

FOCUS

Media Release

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Smiths Falls FOCUS Community Coalition advocating to renew funding

Since 1991 when the first sites were founded, FOCUS Community Projects have been working for the health of all Ontarians by preventing injury and harm as it relates to drug and alcohol use. The sites continue to work with the same budgets they were awarded in 1998 and have become experts at doing more with less. Indeed, in 2007-08, the cumulative report of in-kind contributions secured by the 22 sites was \$4.24 million dollars. That's a significant return on the government's investment of \$2.4 million annually. In that same year, 817 partnerships were reported.

The FOCUS Provincial Projects' most recent five year funding cycle ended on March 31, 2008. Prior to that, it was announced that an additional, transitional year had been granted while future directions for the Projects were discussed. That extension ends on March 31, 2009.

As the economy struggles and the stressors of life continue to take a toll, many people turn to drugs and alcohol as a means of coping. You only have to watch the news or read the paper or walk down the street in many neighborhoods to know that the misuse of drugs and alcohol continues to be a significant issue in our society. Addiction and injury treatment costs continue to skyrocket. Sometimes, it seems hopeless.

But it's not. The FOCUS Community Projects have and are continuing to galvanize their communities to action. Best practice programs have been implemented, the existing body of knowledge added to, and new programs and resources developed where these did not previously exist. We work in schools and workplaces, with families and individuals, volunteers and professionals. We are doing the work of prevention and health promotion well, and we are making a difference. In our communities, strong partnerships have been cultivated, and community capacity enhanced significantly.

In your community, the Smiths Falls' local advisory committee agrees that direction about the future of FOCUS is needed now so that plans can be made, and dollars invested wisely. Together, we are calling on the Minister of Health Promotion to renew our funding for an extended period so that we can continue the good work we have done!

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