

We are privileged to nominate our colleague Joan Yee for the Environmental Health Foundation of Canada - Canadian Waste & Wastewater Association - Safe Water Award. From 2015 to 2018, Joan coordinated the Alberta Health Services (AHS) Natural Recreational Water Program. She has since moved on to another role within AHS, however her innovative thinking and dedication has led to lasting changes in the practice of the provincial natural recreational water program.

Joan was involved in the coordination of the *Enterococcus* pilot studies conducted in Alberta from 2015 to 2017. Joan supported AHS' involvement in the pilot study to transition from using thermotolerant coliforms and culture-based methods to the more epidemiologically sound method of using quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR) and *Enterococcus* as the indicator of bacteriological water quality in natural recreational water in Alberta. The pilot study also explored the use of microbial source tracking (MST) to identify sources of fecal contamination in beaches exceeding fecal contamination benchmarks. This work was the foundation for the *Alberta Safe Beach Protocol* introduced in 2019 by Alberta Health (Government of Alberta).

As AHS prepared to transition to using the *Alberta Safe Beach Protocol*, Joan worked closely with colleagues at Alberta Health to develop the priority site list, a tool used annually to determine the beaches in Alberta that are eligible for sampling each year based on cyanobacterial bloom and fecal contamination risk. With over 300 beaches in Alberta, it is not feasible to sample all of them each year. The priority site list assesses health risks associated with beaches by considering level of beach use, historical sampling and/or advisory data, and site assessment data (if available). This tool continues to be used each year to determine the beaches that will be sampled for *Enterococcus* and/or cyanobacteria.

Joan is a strong advocate for the use of technology and data management tools to support the practice of Environmental Public Health. She set out an innovative, collaborative approach with Public Health Infrastructure and Surveillance, the Provincial Laboratory of Public Health, Medical Officers of Health, Alberta Health and field staff partners to develop a dashboard to monitor bacteriological water quality and advisories within Alberta. Joan is an advocate and firm believer that reliable data drives risk assessment and evidence-informed decision making, thereby improving the delivery of the natural recreational water monitoring program in Alberta. Utilizing this sophisticated, timely dashboard allows Public Health Inspectors to monitor current water quality as well as identify year-over-year trends at natural recreational water sites.

Joan's dedication, commitment to quality improvement and evaluation, technical knowledge and passion for supporting safe and healthy natural recreational water illustrate the characteristics which qualify her for this award. Her outstanding contributions should be recognized and celebrated by the Environmental Health Foundation of Canada and the profession.