

Board of Health Meeting Summary

November 9, 2011

Peterborough County-City
HEALTH UNIT
...because health matters!

Wireless Technologies

Four community members provided deputations to the board expressing their concerns about wireless technology. Following this, Dr. Ray Copes, Director, Environmental and Occupational Health of the Public Health Ontario, gave a presentation on the latest scientific research into any possible health effects from wireless technologies. He noted that the May 2011 meeting of the International Association of Research on Cancer Working Group found studies were inconclusive in confirming any association between radio frequencies (RF) and electromagnetic frequencies and cancer. Reducing RF exposure can be achieved by limiting cell phone use or placing laptops on desks. Other forms of ionizing radiation represent larger public health issues, such as radon which produces 300 cases of lung cancer in Ontario each year, or exposure to UV Radiation from the sun. Where controversy continues regarding wireless technology use in certain settings, Dr. Copes suggested engaging independent consultants to measure levels to provide objective results. To review his presentation, please visit www.pcchu.ca and click on “[WiFi Information](#)”.

Q3 2011 Program Report and Financial Update

Larry Stinson, Director of Public Health Programs, provided a review on the Health Unit’s activities during the third quarter of 2011. He noted that the Health Unit continues to perform well considering challenges imposed by limited capacity. One area where capacity was recently enhanced was in the creation of two new Public Health Nursing positions whose work will specifically address local priority populations. Priority populations are defined as groups that are at risk and for which public health interventions may be reasonably considered to have a substantial impact at the population level. These two new nurses will focus on children and youth in poverty, as well as adults with mental health issues and vulnerable seniors.

Extreme Cold Response Plan

Program Manager Donna Churipuy presented the draft Extreme Cold Response Plan. It described the health risks of extreme cold, which populations are most vulnerable, and the various public health actions to be undertaken by the Health Unit at different forecasted temperature thresholds. The plan provides a framework to coordinate an emergency response with municipal and other community partners if extreme cold situations occur in order to mitigate any health risks to local residents.

Staff Report: Tobacco, Second-hand Smoke and Water-pipes

Tobacco Enforcement Officer Ingrid Cathcart presented a staff report for the board’s review about the emerging use of water-pipes and their potential impact on the public health and the Health Unit’s tobacco enforcement program. Scientific evidence shows that water-pipe use involving either tobacco or herbal substances is harmful to human health, creates second-hand smoke, and increases the possibility of infectious disease transmission. The current *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* does not contain provisions to deal with the public use of non-tobacco products in water-pipes. The board approved the following recommendations:

- To request local municipalities with smoking by-laws to amend their bylaw to create a new definition of smoke and include prohibition of the burning of substances in all indoor public spaces, workspace and outdoor public spaces.
- To request that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care monitor and assess the public health effects of exposure to smoke from water-pipe usage in public indoor spaces.

Approval of RFP Regarding Financial Analysis and Plan for PCCHU Expanded Facilities

The Board of Health approved awarding the Request for Proposal P-01-11 for a Financial Analysis and Plan for an Expansion to Health Unit facilities to Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP for \$95,000.

Staff Report: Update – Transfer of Genetics Program to the Peterborough Regional Health Centre

The Board was updated on the status of transfer of the Genetics program to the Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC). Discussions between the PRHC and the Health Unit are underway in the hopes of a December 5, 2011 start up of the program at the hospital. Terms and timelines of the relocation continue to be discussed between PRHC and Health Unit representatives.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at 10 Hospital Drive in the Peterborough County-City Health Unit board room.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Rosana Pellizzari
Medical Officer of Health

Deputy Reeve Andy Sharpe
Chair, Board of Health

Please contact Brittany Cadence, Communications Supervisor, with any questions at bcadence@pcchu.ca or (705) 743-1000, ext. 391.