

Board of Health Meeting November 17, 2016

Summary

Opioid Strategy for Leeds, Grenville and Lanark

Across the province the number of deaths due to opioid use, including fentanyl, continues to rise and now surpasses individuals killed in traffic collisions. In response the province has recently announced the Provincial Opioid Strategy which includes three major components:

- Modernizing Opioid Prescribing and Monitoring
- Improving the Treatment of Pain
- Enhancing Addictions Support and Harm Reduction

The Health Unit is involved in the Harm Reduction component with education, the needle-exchange program, referrals to community supports, and providing naloxone to users and their families and friends to reduce the risk of death from overdose.

On December 14, 2016 the Municipal Drug Strategy of South Grenville, the Community Harm Reduction Committee, and the Health Unit are collaborating on an Opioid Education Day at the Brockville Memorial Centre. Everyone is invited to attend and contribute to the discussion about how we can work together to address the challenge of opioid use in our region.

Basic Income Guarantee and Nutritious Food Basket

The recent results of the Ontario wide survey on the cost of nutritious food baskets, conducted by local public health units, reveals that food costs in our region continue to climb. They are now 23% higher than in 2010. While this rise affects everyone, it is a particular challenge for individuals and families living on a low income.

Recognizing the profound affect living in poverty has on children, teens, adults, and families, the provincial government has asked retired Senator Hugh Segal to prepare a report on how a pilot for a Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) could be conducted in the province. His report is now available at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/finding-better-way-basic-income-pilot-project-ontario>

Feedback on the report can be done on-line by January 31, 2017 or in a regional in-person discussion hosted by the province: Kingston January 9, 2017 and Ottawa January 24, 2017. Organizations can host their own consultation as well.

2017 Budget Preparation

The Finance, Property and Risk Management Committee discussed the 2017 budget at their recent meeting. A budget shortfall is projected for 2017 based on no increase in the provincial grant, and increases in staffing and benefit costs. The deficit will be addressed through the Program Budgeting and Marginal Analysis (PBMA) process used successfully in 2015. The decision about any increase in the 2017 municipal levy will be deferred until the PBMA process is completed in January 2017. At that time more information will be available to the Board to determine the impact the municipal levy will have on programs and services.

Champlain and South-East LHIN Sub-Regions

Each LHIN in Ontario must identify LHIN Sub-Regions as part of the planned Patients First Act by September 30, 2016. “The Sub-Regions will focus on population health needs and address health equity, enhance coordination of services – improve access, system navigation and smooth transitions of care, and better leverage of local community resources and knowledge.”

After feedback from the community, the Champlain LHIN changed its recommendation about the North Grenville, Mississippi Mills, Carleton Place, Beckwith and Lanark Highlands area. Instead of including it in the Ottawa West Sub-Region, they recommended it be included with Renfrew County in a Champlain West Sub-Region. It is recognized that this is not ideal, so work is underway with both LHIN’s to assess alternative options.

A well-attended Forum for Health Community Care and Social Service Governors and Leaders was held on November 4, 2016. Its purpose was to identify opportunities to strengthen patient-centred care in the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville LHIN Sub-Region. Dr. Paula Stewart presented a summary of the Population Health Approach which provides a framework to identify important health concerns in the community, the factors that influence them, and lays out a collaborative approach to responding to concerns to improve the health of the population and to address inequities in health.

Communication Strategy

The Health Unit Communication Strategy includes the use of regular media, social media, the website, reports, regular newsletters and alerts to connect with the public and partner organizations and service providers. Board members emphasized the important role municipalities can play in communicating public health messages to their residents. In the new year, the Health Unit Communication Team will work with municipalities to determine how they would like to be involved in communicating public health information to their residents, and how they would like to learn more about public health programs.