

Welcome to the Newsletter for the Advocacy e-Mentoring program.

About the program

The PHAIWA Advocacy e-Mentor program was established as a pilot program in late 2011. As a pilot program, and a unique advocacy mentoring scheme, this has been a learning experience for both participants and for PHAIWA. Ongoing evaluations have provided information which will be used to improve and structure the next mentoring program, due to commence in May 2013. The feedback has indicated that mentees have found the pilot program a valuable experience, and a great opportunity to learn and practice new advocacy skills. It was also provided a chance for mentors to meet new, enthusiastic professionals from outside their field of public health and for mentees to build relationships with leaders in public health advocacy.

Mentoring activities

The advocacy e-mentoring program included a number of components:

- ◆ Pairing mentees with a mentor;
- ◆ Regular contact between mentees and their mentor;
- ◆ The completion of a range of online advocacy activities (with feedback);
- ◆ Attendance, where possible, at face to face discussions on specific advocacy topics;
- ◆ Informal advice from PHAIWA staff on mentees advocacy strategies, and
- ◆ Participation in an online chat room.

Examples of online activities that mentees were asked to complete included:

- ◆ Identifying an unhealthy advertisement for PHAIWA’s “Bin the Spin”, a bulletin showcasing unhealthy advertisements
- ◆ Developing a press release on the topic of quad-bike safety and potential advocacy strategies to address;
- ◆ Developing an online poll question, on a topic of their choice, supported by written material to inform the poll question;
- ◆ Reviewing a peer review journal article about leadership development and advocacy and contributing key learnings to the online forum to stimulate discussion;
- ◆ Writing an editorial critique for a series of new health promotion advertisements aimed at preventing tobacco use in Indigenous communities in WA, and
- ◆ Finding a news article of their choice, and writing a “Letter to the Editor” response.



**Poll questions submitted by mentees used on the PHAIWA website**

1. Do you think it is the responsibility of workplaces to implement health initiatives for employees?  
Responses: Yes- 59% No- 33%, Unsure - 8%

2. Should more emphasis be given to creating healthy environments when making planning decisions?  
Responses: Yes- 92%, No- 8%

## Opinion Piece Seminar

One aim of the e-mentoring program was to promote the rising stars in public health using advocacy strategies. The Opinion Piece Seminar Series showcases emerging leaders in public health. Three of our mentees were invited to present at the September 2012 Opinion Piece Seminar. The topic the mentees discussed was “How does the long term view for public health fit with the Gen Y generation?”



Opinion Piece speakers Prue Reddingius, Emma-Lee Finch and Lauren Tracey

An interesting unexpected outcome from this seminar was the invitation for the mentees to contribute to the health blog “Crikey” describing briefly their thoughts on the seminar topic. The link to the blog is on page 3.

## Did the advocacy e-mentoring program work?

PHAIWA is pleased to say that yes, the advocacy e-mentoring program has made a difference! While the full evaluation of the pilot program is yet to be conducted, results from the mid-way evaluation found that:

- ◆ 78% of respondents had increased knowledge or skills in advocacy as a result of the program;
- ◆ 50% of respondents had increased knowledge or skills in leadership as a result of the program;
- ◆ 71% of respondents agreed that the set tasks allowed them to apply advocacy skills, and
- ◆ 86% of respondents agreed that the set tasks increased their understanding of advocacy.



Parents Jury staff meeting with PHAIWA mentees and mentors

## Professional Development Opportunities

In August 2012, a session on how to use social marketing to promote health was convened specifically for mentees and facilitated by Corrina Langelaan and Angela Mallon from the Parents Jury. This event was an exclusive professional development event for those involved in the advocacy e-mentoring program and was well attended by both mentees and mentors. This was an excellent opportunity for mentees to socialise and network.

In addition to the Parents Jury event, mentees attended a number of PHAIWA capacity building activities throughout the year, and were given discounted registration for any user-pays workshops facilitated.

## Unexpected outcomes

During the pilot program, a number of additional and unexpected events happened. Some had fantastic results and others were learning curves...but that is what a mentoring program is all about! What PHAIWA really liked about these next stories, is that the mentees felt confident and empowered enough to have a go at new advocacy strategies. We are very proud of all our mentees achievements, so here are a few of our unexpected outcomes from the program.

One of our mentees, Rebecca Johnson wrote a piece on *Croakey* called “The SensaSlim saga: what have we learnt?” Check it out at: <http://blogs.crikey.com.au/croakey/2011/12/08/some-very-interesting-reading-on-the-tga-ken-harvey-and-pertinent-questions-for-public-health-advocates/>

As previously mentioned, the three mentees involved in the Opinion Piece Seminar contributed to another *Croakey* blog about Gen Y. This is available at: <http://blogs.crikey.com.au/croakey/2012/10/12/generation-y-and-what-they-bring-to-and-expect-from-public-health-workplaces/>

Lauren Tracy, a PHAIWA mentee wrote a piece on *The Punch* titled “That Movember mo could be doing more harm than good”. We are very proud of Lauren’s efforts because as we know advocacy is not always easy! Check out the article at <http://www.thepunch.com.au/articles/That-movember-mo-could-be-doing-more-harm-than-good/>

Mentees also had Letters to the Editor published in *Perth Voice*, *The Guardian Express* and *The West Australian*.

Another mentee developed a project to end investments in tobacco companies by federal, state and territory governments and by major superannuation funds. Another exciting outcome was a mentee proactively lobbying internally to secure a budget for a new public health position within their organisation.

One of our mentees arranged for her mentor to conduct advocacy training for other staff in her team, and a number of entries to PHAIWA’s “Bin the Spin” (beyond when asked to do this as a set task) were received from mentees.

Overall, PHAIWA considers this skills based online advocacy course has been successful and we look forward to working with another set of emerging advocates in 2013!

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If you know anyone who may be interested or suitable to participate in the next mentor program, please email their details to Myra on [myra.robinson@curtin.edu.au](mailto:myra.robinson@curtin.edu.au)