

Board of Health

Monthly Report- April 25, 2002

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Influenza Campaign 2001-2002

Submitted by Jane Futcher, Director of the Clinical Services Department

Once again the Influenza Immunization Campaign was a success. This was due to the efforts made by the Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF), physicians, local industries and the Health Unit Immunization Team and their partners.

The campaign got off to a bumpy start; there was uncertainty about vaccine availability. Once the vaccine arrived and was distributed to health care professionals around the tri-county, the campaign began in earnest.

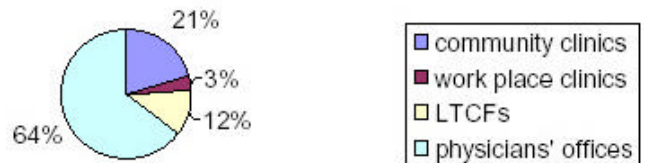
Physicians immunized 37,137 people in their offices, workplaces accounted for 1,934 employees, LTCFs added another 6,684 residents and staff to the 11,907 people immunized at community clinics run by the Health Unit. **In total 57,662 residents were immunized for influenza.**

The Health Unit immunization team is comprised of three staff members: Sheila MacInnes; Cindy Griffith and Sally MacInnis. Other nurses from the Health Unit helped out at the very large clinics in Smiths Falls and Brockville. Our community partners this year were nurses and clerical support staff from Almonte General Hospital, Carleton Place Memorial Hospital and Perth Smiths Falls District Hospital.

The first clinic was in Westport on October 16th and the last in Carleton Place on December 6th. The two largest clinics were in Carleton Place on November 7th where 1,000 people attended and in Smiths Falls on November 15th where 1,040 were immunized.

Early immunization (October) in LTCFs began with the 1999 influenza season. Prior to this the elderly and at-risk populations were immunized throughout the month of November. This is always a "risky" practice as the immunity in the elderly lasts only about 4 months and is only 40- 60% effective at preventing influenza. Thus, with early immunization we have a greater chance of out-breaks in this population, occurring in February, March and April. The healthy adult responds to the influenza immunization at a 70-90% effectiveness rate which may last up to 6 months. Since 1997, it has been known that immunized staff in LTCFs confer an "extra" immunity to residents.

**Community Sites
2001- 2002
Influenza Campaign**



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

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This year the Influenza season began early in October 2001 and continued into April 2002. We experienced the first outbreak in a LTCF in October, before the influenza vaccine was available for distribution. In total there were 9 out-breaks in LTCFs, specialized residences and the chronic care wards of two hospitals. In general the out-breaks were over quickly, there were less deaths and the duration of symptoms was relatively short.

	% staff immunized	Cases	Duration	Deaths
97-98	15 %	255	19.6	29
98-99	33 %	204	21.5	3
99-00	91 %	61	15.4	2
01-02*	79 %**	104	14.1	1
01-02 LTCFs only (hospitals excluded)	91 %	97	13.8	0

* Numbers do not include the outbreak that began prior to the immunization campaign or the one presently underway. All out-breaks began after February 12th, when the residents' immunity was beginning to wane.
 ** Percentage of Staff immunized was "low" as the two hospitals have been factored into the equation.

An obvious goal for the 2002-2003 campaign will be to increase the number of staff immunized in acute care hospitals. Only one hospital, the Carleton Place and District Memorial Hospital, achieved the minimum staff immunization requirement of 70 %. They did extremely well with a staff immunization rate of 90 %. This now sets the standard for other hospitals in the region.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Community Campaign

Submitted by Barb Guthrie, Public Health Nurse

Health Unit staff recently organized a meeting with community partners to explore interest in working together to address Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Thirty-three people, including parents, volunteers, and representatives from community agencies, attended.

It may seem that the dangers of alcohol in pregnancy are now well understood and that drinking during pregnancy is no longer a problem. However, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is an issue in most communities. Alcohol is a part of our lifestyle and there are many reasons why its use may continue during pregnancy:

- ⌚ Some women may drink before knowing that they are pregnant.
- ⌚ Some may not know it is harmful.
- ⌚ Some may believe that small amounts of alcohol are safe in pregnancy.
- ⌚ Some drink because of life's problems.
- ⌚ Some drink because it is part of their family and social life.

Alcohol during pregnancy can permanently damage the brain and central nervous system of a developing baby. The extent of damage varies with the amount of alcohol con-

sumed, the frequency of drinking and the stage of development of the baby. There are no known safe limits or safe times for drinking in pregnancy; the more alcohol consumed, the greater the risk of harm.

FAS damage can manifest itself in a child by facial irregularities, small head, low birth weight, and developmental delays. FAS effects may not be initially apparent, but as the child develops there are behaviour problems. FAS children typically have difficulties at home, in school, in the workforce, and may have trouble with the law.

The FAS meeting was hosted by members of the Health Unit's Reproductive Health and Injury Prevention Committees. Participants expressed interest in planning and implementing a community campaign that will do the following:

- ⌚ Prevent and reduce alcohol use during pregnancy,
- ⌚ Identify supports for families affected by FAS, and
- ⌚ Acquire resources for physicians, teachers, employers, the police and others who work with FAS-affected families.

The planning process begins on May 30th.

Have You Learned the ABCs of Healthy Eating?

Submitted by Heather Deegan & Dianne Oickle, Public Health Nutritionists

Healthy eating begins with knowledge about making healthy food choices, such as the choices made when selecting foods in the grocery store. What better way to learn some hands-on tips for making healthy food choices than going to the grocery store with a Registered Dietitian...or having a Dietitian bring the grocery store to you?

Supermarket Survival was used to kick off the 2002 Nutrition Month campaign in Leeds, Grenville & Lanark at the February 21st Board meeting. Subsequent to that, many events and activities were held during March to promote nutrition and healthy eating.

Media

An extensive media campaign was used to promote Nutrition Month in the Tri-county. A press kit containing a press release, nutrition articles and fact sheets was sent to 20 local media contacts.

Television

The Dietitians made guest appearances on the CKWS 5:30 news, Talk of the Town (weekly cable show in Brockville) and the local cable station in Smiths Falls.

Radio

The Dietitians were featured as guests on The Bruce Wylie Talk Show for a call-in segment and were able to take questions from callers on various nutrition topics. Also, an interview was done for the news program on Country 92 in Smiths Falls. Country 92 also aired "nutrition clips" throughout March that contain information on a variety of nutrition topics. In addition, public service announcements were purchased to promote Nutrition Month.

Print

An interview with the Dietitians was printed in the Recorder & Times at the beginning of March and featured some highlights from the February 21st presentation to the Board of Health. Also, five nutrition articles were written and printed in many newspapers in the Tri-county. The articles addressed the theme of Nutrition Month. Topics included antioxidants, B vitamins, calcium and bone-building nutrients, milk myths, and nutrition research.

Staff Education

Several approaches were used to educate Health Unit staff about nutrition and healthy eating during Nutrition Month. It was an excellent opportunity to reach all staff, and support the new workplace wellness initiative at the Health Unit.

Presentations

The Supermarket Survival presentation was delivered at all team meetings during the month of March, with the intent of providing Health Unit staff with some practical tips to make healthier choices in the grocery store. It also served to demonstrate the type of information that is offered to the community through various presentations that the Dietitians deliver.

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Email

The five newspaper articles that were sent to local newspapers were also e-mailed to all Health Unit staff (one at the beginning of each week in March), to provide some new information and to keep staff aware of the information that the community received during Nutrition Month.

Pay Stub stuffers

A short quiz was distributed with the first pay stub in March and the answers to the quiz were distributed with a pay stub later in the month. The questions addressed the theme of Nutrition Month – “The ABCs of Healthy Eating”.

Community Presentations

Several community presentations were delivered to various audiences, including high school classes, seniors groups, an adult learning center, and the Canadian Diabetes Association spring education session (Brockville).

Newsletters

Articles highlighting the theme of Nutrition Month were distributed in the Physicians’ Newsletter and the Workplace Health newsletter.

Website

The Health Unit Website featured an announcement on the main page indicating March is Nutrition Month, with a link to the nutrition section of the Website. Viewers were able to read articles on various nutrition topics.

High Schools

A volunteer student from each high school was sent a resource package that included ideas to promote nutrition and healthy eating in their school during Nutrition Month, as well as some ideas to make healthy food choices throughout the year. The student volunteer received the resources and coordinated activities for his/her peers.

Community Displays

The YMCA/YWCA in Brockville featured a nutrition display with handouts throughout the month addressing four key topics: how to estimate a serving size, Canada’s Food Guide and Canada’s Physical Activity Guide, the truth about dieting and milk myths. The display was well received and pamphlets were replenished several times.

General Resource Distribution

Nutrition Month fact sheets were mailed to 31 seniors’ organizations and 41 fitness centres in Leeds, Grenville & Lanark.

As a result of the Nutrition Month activities, the Dietitians received many requests from community members for further information on nutrition and healthy eating. There has also been considerable positive feedback from the public, health professionals and co-workers, which suggests a successful educational campaign for Nutrition Month 2002.

Tobacco Bylaw Development Activities

Submitted by Yves Decoste, Tobacco Coordinator

Dr. Gardner, Medical Office of Health and his staff have now visited several municipal councils to present the results of the Tobacco Public Opinion Survey and to urge municipalities to develop 100% smoke-free bylaws consistently across Leeds, Grenville and Lanark.

As of the writing of this report, presentations have been made to Smith Falls (March 18), United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (March 21), Elizabethtown/Kitley (March 25), Brockville (March 26), Lanark Counties (March 27), Gananoque (April 2), Prescott (April 3), Augusta Township (April 8) and Drummond/North Elmsley (April 9). Response to the presentation has been varied with one municipality eager to proceed with a bylaw review process and others preferring to consider the matter further.



Elizabethtown/Kitley have stated that they would like to see its neighbour Brockville enact a bylaw. Brockville Council has offered to host public meetings through its Community Services Committee and the Brockville and Area Chamber of Commerce has been instructed to evaluate their members' support for this initiative. Gananoque Town Council has asked the Health Unit to follow-up with its Chamber of Commerce to see if a survey of its members could be done. Prescott Town Council mentioned that their Chamber of Commerce is looking into the 100% smoke-free issue and advised the Health Unit that they would be discussing the issue at future meetings.

The list of confirmed municipal council meetings keeps growing:

- Edwardsburg/Cardinal Council – April 15, 2002
- Montague Council – April 16, 2002 at 7:00 p.m.
- Merrickville-Wolford Council – April 22, 2002 at 7:00 p.m.
- Town of Perth Council – April 23, 2002
- Bathurst/North Burgess/South Sherbrook Council – April 23, 2002 at 7:30 p.m.
- Township of Athens Council – May 6, 2002 at 7:15 p.m.
- Carleton Place Council – May 14, 2002
- Mississippi Mills Council – May 14, 2002 at 7:00 p.m.
- North Grenville Council – May 27, 2002 at 6:30 p.m.
- Lanark Highlands Council – May 28, 2002 at 7:00pm

For more information on tobacco bylaw development please contact Yves Decoste, Tobacco Coordinator for the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit at 345-5685.