



BOARD REPORT

Friday August 14, 2009



Medical Officer of Health

REPORT TO THE BOARD

Friday August 14, 2009

National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health

The NCCEH is one of six centres recently established by the Public Health Agency of Canada to foster linkages within the public health community. Located at the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) in Vancouver, the centre's focus is environmental health, defined initially as services and programs currently delivered by regional and local health agencies in Canada.

Its function is to:

- synthesize, translate, and exchange knowledge;
- identify gaps in research and practice knowledge; and
- build capacity through networks of environmental health practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers.

The collaborating centre has a very informative web site which covers many environmental topics. They have recently presented regarding current knowledge of wind turbines and health to the Western Canadian Medical Officers of Health. The presentation is available on the Web site at events/western MOH meeting 2009'. I found the presentation to be a balanced look at the issues and it includes good information.

http://www.ncceh.ca/en/events/recent_events

The author of the presentation, Mr. Ray Copes, has recently become the Director of Environmental and Occupational Health at the Ontario Agency for Health Promotion and Protection. There may be an opportunity for him to come to our area and present at a community meeting. We think it would be helpful to have a non biased informational meeting regarding this topic. If the municipalities are interested we will involve them in the planning of this event.

Michael Schmidt Charter Challenge

During the January 30, 2009 court appearance of Mr. Schmidt regarding the charges against him under the HPPA and the Ontario Milk Act, Mr. Schmidt presented a charter of rights section 7 challenge as part of his defense. The Attorney General of Ontario has just released their factum on the section 7 charter issue. The ruling is rather long and involved but the final conclusion is, "The Attorney General respectfully requests that the Applicant's constitutional challenge be dismissed." Now that this is cleared, the cases against Mr. Schmidt in which we are involved can be decided.

Hazel Lynn

PROGRAM REPORT

AUGUST 2009



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Program Report is issued on a monthly basis to inform our board and community partners of our activities.

The highlighted programs are featured in this issue...

DIRECTOR, HEALTH PROMOTION: Maureen Handley

Lynda Bumstead
Chronic Disease Prevention
 Early Detection of Cancer

Sarah Ellis
Healthy Babies
Healthy Children

Carrie Griffith
Reproductive Health
Child Health
 Oral Health Services

Denna Leach
 Sexual Health
 Injury Prevention
Substance Abuse Prevention

Linda Davies
Tobacco Projects
 Tobacco Control Act
 Tobacco By-law Enforcement

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DIRECTOR, HEALTH PROTECTION: Chris Munn

Karen Sweiger
Vaccine Preventable Diseases
 Rabies Control

Andrew Barton
Food Safety
 Health Hazard Investigation
 Emergency Planning

Lou D’Alessandro
Safe Water
 Environment

Susan Shular
 Control of Infectious Diseases
 Pandemic Planning
 Vector Borne Diseases
 Tuberculosis Control

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FOOD SAFETY

In addition to routine inspections to ensure compliance with food safety regulations, Public Health Inspectors also participate in outreach and training.

So far this year, 147 people received food handler certification. This includes three courses at the Canadian Auto Workers Education Centre in Port Elgin to certify 60 food handlers involved in food services at CAW facilities across Canada.

Less formal training included workshops at Cape Croker where a First Nation group received training on food safety issues. This opened the door to further educational opportunities from other Public Health programs. An after school program to high school age girls from the Saugeen First Nation explored similar topics. Public Health worked with the Children’s Aid Society to improve their staff’s knowledge of food safety, enabling them to pass on information to their clients. For a number of years, Public Health has taken part in the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation High School Graduation training. These workshops target young workers, many of whom find employment in the food industry.

In collaboration with the Nutrition Program, food safety was a component of the training to the Eat and Learn School Nutrition Program. Eat and Learn offers healthy food choices to 3000 children each day in over 60 schools in Grey Bruce.

“DON’T DO METH...NOT EVEN ONCE”

As part of the recommendations of the report *Crystal Meth...A Profile of its use in Grey and Bruce Counties (2009)*, the crystal meth task force will lead a comprehensive coordinated four-pillar strategy to tackle the issue of crystal meth in our community.

The West Hill Secondary School student production of *Crystal Clear: Death by Meth* is one example of community partners addressing the education/prevention pillar. “Don’t Do Meth...Not Even Once” was the strong, clear message delivered throughout May by the grade 12 drama class to over 1600 of their grade 9 – 12 peers from high schools across Grey Bruce. Support from Grey Bruce FOCUS community partners assisted the students to script, produce and perform this compelling drama. The production speaks to the damaging effect meth has on users, their family, friends and the community. Audience reaction shows the positive impact of the peer-to-peer message: “I already knew that meth was very addicting, but I did not know it could suffocate you and make you act a lot differently”; “Very eye opening. You made people not want to try meth”; “The theme stood out: ‘Don’t Do Meth...Not Even Once’. It was a constant quote throughout the play, something you would understand”; “The play showed how dramatically meth can affect your life.”

In June, the production received well-deserved recognition with an Award of Excellence from the Bluewater School Board.

SAFE STRONG CLEAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Safe Strong Clean is a rural planning and development initiative to engage private, public sectors and the community at large to create vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities. This spring, Public Health staff participated in two training sessions to enhance their understanding of healthy community development. Teams will work with municipalities to develop local strategies to support healthy community development.

This initiative integrates community development leadership within local government and creates partnerships with a resulting synergy from the combined effort of local resources including human, social, political, financial, built and natural environments.

Fall workshop will provide the opportunity for Public Health staff and municipal leaders to discuss the relationship between health and the built environment.

BREASTFEEDING

The *Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants (Joint Statement) by the Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada and Health Canada (2007)* states “breastfeeding is the optimal method of feeding infants.” Research confirms the health, cognitive, environmental and cost benefits of breastfeeding for baby, family and community.

Public Health support for breastfeeding takes place in one-to-one and group settings. To date this year, 244 families attending prenatal programs received information on breastfeeding. Breastfeeding assessment and counselling via telephone is provided to 83% of mothers giving birth in Grey Bruce. Healthy Baby Centres across Grey Bruce provided 149 families with support around breastfeeding. Every year, between 1250 and 1300 families receive the *Let’s Grow* mail-outs with information for parents of newborns.

Internal breastfeeding policies are under review to ensure compliance with the World Health Organization’s designation as a *Baby Friendly* community service.

BY THE NUMBERS

Mid-year statistics for Healthy Babies Healthy Children indicate a consistent number of pregnant women screened for risk and a comparable number of births to 2008. Postpartum visits in community sites have provided an opportunity for low-risk clients to access Public Health services in a centralized model. This change in practice also provides staff with the opportunity to focus efforts with the high-risk population on determinant of health goals (poverty, education, employment). Evaluation of this new practice is continuing.

Indicator	January 1 - June 30 2008	January 1 - June 30 2009
Pregnant women screened with Larson	520	508
Pregnant women scoring at risk	123 (23%)	113 (23%)
Families with a live birth	615	649
Families contacted within 48 hours of hospital discharge	604 (84%)	520 (81%)
Families scoring at risk	332	278

HIGH SCHOOL GRANTS PROGRAM ENDS

The Ministry of Health Promotion has discontinued the *High School Grants Program* and area schools have completed their final activities. Ten high schools in Grey Bruce each received a grant of \$1,000 this past school year to conduct activities promoting student health and to make a tobacco-free, healthier culture the school norm. The projects are student-initiated, planned, and coordinated. In six of the 10 participating schools, the funded events represented the only tobacco-focused activities conducted during the school year.

Projects include designated tobacco awareness weeks, poster/video contests, guest speakers and demonstrations of the pig's lungs. There was a new focus this year on physical activity and tobacco-free sports and recreation. The projects engaged 160 students in the planning and implementation and reached 3,957 students with health promotion activities.

DRINKING WATER SAFETY

The goal of the Safe Water Program is to prevent and reduce the rate of water-borne illness. Safe drinking water is basic to health and everyone has a right to a safe and reliable supply of drinking water. The updated *Ontario Public Health Standards* contain a new *Drinking Water Protocol* covering Small Drinking Water Systems. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care took over this portfolio from the Ministry of the Environment in December 2008. Grey Bruce has over 1300 designated Small Drinking Water Systems. Public Health staff is undertaking detailed risk assessment at each of these sites. One quarter of Grey Bruce residents obtain their drinking water from a private supply; use increases during the summer months with seasonal occupants.

The *Drinking Water Protocol* requires Public Health to provide a timely response to private drinking water complaints. Public Health Inspectors operate a daily telephone help-line to address inquiries from private drinking water users. Public Health responds to approximately 2000 private drinking water inquiries each year. The most common questions are with regard to sampling frequency or procedures and interpretation of lab sample results. To ensure safe drinking water, residents with adverse sample results receive advice on corrective action, disinfection procedures and water use restrictions.

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) describes a range of permanent disabilities that may affect people whose mothers drank alcohol while they were pregnant.

A recent contest by the Grey Bruce FASD Community Mobilization Committee increased awareness of the problems associated with alcohol use during pregnancy. Students from Saugeen District Secondary School Communication Program designed posters and public awareness videos with the message that alcohol and pregnancy do not mix. The project was funded by the Grey Bruce FOCUS Project and judged by the Owen Sound Youth Action Alliance.

Education and awareness about alcohol use during pregnancy is also emphasized during prenatal classes; 244 parents-to-be have attended classes this year.

Home visiting nurses are piloting a new assessment tool with their clients. This tool screens for a number of types of substance uses, including alcohol, and provides specific actions for follow-up care.

Public Health is also involved with the Hospital for Sick Children and local hospitals in the *Pilot Study on Neonatal Screening for Prenatal Ethanol Exposure in the Region of Grey Bruce, Ontario* (Gareri et al.). This partnership tracks children exposed to alcohol prenatally and provides developmental screening at key intervals to ensure early identification, diagnosis and intervention.

HUMAN PAPILOMAVIRUS IMMUNIZATION: INCREASED UPTAKE

In August 2007, the province announced that all Public Health Units would offer the human papillomavirus (HPV) immunization, Gardasil®, to all grade 8 females starting in the 2007-08 school year. During this initial year, 57% of Grey Bruce grade 8 females received the publicly funded vaccine through the school-based program, compared to the provincial average of 49%. With increased efforts by nurses in the Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD) program to promote the benefits of the vaccine, 70% of grade 8 females received the three dose series of the HPV vaccine in the 2008-09 school year.

The vaccine is also available at all three clinic sites in Grey Bruce: Owen Sound, Walkerton and Port Elgin. During 2008, VPD nurses administered 114 publicly funded HPV immunizations to eligible grade 8 females. An additional 73 eligible females, aged 9-26 years received HPV immunizations, at a cost of \$150 per dose.

Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV)

