a public health perspective drives ethical decision making in food and nutrition related policies, programs, purchasing, partnerships, funding and sponsorship
- the role of policy and how food and nutrition public policy is developed in Canada
- food and nutrition surveillance and monitoring as it relates to planning, policy analysis, program evaluation, advocacy, and research
- the processes and roles of partnership, collaboration, community development and advocacy to improve the health and wellbeing of the population through food and nutrition strategies
- the core attitudes and values shared by public health professionals.



Recommendations: Public Health Nutrition Competencies

- Update Dietetic competencies to strengthen foundation of PH nutrition practice.
- Provide all dietetic students and interns practical training with public health experiences throughout their education.
- Present opportunities for PH nutrition staff to strengthen their practice for greater consistency within the public health nutrition workforce across Canada.
- Identify, promote and support advanced level public health nutrition practice.



Objective #3:

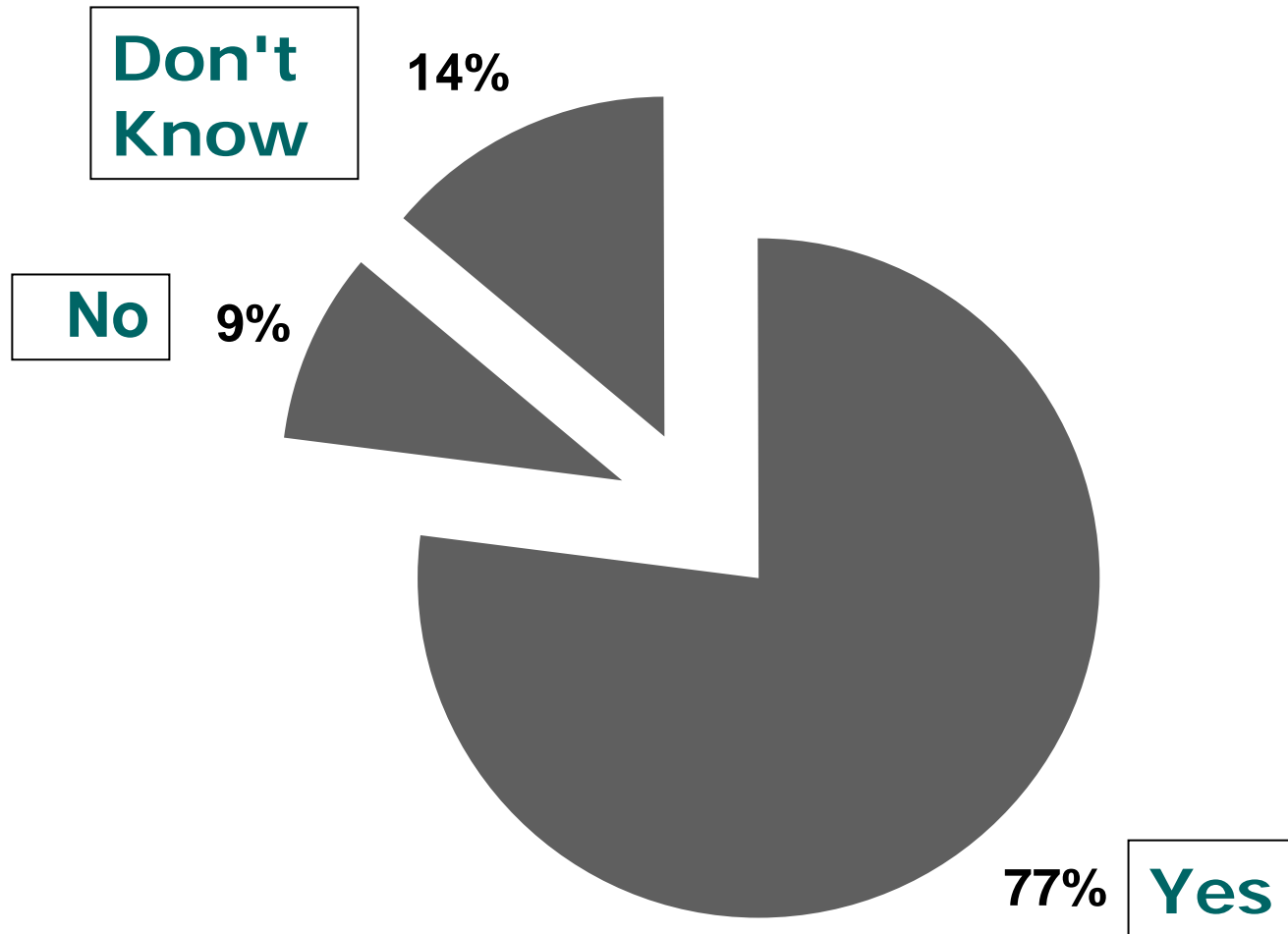
**Investigate a national
leadership and organizational
structure**



Environmental scan of missions and functions – 17 organizations

- Provincial level Public Health Nutrition organizations
- National level Public Health Nutrition Organizations (outside Canada)
- National level Public Health Organizations (in non-nutrition disciplines)
- International Public Health Nutrition Organization

Do you think there is a need for national leadership or a national organizational structure to support your public health nutrition practice?



Base: All respondents (n=297)



Additional Supports Needed

- advocate for a healthy population by identifying and responding to relevant issues at a national level;
- develop and promote consistent standards of practice;
- support the education and training of public health nutrition professionals; and
- promote and advocate for a competent and well supported Canadian public health nutrition workforce.



Recommendation: Leadership & Organizational Structures

- Effectively support public health nutrition practice and interdisciplinary public health workforce development through national level structures and mechanisms.



Summary of Recommendations

1. Use the national definition of practice to shape the future direction of public health nutrition practice.
2. Update the Dietetic competencies to strengthen the foundation for public health nutrition practice.
3. Provide all dietetic students and interns in their education and practical training with public health experiences.

Summary of Recommendations cont'd

4. Present opportunities for public health nutrition staff to strengthen their practice for greater consistency nationally within the public health nutrition workforce.
5. Identify, promote and support advanced level public health nutrition practice.
6. Effectively support public health nutrition practice and interdisciplinary public health workforce development through national level structures and mechanisms.

Next Steps

1. Disseminate Technical Report and Recommendations for Action
2. Complete and share a report on the processes used throughout this work
3. Develop our next Action Plan and review Task Force membership
4. Explore other workforce issues (e.g. capacity)

Thank You!

- Task Force Reports are available at <http://www.dietitians.ca>

Go to Resources section; search Task Force on Public Health Nutrition Practice

- Contact us at: jane.bellman@wdghu.org