

October 20, 2015



## **This is Infection Control Week in Canada and the U.S.**

To recognize the week, the Infectious Disease team at the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit in partnership with Public Health Ontario, hosted an annual Infection Control Education Day on October 15<sup>th</sup> at the Smiths Falls Memorial Community Centre. The theme this year was “Take action. You can make a difference!” *Ninety* health care professionals from Hospitals, Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes, Public Health Ontario and the Health Unit attended the event from across the tri-county area.

Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health for the Health Unit began the day by highlighting several Hot Topics for 2015, including a review of the 2014-2015 influenza season and an update on ebola and our involvement at the local level in Ontario.

Dr. Gary Garber MD, FRCPC, FACP, FIDSA, Chief of Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC), Public Health Ontario gave an engaging and informative presentation on “IPAC in Canada—the Past, the Present and the Future”. He reviewed our learnings and progress in Infection Control in Ontario related to SARS and more recently with the ebola experience in West Africa. His message highlighted the fact that everyone in health care has an important role in infection control and that ‘it works’ when everyone is involved!

Rhonda Mauricette Pollard, BSc, MA, Senior Advisor, Leadership Development and Organizational Improvement, Public Health Ontario, focused on “Leadership as a practice, not a position”. She highlighted the sources of influence that leaders at all levels can use to create positive change for themselves and others. She used scenarios that affected everyone in the audience, such as increasing hand hygiene rates for health care workers.

In the afternoon, Lisa Miller PHN, Vaccine Preventable Disease Program shared up-to-date information about the influenza vaccine this year. Debbie McIntyre, Public Health Nurse and Courtney Shaffer Public Health Inspector, from the Infectious Disease Program then guided participants through an exercise where groups had to manage a mock influenza outbreak scenario. It was very well received and provided an opportunity to discuss common issues and challenges in order to prepare for the upcoming flu season.

The use of icebreakers, interactive audience polling questions, and a contest for the most improved influenza immunization rate for HCWs for 2015/16 added to the *fun* event and provided opportunities to network throughout the day. What a great way for everyone to ‘take action and make a difference’ leading into Infection Control Week!

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