

Board of Health

Monthly Report - July-August 2001

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Preterm Birth – Making a Difference

Submitted by Barb Guthrie-Gill, Public Health Nurse

Reviewers are praising a comprehensive document that has just been completed with the involvement of Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit staff. The three- pronged document, for use across Ontario, is called “Preterm Birth – Making a Difference” and includes:

1. ‘FAQs’ – frequently asked questions about preterm birth and its significance,
2. guidelines for the education of pregnant women and partners about preterm birth and for the management of women who are in preterm labour and
3. a step-by-step ‘tool kit’ for achieving consistent, community wide implementation.

Preterm birth affects more babies than all other perinatal health problems. About 8% of babies are born preterm in Ontario or about 1 in 12 babies.

Preterm Birth (being born before 37 completed weeks gestation) accounts for about 70% of babies born with low birthweight. (The other low birthweight babies are born at term, 40 weeks gestation, but are small for gestational age because of poor intrauterine growth). Low birthweight (<2500 grams) is an important predictor of future health problems and disability.



“*Preterm Birth - Making a Difference*” was prepared with funds from Best Start-Community Action for Healthy Babies. The three collaborating partners were: Best Start; The Perinatal Partnership Program of Eastern and Southeastern Ontario (PPESO); and the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Ontario. Dr. Gardner and Faye Brooks were members of the steering committee and Faye Brooks was the project manager. Barb Guthrie-Gill, LGL public health nurse, was the resource person for the ‘tool kit’ working group. (The funding covered Faye and Barb’s time on the project.)

The document is now completed and on schedule. Best Start will be asking a few health units to pilot this fall and Board members will have the opportunity to read the document when Best Start has released it.

We are optimistic that, with the help of this document, communities across Ontario will be able to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with preterm birth.



CONTACT US:

We welcome your comments and suggestions for the Board Report at board@healthunit.org

RACING AGAINST DRUGS 2001

Submitted by Kelly Munroe, Public Health Nurse

RACING AGAINST DRUGS 2001, from June 19 to June 22, proved to be an event more successful than the previous year. This year, 1800 grade 5 and 6 students visited the Brockville Memorial Centre over 3 ½ days. Students visited approximately 12 out of 26 Pit Stops that delivered an interactive message about the risks of drug and alcohol use as well as ways to prevent injury.



RACING AGAINST DRUGS is a community-based program developed by a partnership, including members from the London Detachment of the R.C.M.P., the Ford Motor Company of Canada, and the former City of London Board of Education. This program uses the theme of the sport of car racing which has no room for error and zero tolerance from drug and alcohol use.

This year's core committee consisted of representatives from the Safe Community Coalition of Brockville and District, the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit, Brockville Police, Smiths Falls FOCUS Coalition, Plooy's Performance Products, YM/YWCA and the Brockville Ontario Speedway. The event ran smoothly and students received consistent messages throughout their two-hour session about drug and alcohol use and injury prevention. The success of this event is largely due to staff members from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit who were instrumental in the planning and delivery of this event. Staff from all departments assisted during the week to ensure that RACING AGAINST DRUGS 2001 was a high quality event.

Assessing the Tri-County Area for Mosquitoes

By Henry Garcia, Director of Health Protection

On July 23, 2001, specially trained Health Unit staff began a five-week survey of collecting mosquito larvae from selected sites within the Tri-County area. These mosquito larvae are collected and identified as to species, gender and population densities for each of the selected areas.

Staff, including six students, have been identifying major mosquito breeding water surfaces in the tri-county area with special emphasis on potential mosquito breeding zones in and near major residential areas. These areas are being mapped and descriptive information on each site is recorded. Rainstorm catch basins have been implicated as a major breeding area for certain species of mosquitoes. In cooperation with appropriate municipalities, a survey will be conducted of most catch basins and mosquito larvae samples will be collected for identification and confirmation.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, our Health Unit is one of the six Health Units in Ontario also conducting special live trapping of mosquitoes using Ministry provided mosquito traps. The trapped mosquitoes are sent to Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario for identification of species and calculation of potential population densities.

The data obtained during this survey will provide key information to municipalities and other stakeholders on effective mosquito control measures that can be taken in the prevention of West Nile Virus mosquito vectors and the control of West Nile Virus in the event that the virus reaches our area from the United States.

Year-to-date (August 1, 2001) a total of 1565 birds have been analysed for West Nile Virus in Ontario.

Homeowners are once again reminded to maintain the areas around their homes free of potential mosquito breeding waters by simply eliminating all standing water that is allowed to pool for more than 3 to 7 days (bird baths, children's toys, rain water gutters, abandoned tires, any container that hold water and is left outside where mosquito can lay their eggs). People should also ensure their doors and windows are properly screened preventing mosquito from gaining access into homes.

For more information on the West Nile Virus and Mosquito Control, please visit our Health Unit's Website at www.healthunit.org