

FOREWORD

In 2010, the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry set out to establish a new Interfaculty Master of Public Health program at Western University. In the fall of 2013 we were able to open a wonderful new facility that is purpose-built for the innovative case method that is used by faculty and students from across our campus. This book represents cases written by students in the inaugural Class of 2014. We are very pleased to offer it as a resource to the educational community with the goal of broadening the reach of public health case teaching into classrooms around the world.

– Dr. Amit Chakma, President, Western University

Public health is inherently multi-disciplinary. The Schulich Interfaculty Program in Public Health is innovative in three major ways. First, it brings together dedicated teachers from the many faculties whose work touches on public health – health studies, law, medicine and dentistry, science, and social science. Second, it uses the case method of learning instead of the more traditional lecture method. And finally, the Western MPH program empowers the students themselves to author public health cases based on their practicum placements. The cases in this book cover some key topics in public health including food-borne illnesses, healthy mothers and children, and the determinants of health that we as health professionals can to some extent control.

– Michael Strong, MD, FRCPC, Dean, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

The Schulich Interfaculty Program in Public Health is radically innovative in many dimensions; this case book exemplifies our commitment to case based pedagogy. We firmly believe that cases are an essential tool in the public health educator's armamentarium, but more importantly, are a public good. Sharing of knowledge should have no barriers, and it is to that end we make our cases freely available. We will be publishing our case book annually in the future, and encourage you to widely share the cases and your experience of using them. Please send us your feedback at publichealth@schulich.uwo.ca. We look forward to hearing from you on how we can together train tomorrow's public health professionals.

– Amardeep Thind, MD, PhD, Director, Schulich Interfaculty Program in Public Health

Teaching with cases is one of those things that looks easier than it is. It requires going beyond the effort required of the traditional lecture. It requires extensive planning, yet often looks spontaneous. While the lecturer has considerable control over the order in which concepts will be covered in a session, the case teacher has to face the unpredictability of not knowing beforehand exactly how the class will unfold. But, when teaching with cases, you see furrowed brows replaced by looks of enlightenment; you see students demonstrate their abilities in leadership and develop their self-confidence, and you see complex concepts covered at a depth that is seldom matched in a lecture. We believe that this is the way to teach and to learn the complexities of public health, and are honored to serve as the editors of our first casebook.

– Mark Speechley, PhD, Amanda Terry, PhD, Editors