



## Media Release

For Immediate Release: Feb 8, 2010

### Funding Ends for Local Alcohol & Drug Prevention Projects

**Smiths Falls FOCUS Community Coalition will be ending as of March 31, 2010.** This marks the end of 12 years providing support and resources to community-based alcohol and other drug misuse prevention programs. The organizers of the local FOCUS program recognize the over 42 partners who have enthusiastically and consistently supported the program throughout the years.

FOCUS Community Projects have operated in communities identified as being at high risk for problems associated with alcohol and other drugs. **FOCUS Community Projects have worked to prevent injury and reduce harm as it relates to alcohol and other drug use, and to raise awareness of alcohol as a risk factor in chronic disease.**

The Ministry of Health Promotion recently introduced a new funding model under the “Healthy Communities Ontario” approach. A recent Ministry-sponsored assessment of the FOCUS Community Projects by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health identified best practices that could be incorporated into the Healthy Communities approach and other related ministry initiatives to further develop alcohol and other drug prevention programming. **As a result, Ministry of Health Promotion contracts which support the province’s twenty-two FOCUS Community Projects will not be renewed.**

Over the years, FOCUS Community Projects have received sustained funding for the planning and implementation of comprehensive programs. **One key to the success of the FOCUS Projects has been the presence of a funded staff person to oversee and coordinate local partnerships and programs.** The FOCUS Community Projects worked with local coalitions to provide health promotion and prevention programming based on local community needs. **The FOCUS sites have consistently achieved a return on investment of more than 200% through the in-kind support of local businesses, organizations and individuals.** Local communities have been strong supporters of FOCUS’ prevention efforts. This was evident in the more than 300 letters and 3000 signatures sent to the Minister of Health Promotion in 2008 illustrating how instrumental FOCUS has been at the local level.

Discussion is underway with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, as well as other community partners, to continue with some of the popular projects initially developed through Smiths Falls FOCUS such as the Community Food Calendars and the Seniors Safety Calendars, as well as in school activities. However, current coalition members are actively seeking funding to assist in the delivery of programming not captured in the health unit’s mandate but shown to be effective and filling a need in our community.

For more information about FOCUS in your community:

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For additional information on Healthy Communities Ontario, go to:  
[http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/healthy\\_communities/HCO-Framework.pdf](http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/healthy_communities/HCO-Framework.pdf)