



June 9, 2010

Minister Margaret R. Best
Office of the Minister
Ministry of Health Promotion
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1S5

Dear Minister Best:

At its May 12, 2010 meeting, the Board of Health for the Peterborough County-City Health Unit considered a staff report on comprehensive tobacco cessation and passed the following recommendations:

That the Board of Health request that the **Minister of Health Promotion** develop and implement a province-wide comprehensive tobacco cessation strategy.

The provincial *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* is a highly acclaimed piece of legislation, however the Smoke-Free Ontario initiative does not include a comprehensive cessation strategy. Without this piece, and in light of stalled smoking prevalence rates, the tobacco control efforts of the past ten years are at risk. We ask that you encourage your staff to prioritize the implementation of a province-wide cessation strategy.

A copy of the report is attached for your reference. If additional information is required please contact Alida Tanna (705) 743-1000 ext. 247 or atanna@pcchu.ca.

Yours truly,

Original signed by

Jim Embrey
Chair, Board of Health
for the Peterborough County-City Health Unit

Encl.

cc: Ontario Boards of Health

To: All Members
Board of Health

From: Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, Medical Officer of Health

Subject: **Staff Report – Tobacco Cessation Services**

Date: May 12, 2010

Recommendations:

That the Board of Health for the Peterborough County-City Health Unit:

1. request a meeting with Jeff Leal, MPP to discuss the urgent need for a comprehensive provincial tobacco cessation strategy with public health units as central to local service provision;
 2. request that the Minister of Health Promotion develop and implement a province-wide comprehensive cessation strategy;
 3. invite Health Unit partners in tobacco cessation to the meeting with Jeff Leal; and
 4. request funding from Social Services, City and County of Peterborough for NRT.
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Please refer to the attached.

Original signed by
Larry Stinson, Acting Director,
Public Health Programs *for*

Rosana Pellizzari, M.D.



Staff Report

Tobacco Cessation Services

Date:	May 12, 2010
To:	Board of Health
From:	Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, Medical Officer of Health
Original signed by Larry Stinson, Acting Director, Public Health Programs for Rosana Pellizzari, M.D.	Original signed by _____ Donna Churipuy, RN, BNSc, Program Manager

Purpose

To report on the status of tobacco cessation services in Peterborough, and the need for a provincial tobacco strategy.

Decision History

On January 21st, 2008, the Medical Officer of Health sent a letter to Minister Best, Ministry of Health Promotion, advocating for a strong role for health units in tobacco cessation.

The Board of Health has also been kept apprised of funding received from Health Canada to implement an intensive cessation counseling service for the residents of Peterborough County and City.

The Board of Health received a staff report on September 18, 2008 with six recommendations. As a result correspondence was sent to: the Minister of Health Promotion requesting enhanced funding for local comprehensive smoking cessation services and free cessation aids for all persons trying to quit; the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care requesting that cessation medications be covered by the Ontario Drug Benefit Plan and that nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) be available at retail outlets; and the Federal Minister of Health requesting that funding for comprehensive tobacco control be re-instituted for First Nation communities.

Financial Implications and Impact

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

That the Board of Health for the Peterborough County-City Health Unit:

1. request a meeting with Jeff Leal, MPP to discuss the urgent need for a comprehensive provincial tobacco cessation strategy with public health units as central to local service provision;
2. request that the Minister of Health Promotion develop and implement a province-wide comprehensive cessation strategy;
3. invite Health Unit partners in tobacco cessation to the meeting with Jeff Leal; and
4. request funding from Social Services, City and County of Peterborough for NRT.

Background

Tobacco use continues to be the leading preventable cause of disease and premature death in Canada, with a current smoking prevalence of 18% among Ontarians aged 15 and older. When surveyed, over half of Ontarians who smoke intend to quit smoking within the next six months, and at least one quarter of those surveyed indicated a serious intention to quit within thirty days.

In Peterborough County and City, smoking prevalence has remained fairly constant between 2001 and 2007. In 2006, the results of a local household survey indicated that 44% of current smokers living within the City of Peterborough wanted to quit within the next six months. By 2008, the percentage of smokers wanting to quit had risen to 54%.

At the 13th World Conference on Tobacco or Health, it was recognized that a reduction in rates of tobacco use will only result from an increased supply of and demand for tobacco treatment. Evidence indicates that the most effective smoking cessations programs are comprehensive programs implemented in a variety of settings. Comprehensive programs include population-based initiatives, individual tobacco cessation approaches, programs tailored for various populations and distribution of appropriate pharmacotherapy.

In Ontario, tobacco users have a few options for cessation support including the nation-wide Smokers' Helpline, counseling by primary care practitioners, and a mix of services offered by health units and other health care agencies including group counselling, individual counselling, minimal contact interventions, provision of self-help resources, support of workplace projects, and tailored support for various populations. In addition, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health has occasionally offered a time limited supply of cessation aids through the Smoking Treatment for Ontario Patients (STOP) study. Although these services are being offered in parts

of Ontario no region offers sustainable comprehensive services that are available to tobacco users when they are ready to quit. As a result, there are significant barriers to cessation services including economic and geographic challenges.

Under the Ontario Public Health Standards (2008), health units are mandated to ensure the provision of tobacco use cessation programs and services. On March 26th, 2008, the Peterborough County-City Health Unit signed a funding agreement with Health Canada to provide intensive tobacco cessation counseling for two years. As a result, the Choose to be...Smoke-free intensive cessation counseling service was implemented. Since its implementation, 210 clients have received service through the Choose to be...Smoke-free program. The Peterborough County-City Health Unit has requested an upward amendment from Health Canada to continue this service for an additional year. However, even if the PCCHU is successful in obtaining the funding it will only be until March 31st, 2011.

In order to successfully quit many people require cessation aids such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). Therefore, in addition to providing counseling, the Health Unit requested and was successful in receiving funding from the City and County of Peterborough to enhance the service through the provision of NRT.

The Choose to be...smoke-free program is working in partnership with local communities and agencies to explore options and to advocate for a sustainable cessation service and the Tobacco Use Prevention team has advocated for a sustainable cessation strategy through the Central East Tobacco Control Area Network. Also, in an effort to develop a local, sustainable tobacco cessation strategy the Tobacco Use Prevention program has requested the Peterborough Regional Health Centre implement the Ottawa model, an institutional program that systematically identifies, treats, and provides long-term follow up to hospitalized smokers.

In addition to providing cessation services, the Tobacco Use Prevention team is working with landlords to implement smoke-free property policies. Also, the City of Peterborough has amended its smoking by-law to include City parks in order to reduce exposure to environmental smoke and to denormalize tobacco use. Sustainable local cessation services are needed to successfully implement and sustain these policies, and to provide a supportive environment for those trying to quit.

Comments

Cessation is the most effective way of altering smoking-induced disease. Ensuring comprehensive evidence-based, cessation supports are in place including access to cessation medications, skilled tobacco cessation counselors and creating supportive environments are key components to people successfully quitting.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy was implemented without a fully developed cessation system. The government needs to move more quickly to address this gap since “declines in smoking

prevalence are flattening¹". Public health units play an integral role in tobacco control and have enormous potential for progressive delivery of comprehensive cessation services. Health units have the health care professionals with the knowledge, skills and existing partnerships with community organizations to deliver comprehensive cessation services in a variety of settings.

Conclusion

The province of Ontario does not currently have a tobacco cessation strategy. The government needs to commit to on-going and sustained funding to support existing services and to increase health unit capacity to provide access to comprehensive cessation services across the province. A provincial tobacco strategy should emphasize access to free cessation aids, sufficient and timely treatment supports, multiple opportunities for access to treatment, and reduction of barriers to treatment. Focused and intensive action is needed to build upon the strong foundation of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, and other local policy development.

Strategic Direction

The Board of Health action supports the first Strategic Direction, **Continuing to Meet Our Mandate.**

Contact:

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Program Manager
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dchuripuy@pcchu.ca

References:

¹ Ontario Medical Association Position Paper: Tobacco, Illness, and the Physician's Perspective. *Ont Med Rev* 2010, Apr: 17-25. Retrieved on May 3, 2010 from http://www.oma.org/Health/tobacco/Tobacco_Illness_Physician_Perspective2010.pdf