Public Health Association of Australia: Policy-at-a-glance – One Health Policy

Key message: PHAA will –

1. Identify and promote opportunities to enhance networking between the multiple disciplines relevant to one health in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region.
2. Facilitate collaboration between individuals and institutions that represent the multiple disciplines relevant to one health in Australian, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region.
3. Collaborate with other relevant Special Interest Groups (SiGs) in the PHAA, animal and human health, agriculture and environment, food and nutrition, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and Political Economy of Health sectors to develop joint policies and activities.
4. Identify and support the development of education and training in one health in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region.
5. Priority areas include: Antimicrobial Resistance stewardship, food security and safety, zoonosis and emerging infectious disease and fostering incorporation of the one health approach in curriculums.

Summary: Humans are inextricably linked to the environment, especially the other animals in it. This link provides us with many benefits from food security and the human-animal bond. However, it also presents risks to human health from emerging and endemic zoonotic diseases. One health approaches seek to improve the benefit and decrease the risks associated with human interactions with animals through enhanced communications, cooperation, and collaboration between multiple disciplines and sectors of society to enhance public health.

Audience: Relevant Australian Federal, State and Territory Governments and agencies, policy makers and program managers. Other relevant stakeholder groups involved in agriculture, animal health and environmental management.

Responsibility: PHAA’s One Health Special Interest Group (SIG).

Date policy adopted: October 2017

Contacts: Van Joe Ibay and Simon Reid, Co-Convenors, One Health SIG
The Public Health Association of Australia notes that:

1. There is increasing convergence in issues associated with animals, humans and the environment that have given rise to issues affecting global health such as zoonotic diseases (transmission from animals to humans), food security, antimicrobial resistance and the impact of the human-animal bond.

2. One health is an approach for dealing with these complex issues through communication, cooperation, and collaboration between multiple disciplines and sectors of society to enhance public health.

3. It has been estimated that 58% of all human pathogens and nearly 70% of emerging and re-emerging diseases are zoonotic. These zoonotic diseases – often caused by contaminated food, water or soil – have major consequences for public health, national economies and potentially on societal stability and security.

4. The incidence of zoonotic food-borne illness (FBI) has increased dramatically in Australia over the past 10 years with rates 10 times the rate in the USA. Over half the estimated 4.1 million cases of food-borne gastroenteritis each year were caused by zoonotic pathogens, which accounted for about 90% of the 5,900 hospitalisations each year (due to FBI) and 18 of the 21 estimated deaths. Furthermore, zoonotic causes of non-gastrointestinal FBI result in a further estimated 16 deaths each. The major sources of contamination are meat, particularly chicken meat, and eggs.

5. While many threats persist, others will emerge. Indeed, the frequency of disease emergence is likely to increase given our changing environment and expanding domestic animal and human populations, because the health of animals (including humans) and the health of the broader ecosystem are inextricably linked.

6. Food security is a global public good and the task of securing food and nutrition requires a multidisciplinary approach. With increasing population growth and reducing viable land. Access to food, food distribution and food production are inter-related and greatly affected by climate change.

7. The human-animal bond is complex and multifaceted, driven by economic, cultural, emotional and nutritional needs. The outcomes of this bond can be positive (emotional wellbeing) and negative (altered behaviours in disasters).

8. The concept of one health has been acknowledged in international fora such as the World Health Assembly and by the Australian government. One health approaches have been implemented at a local level in a number of multi-institutional networks and globally with the Tripartite Alliance (WHO/OIE/FAO) three areas of collaboration: dog-mediated rabies elimination, animal influenza and antimicrobial resistance.
PHAA Policy Statement on: One Health Policy Statement

The Public Health Association of Australia affirms the following principles:

9. There is a need to improve cooperation and collaboration across agencies, sectors and disciplines to address many serious interconnected challenges to the health of people, domestic animals and wildlife, and to the integrity of the ecosystems.

10. Australia’s national public health, environmental, industry and agricultural policies exist in a global context and must recognise the direct and indirect effects on human health from changes driven by human activity that are taking place across the ecosystem at a range of scales.

The Public Health Association of Australia believes that the following steps should be undertaken:

11. Increase awareness of the benefits of one health among practitioners and policy makers in the human, animal and environmental health sectors in Australia.

12. Support new and innovative curriculum development for training and education that incorporates one health approaches. This will build a new generation of practitioners and policy makers in the human, animal and environmental health sectors with the skills to improve management of existing and potential disease threats in Australia.

13. Support greater networking and collaboration among the disciplines and institutions relevant to one health.

The Public Health Association of Australia resolves to undertake the following actions:

14. Identify and promote opportunities to enhance networking between the multiple disciplines relevant to one health in Australian, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region.

15. Facilitate collaboration between individuals and institutions that represent the multiple disciplines relevant to one health in Australian, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region.

16. Collaborate with other relevant SIGs within the PHAA animal and human health, agriculture and environment sectors to develop joint policies and activities.

17. Identify and support the development of education and training in one health in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region.

ADOPTED 2012, REVISED AND RE-ENDORSED IN 2017
First adopted at the 2012 Annual General Meeting of the Public Health Association of Australia. The latest revision has been undertaken as part of the 2017 policy review process.
References