

# PUBLIC HEALTH BURSARIES

**B.C. Associated Boards of Health,  
Dr. Ken Benson Memorial Bursaries**

**The Isabel Loucks Foster  
Public Health Bursary Fund**

Applications are invited from qualified students who are or who wish to engage in post-graduate study in a field of Public or Community Health Practice within any recognized discipline.\*

(\*physicians are eligible to apply only for the Isabel Loucks Foster Public Health Bursary)

Eligibility requirements and application forms may be found at the Health Officers Council Website at:

<https://www.healthofficerscouncil.net/bursaries/>

Awards in amounts up to \$5,000 are available.

Completed documentation is to be submitted electronically  
by **August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026** to:

Email: [hoc.secretariat@phabc.org](mailto:hoc.secretariat@phabc.org)  
Health Officers' Council of BC  
C/O Public Health Association of BC  
#550-2950 Douglas Street  
Victoria, BC V8T 4N4

## The Isabel Loucks Foster Public Health Bursary Fund

The Isabel Loucks Foster Public Health Bursary fund has been set up to provide bursary funding for public health post-graduate studies.

The funds are managed by the Vancouver Foundation and the Bursary funds will be released to a successful applicant's educational institution annually on the recommendation of the Health Officers' Council. The Health Officers' Council is comprised of the Medical Health Officers and public health physicians of British Columbia.

### Terms of Reference

**Availability** - Bursaries in an amount up to \$5,000 are available to eligible applicants on a one-time-only basis. Applicants who have previously received a bursary through Health Officers Council are not eligible.

**Eligibility** - Full-time students engaged in post-graduate study in a field of Public/Community Health Practice within an applicable discipline (e.g. nurses, nutritionists, environmental health officers, physicians, etc.).

- \* persons must be ordinarily resident in B.C.
- \* persons must have demonstrated excellence in performance and leadership ability
- \* studies may be undertaken at any suitable educational institution either within or outside British Columbia

*If a student is studying at an educational institution that is not registered as a charitable entity in Canada, they are required to identify and include the name of the charitable organization they want the funds be transferred to. List of registered charities: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities-listings.html>*

**Conditions** - Candidates must demonstrate satisfactory enrollment and standing in a course of studies or acceptance into a program. Candidates must acknowledge acceptance of the bursary by letter to the Chair of the Health Officers' Council. It is suggested that bursary recipients consider a future donation to the bursary fund in support of the future education needs of those who will follow them.

**Timelines** - Applications, accompanied by a current C.V.; proof of acceptance or enrollment in an appropriate program; future goals and intentions within public/community health; and any other information you feel relevant to the selection committee, be forwarded to the Chair, Health Officers' Council, by a set date in late August/early September of the year in which the bursary is required.

Successful candidates will be notified by October 31<sup>st</sup>. The entire amount of the award will be forwarded to successful candidates prior to the commencement of the next semester.

## **JESSIE ISABEL LOUCKS FOSTER**

Jessie Isabel Loucks (Isabel) was born on May 17, 1917, and completed her secondary schooling in Regina. During her teenage years she was active in the church C.G.I.T. group and attended several summer camp sessions. Prior to leaving for University, she completed a secretarial course at the Technical School. At 18 years of age she entered the University of British Columbia's School of Nursing, received her R.N. from the Vancouver General Hospital (earning the Bedside Nursing prize) and her B.A.Sc. (Nursing) degree from U.B.C. in 1940. She was employed as a Public Health Nurse for 3 years - in Vancouver, Duncan and Cranbrook - prior to receiving a scholarship to attend Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland. She received her Master's degree in Public Health Administration (M.P.H.) in 1944.

That same year, she was married in Baltimore to Robert (Bob) Foster, a naturalized American of Austrian birth. He was a portrait photographer from New York City. The Fosters resided in the Eastern United States for 4 years - in New York City, Hartford, Conn., and Louisville, Kentucky - where Isabel continued to work as a health educator and as a public health nurse. In 1948, they moved to Seattle, Washington, and established a home on Mercer Island in 1953. They had no children. Bob died of a coronary attack in 1959.

Isabel was employed as an Occupational Health Nurse with Pan American World Airways, from 1949 to 1971. During this time, she enjoyed annual holidays abroad, was active in the professional nursing groups, in the Mercer Island Presbyterian Church, and in the Washington Athletic Club. In 1971, her position was abolished due to financial cutbacks. She accepted early retirement and returned to live in Vancouver. She regained her Canadian Citizenship, which she had relinquished during her years in the U.S., and became involved in community activities, acting as a docent at the Vancouver Aquarium, lawn bowling, playing bridge, and participating in activities at St. Giles United Church.

Isabel passed away of a stroke in May 1998, in Vancouver, BC.

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Extracted from Isabel's notes by her brother William W. Loucks, May 9, 2001

## **The British Columbia (B.C.) Associated Boards of Health Dr. Ken Benson Memorial Bursary**

This bursary was established by The Associated Boards of Health with funds which they had raised prior to their dissolution in 1997. The bursary is named in honour of Dr. Ken Benson who, during a long career in public health in British Columbia, was a Medical Officer of Health, an Associate Deputy Minister and public health consultant to the Associated Boards of Health of British Columbia.

The funds are managed by the Vancouver Foundation and the Bursary funds will be released to a successful applicant's educational institution annually on the recommendation of the Health Officers' Council. The Health Officers' Council is comprised of the Medical Health Officers and public health physicians of British Columbia.

### **Terms of Reference**

**Availability** - Bursaries in an amount up to \$5,000 are available to eligible applicants on a one-time-only basis. Applicants who have previously received a bursary through Health Officers Council are not eligible.

**Eligibility** - Full-time students engaged in post-graduate study in a field of Public/Community Health Practice within an applicable discipline (e.g. nurses, nutritionists, environmental health officers, etc.). **Physicians are not eligible for this bursary.**

- \* strong preference will be given to individuals who are resident and practicing in B.C.
- \* preference will be given to those candidates who demonstrate a commitment to remain in B.C.
- \* preference will be given to candidates who commit to live and practice in rural areas of B.C.
- \* studies may be undertaken at any post-secondary institution in B.C.
- \* consideration will be given to candidates who wish to study out-of- province or out-of-country

*If a student is studying at an educational institution that is not registered as a charitable entity in Canada, they are required to identify and include the name of the charitable organization they want the funds be transferred to. List of registered charities: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities-listings.html>*

**Conditions** - Candidates must demonstrate satisfactory enrollment and standing in a course of studies or acceptance into a program. Candidates must acknowledge acceptance of the bursary by letter to the Chair of the Health Officers' Council. It is suggested that bursary recipients consider a future donation to the bursary fund in support of the future education needs of those who will follow them.

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Successful candidates will be notified by October 31<sup>st</sup>. The entire amount of the award will be forwarded to successful candidates prior to the commencement of the next semester.

### **KENNETH BENSON, M.B.Ch.B, LMCC, DPH, FRCPC**

Dr. Benson was a Professor Emeritus, Department of Epidemiology at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Benson was a man of vision, an inspirational leader of public health provincially, nationally and internationally. Possessing forthright honesty, clarity and a great sense of humour, he was as masterful at chairing meetings and hearings of the Community Care Facilities Board as he was in hosting garden parties.

He was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. During the 2nd World War he served as a 21-year-old executive officer in the British Royal Navy in 1945, and proudly commanded his own minesweeper down the Thames. Dr. Benson graduated in medicine from the University of Edinburgh in 1951. After a brief stint in general practice in Edinburgh and Crief, he immigrated to Canada in 1956.

He was the Medical Health Officer in Prince George during an outbreak of polio shortly after his emigration. He dedicated the rest of his career to public health and his contributions were numerous. He was awarded the Fraser Memorial Gold Medal in 1958, the R.C. Defries Award in 1979 (from the Canadian Public Health Association) and the James M. Robinson Memorial Prize in 1987 (Department of Health Care and Epidemiology, UBC).

Dr. Benson worked as a Medical Health Officer in Prince George, Victoria and Courtenay. He became the Provincial Health Officer and was an Associate Deputy Minister within the Ministry of Health Responsible for Public Health. He served on many provincial / federal task forces and was two times the President of the Canadian Public Health Association. He continued working after normal retirement as the Chair of the Community Care Facilities Appeal Board and as a consultant to the Associated Boards of Health.

He was instrumental in establishing the Associated Boards of Health public health bursaries otherwise known as the Ken Benson Award. This bursary provides grants to non-physician public health workers to support them in further public health training.

Dr. Benson died suddenly of a heart attack at age 71 while preparing to launch his boat for a fishing trip on September 18, 1996.