

Board of Health

Monthly Report - Nov. 28, 2002

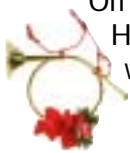
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Season's Greetings

On behalf of the staff of the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, and the members of the Board of Health I would like to wish you one and all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.



Sincerely,
Dr. Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health

Stop the Hesitation...Get the Vaccination

Submitted by Bonita Erwin, Public Health Nurse

Infection Prevention...don't take your health for granted!

High technology and new therapies have lulled us into a false sense of security regarding infectious diseases. In Canada, most of us have been fortunate to never see the devastating effects of such diseases as diphtheria and polio. Do any of you remember pictures of people in iron lungs or quarantine notices on doors? New technology has not completely removed the risk of acquiring disease. Regular vaccination remains one of the best ways to remain healthy. Childhood immunization rates have dropped. This may be a result of lack of understanding amongst parents and active campaigning by anti-vaccine lobby groups. Infection control professionals can be an invaluable resource helping people make informed decisions about vaccination. The pneumococcal vaccine for those at high risk and a yearly influenza vaccine are simple and effective ways of protecting the most vulnerable members of our communities.

"Stop the Hesitation...Get the Vaccination" was the theme of this year's National Infection Control Week, October 21 to October 25, 2002, as proclaimed in the House of Commons. CHICA-Canada (Community and Hospital Infection Control Association) is a national organization comprised of 19 regional chapters providing a forum for information sharing and the development of improved practices in infection control.

CHICA-Canada reminds us that infection prevention is the key to remaining healthy. Regular vaccination remains a cornerstone in any prevention program.

The Eastern Ontario Professionals In Infection Control (EOPIC) are members of CHICA. Our membership involves people from Belleville, Kingston and Brockville. Locally we have representations from the long-term care facilities, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit and the Brockville General Hospital.

The health unit began the Universal Influenza Immunization Campaign (which runs until mid-December) during Infection Control Week. Throughout the year, we continue our commitment to the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program through school immunization programs and Health Unit clinics and to infection control through our membership on Infection Control Committees of all hospitals and long-term care facilities in the tri-county.



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

Public Health Nutritionists Address Food Security

Submitted by Heather Deegan, Public Health Nutritionist, and Dianne Oickle, Public Health Nutritionist

The public health nutritionists of the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit have been working on a number of initiatives to assess food insecurity among tri-county residents.

The cost of healthy eating is on the rise for residents of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark counties. For the fifth consecutive year, the cost of the Nutritious Food Basket has increased, demonstrating a substantial hike of \$78.93 per month to feed a family of four since the survey was first done in 1998.

According to the most recent Nutritious Food Basket survey, the average cost of feeding a family of four is \$539.60 per month, compared to \$460.67 per month just five years ago. The Nutritious Food Basket is a project completed yearly by the health unit under the direction of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. Each year, ten grocery stores throughout Leeds, Grenville and Lanark are surveyed for the cost of 66 specified food items that support nutritional health and reflect the shopping behaviours of Canadians.

An update to the Food Access Inventory for Leeds and Grenville counties, as well as for Lanark County, has been completed. This inventory outlines food security programs that are available across the tri-county to help residents and their families access healthy foods. The programs are classified as Emergency Food Programs i.e. food banks, Skill

Development Programs i.e. community kitchens, and Food Support Programs i.e. Meals on Wheels, Good Food Box. The Inventory is mailed to service providers, municipalities, and community organizations for use in referring their clients to services that may help them access food.



The public health nutritionists have recently initiated consultation with community partners to address food insecurity in our community, including two focus groups in Smiths Falls and Brockville. In addition, the public health nutritionists are involved with the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Health Forum Task Group on Socio-economic Determinants of Health. This group will be examining low-income issues and working to improve the socio-economic determinants of health among our community members. Planning is underway to help residents decrease the barriers that prevent them from accessing healthy foods.

A Food Security media campaign was initiated in October 2002. A press release outlining the above activities was sent to all print and TV media in the tri-county on Thursday October 24, 2002. In addition to this, the Nutritious Food Basket results and the Food Access Inventories were distributed to partners across the tri-county. As well, a newspaper article was submitted to local media for print, and fact sheets were distributed to partners and clients through various channels.

Healthy Choices

"Thoughts and feelings happen. Acting on them is a choice."

Submitted by Rebecca Kavanagh, Public Health Nurse

Healthy Choices is a four-week program for grade 7 & 8 students. It has public health nurses going into the classroom for one afternoon a week for four weeks to discuss health related issues such as:

- ⌚ Self-Esteem
- ⌚ Body Image
- ⌚ Peer Pressure
- ⌚ Relationships
- ⌚ Drugs
- ⌚ Tobacco
- ⌚ Stress
- ⌚ SmartRisk (Injury Prevention)
- ⌚ Choices

In 2001/ 2002, approximately 1900 students received Healthy Choices and this school year it's anticipated to be the same. This program uses interactive and innovative ways to educate students through a wide variety of activities, games, videos, written assignments, and discussions. Each goal and objective of Healthy Choices matches the objectives set out by the Healthy Living Strand of the Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Activity Education 1998.

