

Board of Health

Monthly Report - November 27, 2003

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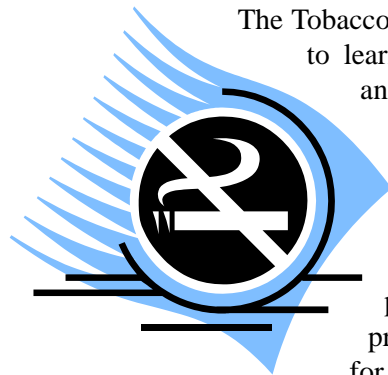
We welcome your comments and suggestions for the Board Report at:

board@healthunit.org



2003 Tobacco Public Opinion Survey

Submitted by Anne Taylor Barnett, Epidemiologist



The Tobacco Public Opinion Survey was first conducted in 2001 to learn about selected smoking-related attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of the residents of the municipalities of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark. A second telephone survey, once again conducted for the Health Unit by the Carleton University Survey Centre (CUSC), was undertaken in the summer of 2003. The intent of the second survey was to monitor possible changes in these characteristics, and thus provide up-to-date information to inform planning for tobacco control strategies. The new survey of 1470 randomly selected persons, planned to provide compar-

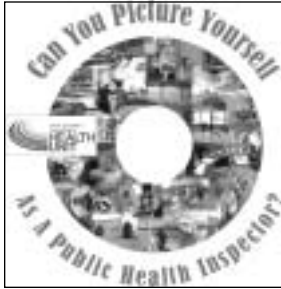
ability to the earlier survey, was primarily a replication of the 2001 questionnaire. Two new questions were added to address more recently defined issues.

The results of the survey were generally comparable to the findings in 2001. Before highlighting these findings, a caution regarding the results of the survey is offered.

A major goal of a survey is to provide an accurate portrait of pre-defined characteristics of a population. A key consideration in assessing the usefulness of survey information for planning purposes is the confidence researchers or planners have that the survey respondents truly represent the population the survey seeks to reflect. It may be that the 2003 Tobacco Public Opinion Survey falls somewhat short in this regard. The low response rate – or rate of persons agreeing to complete the survey - is cause for concern. According to the CUSC, the 35% response rate for this survey far exceeds industry standards as reported by the Professional Marketing Research Society. However, this rate is a significant drop from the 49% response rate obtained in the 2001 survey. The Health Unit recognizes the limitations of the survey and recommends caution in the interpretation and use of the results. The results may differ from those that would be found could we obtain the opinion of all residents of our municipalities. In comparison to the 2001 survey, there is an increased over-representation of females in the survey respondents compared to the population of our region, and an increase in the proportion of university graduates.

With that proviso, we report that the 2003 survey results support conclusions consistent with those of the 2001 report:

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Staff Produces Nationally Recognized Promotion Campaign For Public Health Inspectors

Submitted by Henry Garcia, Director, Health Protection

By the very nature of our job being “behind the scenes”, we automatically have a challenge ahead to make our occupation visible.

How many of you had met a public health inspector?

At the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit in Brockville we have a unique situation where several job vacancies and upcoming early retirements has left us with a shortage in qualified inspectors. This situation prompted our agency to look seriously at finding a means of recruiting and retaining inspectors. One such idea was a CD program to help introduce area high school students to our profession. Our rationale was that if we could encourage local high school graduates to attend Ryerson and complete the certification process that we would have a greater chance of retaining these people with ties to the area. We realize that because of our location as a rural health unit, we had to focus on directing high school students as opposed to directing mature students who might have family responsibilities that may make it difficult to attend school in Toronto.

The format of a nine-minute CD presentation was chosen due to its versatility. It can be run as a slide show on its own in individual schools or on a personal computer. It can also be used as a presentation tool if a health inspector is invited to speak at a school or career fair. The CD is a welcomed

resource for many guidance councillors in high school as it provides the necessary information on course requirements and where the program can be studied. High school students are comfortable with computers and can view the CD at their own convenience.

The cost of producing the CD is relatively low, as the photos seen in the presentation are members of the inspection department in action, and was produced in house.

At the annual CIPHI conference held in Waterloo, September 29 – October 1, 2003 the CD and display were presented to the delegates with very positive feedback. Our health unit was presented with an award from Michael Duncan, President of CIPHI Ontario Branch acknowledging and appreciating our efforts in promoting the field of Public Health Inspection. CIPHI (National) has indicated they wish to use the package nationally. This has raised the profile of the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit!

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following staff in the production of this nationally recognized promotional package:

Kim McCann
Nancy Carpenter
Teresa Clow
Susan Healey
Holly Dopson

Tobacco Survey *continued from page 1*

- The majority of people are aware of the seriousness of smoking and second-hand smoke as a health issue.
- The majority of people support 100% smoke-free bylaws. Support in 2003 was 64.0% compared to 61.9% in 2001, a modest increase which may not be significant.
- Smoking status is a significant predictor of attitude toward 100% smoke-free bylaws.
- There are no significant differences in support for 100% smoke-free bylaws by geographical area of residence.
- The majority of people are more likely or as likely to frequent public places with 100% smoke-free bylaws.
- The majority of respondents are in favour of implementing a 100% smoke-free bylaw all at one time.

Two new questions provided further insights into the opinions of the survey respondents regarding smoke-free establishments. Respondents were asked whether they go to public places in other municipalities because they are smoke-free or avoid public places because they allow smoking. Thirty-five percent of respondents said they do seek out smoke-free establishments in other municipalities and forty-two percent said they avoid public places because of smoking.

For more information, please contact Yves Decoste, Tobacco Co-ordinator, at (613) 345-5685 ext. 2202 or Shani Gates, Planning and Evaluation Consultant at ext. 2270.

Health Unit Urging Residents To Give Medicine Cabinets A Thorough Clean Out



Submitted by Kelly Munroe, Public Health Nurse

While many of the residents of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark have taken medications for relief from a variety of ailments, those same medications can cause injury, even death. For the month of **November**, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is joining forces with the Eastern Region Injury Network to deliver the 2nd Annual Eastern Ontario "Medicine Clean Out" campaign.

The group's 'Medicine Clean Out' message has three key points:

1. Return out-dated, expired and no-longer-required medicines to your pharmacy for proper disposal.
2. Medicines are hazardous waste – don't throw them out in the garbage and don't flush.
3. Medicines can lead to injury. Protect your household by keeping medicines locked and away from children.

Last year the campaign was delivered by 21 pharmacies across our area. Overall, approximately 265 bags of old medications were collected. Each bag returned during this campaign signifies the reduced potential for injuries to everyone, especially our children, seniors, and environment.

From November 1 to 30, 2003 the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is urging area residents to take the following steps to participate in an Eastern Ontario wide 'Medicine Clean Out.'

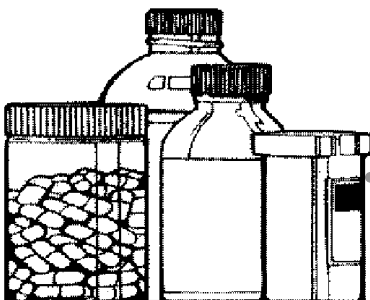
- Step 1** – Clean out the expired and out-dated medicines in your home. This includes prescription, over-the-counter, and herbal medications, and vitamins.
- Step 2** – Place medicines in a bag.
- Step 3** – Bring the bag to your local participating pharmacy for safe and free disposal.
- Step 4** – Medicine remaining in your home should be locked up and out of children's reach.

To find a participating pharmacy in your area check out our website at www.healthunit.org or call our HealthAction Line at 613-345-5685 or 1-800-660-5853 after October 27, 2003. The Eastern Region Injury Network (ERIN) members participating in this project include the: Leeds Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, Eastern Ontario Health Unit, Renfrew County and District Health Unit, City of Ottawa Public Health, and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Plan-It-Safe Program.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Medicine Clean Out (15 second PSA)

November is Medicine Clean Out Month, a time to remove old medications that could harm you or your family. Visit participating pharmacies for safe disposal details, or call the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit for the participating pharmacy nearest you at 345-5685 or call the HealthAction Line at 1-800-660-5853.



Medicine Clean Out (30 second PSA)

There's a hazard in your home you may not be aware of. Expired, left over or unlabeled medicines are Hazardous Waste that must be disposed of properly. November is Medicine Clean Out Month, a time to remove old medicines that could harm you or your family. Visit participating pharmacies for safe disposal details, or call the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit for the participating pharmacy nearest you at 345-5685 or call the HealthAction Line at 1-800-660-5853.