

2014-15 SHEELA BASRUR CENTRE

A Year in Review



Fostering public health leadership

With another successful year of activities in 2014–2015, the Centre is becoming a recognized brand synonymous with a suite of programs geared towards public health professionals and students. Focusing on communications and leadership development, these programs continue to be offered annually and our network of award recipients is growing rapidly.

Through SBC training programs, recipients are acquiring valuable information and experience. They are returning and sharing their learnings with their public health colleagues, which strengthens the sector as a whole.

As the Centre's programs continue to evolve, we are witnessing the value they provide. Our programs translate into palpable knowledge, practical skills and unique communications opportunities. An example is Kathleen Dooling's Fellowship experience as a medical journalist at ABC News (see her interview on page 5).

Looking ahead to the coming year, we envision the Centre moving into a period of renewal. We will continue to offer the Centre's annual programs and

activities, while focusing on sustainability in 2015–2016 – acquiring new sponsors, maintaining current partnerships, and fundraising. This will ensure the continued accessibility of our activities and programs, positioning the Centre as a go-to communications and leadership development resource for public health professionals.

In the coming year, our goal is to sustain the Centre's programming for the next generation of public health professionals and continue Dr. Basrur's legacy of excellence in leadership and communications.



Sheela Basrur Centre

IN THIS EDITION

- 3 Preparing for the next public health crisis
- 5 A Day in the Life of an ABC News Medical Journalist
- 7 SBC Student Awards and Programs: Tackling public health issues with creative communications
- 9 2014 Student Travel Bursary Award: Public health programs in action
- 11 Supporting Public Health in Ontario: Donate to the Sheela Basrur Centre
- 12 Our Partner: Toronto Foundation

Writer:
Jill Kinsella

Editor:
Bell

Designer:
Steven
Janovsky

UPCOMING EVENTS

Communications Student Award

Call for Applicants
August 2015

Media Training Workshops
November 2015

Student Travel Bursary

Call for Applicants
January 2016

Sheela Basrur Symposium
April 2016

Preparing for the next public health crisis

Ebola, measles, and Enterovirus D68 are only a few of the public health crises that have surfaced globally this past year. As issues like these continue to make headlines, there is an increasing need for public health professionals to communicate effectively and in a way that will resonate with the media and the general public.

2014 SBC Media Training Workshops

The demand for media training has increased exponentially, as many of our experts are now solicited by the press. As media attention to public health increases significantly, whether at the local public health level or international, it is no surprise that the SBC/PHO Media Training Workshops continue to sell out each year.



Photo credit: Claude Martel

2014 Introductory Media Training Workshop.

This past fall, SBC and PHO held their annual media training workshops. These interactive sessions are geared to public health professionals and attended by those seeking to advance their communications and media spokesperson skills.

The Introductory Media Training Workshop brought together renowned journalists and media experts. Public health professionals from across the province attended the session, learning vital communication skills and the art of crafting messages.

In collaboration with Science Media Centre of Canada, the session featured leading journalists Helen Branswell (Canadian Press), Pauline Dakin (CBC News Halifax) and Sandra Gionas (The Agenda with Steve Paikin). These experts offered insights into how the media operates and how, through the media, key messages can be conveyed to the public.

The afternoon delivered practical, hands-on experience as attendees broke out into groups, collaborating with health unit communications advisors Brittany Cadence (Peterborough County-City), Rita Marshall (Huron County) and Kathy Dermott (Simcoe-Muskoka District), to review and refine key messages. Attendees also participated in mock broadcast interviews and a group discussion on print and television interviews.



Great workshop. The breakout session group work was well facilitated and helpful in preparing for media interviews.”

— 2014 Introductory Media Training Workshop participant



The Advanced Media Training Workshop offered in-depth training to a small group, focusing on interview and delivery techniques, key message development, press conferences and performance in phone and television-style interviews.

Media trainer, Karen Gordon of Squeaky Wheel Communications, led this intimate and interactive workshop. Participants had an opportunity to finesse their performance and delivery techniques, and learn about verbal and non-verbal communication skills. They also learned about on-camera presence, and how to avoid media pitfalls.

with the knowledge acquired from these comprehensive media training sessions, participants developed a sense of confidence, knowing that they were better equipped to navigate through their next media interview with ease.

Information about the 2015 Media Training Workshops will be available on the [SBC website](#) this fall.



Doing the on-camera interviews, even though frightening and painful, was extremely helpful and beneficial.”

— 2014 Advanced Media Training Workshop participant

Participants had a chance to hone their interview techniques by engaging in mock interviews. These were recorded and then played back so the interviewees could observe and critique their own performance. They also received feedback from the group.

Although some of the activities took many attendees out of their comfort zone, most said these practical exercises, although painful at times, were very beneficial. Armed



Top: From left to right: Sandra Gionas (The Agenda with Steve Paikin), Pauline Dakin (CBC News Halifax), Helen Branswell (Canadian Press) and Penny Park (Science Media Centre of Canada). Photo credit: Claude Martel.

Above: 2014 Advanced Media Training Workshop Photo credit: Samantha Engbers.

Medicine meets news: A day in the life of an ABC News journalist

Recently, the Don Low Communications Fellowship provided a valuable opportunity for an Associate Medical Officer of Health to work at ABC News as one of their medical journalists.

Dr. Kathleen Dooling was selected as the 2014 Don Low Communications Fellowship recipient. Her commitment and leadership in public health is the embodiment of the purpose of the Fellowship. While completing her Fellowship, Dr. Dooling worked as the Associate Medical Officer of Health at Peel Public Health. She worked on a variety of challenging public health initiatives, including providing urgent risk communication to several stakeholders throughout the culturally diverse region of Peel.

Dr. Dooling frequently delivered vital information to the medical community, schools, government, the media and the public. Relying on her communications skills to meet the unique challenges in her daily work, Dr. Dooling often conveyed information about infectious disease – vaccines, influenza risks, measles importation and antibiotic resistant bacteria.

This spring, Dr. Dooling used her Fellowship to undertake the Medical Journalism Internship at ABC News. The Fellowship deepened her knowledge of communications and supported her role as a key spokesperson.

SBC: How did you hear about the Medical Journalism Internship at ABC News?

Dr. Dooling: In 2012, during my time at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, I learned about the Medical Journalism Elective at ABC News. The elective seemed like a valuable and unique opportunity to understand media by working on the inside.

SBC: What was the application process for the internship?

Dr. Dooling: The application process was very informal. ABC News takes Medical Residents and Fellows who are physicians and supported by their own funding, to do 1-6 month electives at ABC Headquarters in New York city. The Don Low



Dr. Dooling on the set of ABC News.

The Fellowship supports public health professionals in the development of communications skills, by providing them with opportunities to advance their current work in communicating with the public and stakeholders.

Communications Fellowship allowed me to qualify as a Fellow and provided the financial backing to undertake the elective. The application process consisted of emailing Dan Childs, managing editor of the Medical News Unit, followed by a brief telephone conversation. The elective is now becoming so popular that there are usually several medical residents at ABC headquarters at any given time.

SBC: What level of engagement with the public and stakeholders did you have in your role?

Dr. Dooling: In my role as Associate Medical Officer of Health in Peel Region I had a high level of engagement with the public and other stakeholders, including media. Situated just outside Toronto, we were within “striking distance” of provincial and national media outlets. In fact, when I started

in this role in the summer of 2009 – during pandemic H1N1 – I had the opportunity to do on-air interviews with local, provincial and national media within months of starting the position. The experience reinforced to me that communication with the media is an essential part of public health practice, and like any other skill, needs to be honed over time.

SBC: What aspects of your internship at ABC News resonated with you the most?

Dr. Dooling: This experience made me realize just how fast the news cycle moves and how many other issues are competing for air time. The lesson I took from this is that **as a public health professional, you have to be ready when the media calls on you for comment. If you delay, your moment will be gone.** And, you have to be skilled in how you use that moment. For example, while I was at ABC News, a woman from India flew to the United States to get tuberculosis treatment and was found to have drug-resistant tuberculosis. The media does not get interested in tuberculosis very often but this was a golden opportunity to give the message that if you don't take your medication properly, you can end up with a resistant form of tuberculosis that can lead to death. Although local public health may have been doing contact investigations for weeks, the story only lasted one day in the media!

“As public health professionals, if we want to bring attention to the stories that will have an impact on the health of the population, we need to be partners with the media.”

SBC: How do you think this experience has prepared you for your interactions with the press?

Dr. Dooling: It has certainly made me more aware of the needs of the media. If you want to get media interested in your public health message, you must provide an image to which they can anchor the story. Video is the Holy Grail, but if you cannot manage that, a still image will help get your story covered. This is true not only for television, but also for paper and online news.

SBC: Was there anything that you learned while at ABC News that changed your perspective on medical reporting?

Dr. Dooling: The news cycle moves fast, deadlines come and go quickly and journalists do not have the luxury of caring about yesterday's news. As public health professionals, if we want to bring attention to the stories that will have an impact on the health of the population, we need to be partners with the media. That means being available so they can make deadlines, packaging the story with an easily digestible press release complete with quotations from experts and video/pictures.

SBC: How will you be able to apply what you have learned in your career?

Dr. Dooling: I can apply what I have learned through the medical journalism elective in my everyday practice of public health. I have already started a blog to document my experience (drdooling.blogspot.com) and a presence on Twitter ([@Dr_Dooling](https://twitter.com/Dr_Dooling)). I plan to use these social media tools to communicate public health messages. I also intend to assist with public health resident media training at the University of Toronto.

SBC: What advice would you give to future public health professionals?

Dr. Dooling: Communicating with the media is one of the most intimidating aspects of public health practice. But it is an essential skill for some public health professionals and the only way to improve is to practice at every opportunity. For those public health professionals looking to enhance their media skills, I recommend the following tips:

- develop a close working relationship with the Communications department in your institution;
- have regular meetings with the Communications Advisor to develop a strategy to improve your relationship with local media and a strategy to communicate the most important health issues in your area;
- volunteer as a spokesperson for interview requests from local radio and television shows;
- develop communications objectives with your supervisor.

We congratulate our recipient of the Don Low Communications Fellowship. The skills Dr. Dooling learned through the Fellowship will help her to continue her valuable work in the public health community.



Dr. Dooling with Dr. Richard Besser, Chief Health and Medical Editor, ABC News, on the set of *Good Morning America*.



Tackling public health issues with creative communications

The Sheela Basrur Centre Communications Student Award provides students from public health and/or communications disciplines an opportunity to showcase their talents, knowledge and creativity by developing communications strategies on critical public health issues.

Above: Anna Vanderlaan (left) and Alice Simniceanu (right).

Congratulations to Communications Student Award recipients **Alice Simniceanu** and **Anna Vanderlaan**.

Alice and Anna, both Queen's University Master of Public Health students, were selected as our winners at the Infectious Disease Surveillance and Management for Public Health Workshop in 2014.

In this competition, three teams of finalists presented creative and engaging campaigns aimed at increasing vaccination rates among health care workers.

A panel of judges from both public health and communications disciplines awarded Alice and Anna for their campaign, "#IGotMyFluShotFor". Their campaign offered innovative communications strategies to engage health care workers in immunization programs.

The award provides a valuable opportunity for students to showcase their knowledge and ideas to public health professionals. After presenting their winning campaign, Alice and Anna received an offer to partner with the Brant County Health Unit. The health unit was looking for new ideas to engage their employees in their workplace flu immunization program.

With only a week before the launch of Brant County Health Unit's employee flu campaign, Alice and Anna worked quickly to revise their communications strategies, gearing their initiatives towards public health professionals. Their social media campaign was implemented within the Brant County Health Unit in the fall of 2014. The health unit already had flu clinics set up for their employees, and the intention was to incorporate "#IGotMyFluShotFor" into their employee engagement events.



Cliff Bingleman and Tracy Benson participate in Brant County Health Unit's Twitter flu campaign.

“ We can create absolutely amazing public health innovations, but if the public doesn't know about them we'll never be able to create meaningful change.”

— Anna Vanderlaan

After the employees at the health unit received their flu shot, photos were taken of them holding a sign saying who they got their flu shot for. The photos were then posted on Twitter with the health unit name and the campaign hashtag.

Anna thought one tweet was particularly impactful: a pregnant woman holding a sign saying she got the flu shot for her baby. The caption read “Truth. Flu shots are safe for pregnant moms”. Anna thought this dual-purpose tweet both raised awareness about the campaign and provided information about the safety of flu vaccines.

The partnership with the Brant County Health Unit gave Alice and Anna valuable perspective on the inner workings of a health unit and how the departments work together on a campaign. They learned about the importance of taking time to understand an organization. Anna remarked, “When trying to create behaviour change within an organization, it is essential to understand its structure and culture. We were able to take what we learned about Brant County Health Unit and use this information to tailor our program to match their needs and capabilities.”

“We can create absolutely amazing public health innovations, but if the public

doesn't know about them we'll never be able to create meaningful change.”

When asked about the importance of communications in public health, Anna stated, “Human behaviour is such an important factor in so many of the issues we face in public health today. That's what makes behaviour change research and evidence-based health communication practices so essential in this field.”

Alice and Anna are thankful for the opportunity to present their work and for being recognized by the public health community. The innovative campaign that was the result of the partnership between the two students and the Brant County Health Unit, illustrates the value that the SBC student awards provide, reaching out to inspire the next generation of public health leaders in Ontario.

Check the SBC website for information about the 2015 Communications Student Award.

APPLY NOW

Public health in the field

Two exceptional master of public health candidates from the University of Toronto were selected as the recipients of the 2014 Sheela Basrur Student Travel Bursary.



Erin Moses (left) and an ASPIRE representative (right).

Erin Moses

Prior to completing her Master of Public Health at the University of Toronto, Erin Moses embarked on a challenging four-month practicum placement in Uganda to work on the Aspire cervical cancer screening project.

[Aspire](#) is an international women's health initiative saving thousands of lives by implementing an integrated cervical cancer screening program in Eastern Africa. Established in 2009, this project is a collaboration between the University of British Columbia and the Makerere University in Uganda. The program focuses on self-collection for the human papillomavirus (HPV) and provides access to education, to empower women and communities.

During her time with the Aspire project, Erin worked in the central slum of Kisenyi, located in the capital city of Kampala. Erin's primary role in the study was to coordinate the set-up of a randomized control trial. She also worked with a team of outreach workers to educate and engage women in the community. Erin and her colleagues held education sessions to generate awareness about cervical cancer.

This project had an impact on Erin both personally and professionally, and gave her a stronger understanding of the importance of public health. Over the four months, she worked closely with a team of outstanding local women and was constantly amazed by their dedication, drive and compassion. Erin's experience in Kisenyi reinforced the value of community-based public health research and how it changes people's lives.



The ASPIRE team in Kisenyi.



The women of Kisenyi also embraced me as one of their own, and proved as interested in me as I was in them. I never felt like an outsider; I felt like a member of the community.”

— Erin Moses



Nandita Perumal (left) and colleague at the soybean oil fortification plant.

Nandita Perumal

During the summer of 2014, Nandita Perumal undertook an eight-week internship with the [Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition \(GAIN\)](#). This was part of her practicum placement towards her PhD in Epidemiology at the University of Toronto.

GAIN is an international non-governmental organization that focuses on public health nutrition. GAIN has offices in several countries, including India, where Nandita spent a portion of her internship. GAIN supports projects on several different nutrition initiatives at the national and state levels, including staple food fortification, universal salt iodization, and production of fortified foods for children under the age of three.

The project that Nandita was involved in during her internship was located in Madhya Pradesh, a central state in India that has a high burden of malnutrition, food insecurity, and child mortality. As a

monitoring and evaluation intern, Nandita coordinated the analyses of the multi-stage, stratified, cross-sectional baseline survey conducted in Madhya Pradesh.

Nandita enhanced her knowledge of the burden of micronutrient deficiencies in Madhya Pradesh, and learned about the challenges of conducting surveys in a resource-limited environment. Her internship experience broadened her perspective by exposing her to new areas of research and strengthened her interest in micronutrient nutrition and maternal and child health research.

During her time at GAIN, Nandita acquired tremendous insight into the creation of monitoring and evaluation systems, the practicalities of large-scale program implementation, and saw first-hand the importance of community engagement and building partnerships.



I learned the importance of building strong partnerships within a project, providing a space for community engagement, and ensuring strong systems for monitoring and evaluation are established.”

— Nandita Perumal



Nandita Perumal.

Congratulations to the 2014 Sheela Basrur Centre Student Travel Bursary recipients, Erin Moses and Nandita Perumal.

Supporting Public Health in Ontario

As the Sheela Basrur Centre (SBC) enters its seventh year, renewal and sustainability will become a major priority.

Over the past several years, funding from our generous partners has helped create strong voices and leaders for change, strengthening the public health sector.

To continue towards our vision and honor the legacy of Dr. Basrur, we need generous supporters like you to contribute to the Centre to keep our programs operational.

Our Work

Our work is making significant and long lasting impacts to improving public health and health services in Ontario. This funding will help us build upon and maintain the successful public health development programs offered by the Sheela Basrur Centre.

Our Programs

Our programs are essential to the viability of public health in Ontario. As public health issues continue to make headlines, there is an increasing need for public health professionals to communicate effectively and in a way that will resonate with the media and general public. Your donation will help ensure that when the next public health crisis hits our province we will be ready to face it head-on.

Your Support

By supporting the Sheela Basrur Centre you are investing not only in our programs that will sustain the sector but also in the people. We are equipping professionals with the skills and resources to effectively manage strategic communications with the public, stakeholders, and the media. These individuals will be essential to providing information, knowledge and advice to navigate Ontario through the next public health crisis.

Our Partnership

Our partnership with the Toronto Foundation means that your contributions are tax deductible. Toronto Foundation will issue the tax receipts on behalf of the Sheela Basrur Centre who receive the funds donated.



Much of the improvement of life expectancy over the past century is due to public health measures.”

— Dr. Sheela Basrur

Make a donation to SBC online

1. Go to the Sheela Basrur Centre Fund webpage.
2. Click on the “Donate to Fund” button.
3. Complete the donation form and click on the “Contribute” button.

[Donate to the Sheela Basrur Centre](#)

Make a donation to SBC by telephone/mail

Please contact:

Tory Robertson

Donor Relations Officer

Toronto Foundation

33 Bloor Street East, Suite 1603 Toronto
ON M4W 3H1

Tel: 416-921-2035 ext. 211

Toronto Foundation



Sheela Basrur Centre
480 University Avenue
Suite 300
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 1V2

Tel: 647 260 7100

Fax: 647 260 7600

Email: SBC@oahpp.ca

www.sheelabasrurcentre.ca

The Toronto Foundation connects philanthropy with community needs and opportunities in order to make Toronto the best place to live, work, learn, and grow.

Established in 1981, the Toronto Foundation has grown to hold over \$250 million in assets and to work with hundreds of concerned Torontonians and high-impact community organizations. The Toronto Foundation is a registered, public, non-profit organization created for and by the people of Toronto.

For more information about donations and sponsorship opportunities, visit www.sheelabasrurcentre.ca or contact us at SBC@oahpp.ca.

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SPONSORS

Founding Partners

The Sheela Basrur Centre gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our five founding partners whose five-year commitment to the Centre enabled its establishment and development.



Don Low Communications Fellowship Founder

The Sheela Basrur Centre would like to thank and recognize Pfizer for its contribution to establishing the Don Low Communications Fellowship.



Sheela Basrur Centre Event Partners

The Sheela Basrur Centre is grateful to our event partners who support the Centre's events throughout the year.

