

Board of Health

Monthly Report - March, 2004

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Board Report at:

board@healthunit.org



Pool Safety Campaign, 2004

Submitted by Julie Ingleby, Public Health Nurse

The Lifesaving Society (2003) drowning research shows that children under the age of five have the highest drowning risk. In fact, twice as many children under five years drown in backyard pools than any other age group. It is therefore important that with the swimming season quickly approaching, everyone keep pool safety a priority. The Canadian Red Cross National Drowning Report also points out this serious statistic: about six hundred Canadians will drown each year and many more will be injured. Most of these incidents are preventable (Canadian Red Cross, 2002).

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit continues to be committed to promoting pool safety in our community. This year, our Pool Safety Campaign aims to reach all of our municipalities. Many residents in our community remain unaware that pool related injuries can be prevented. In targeting the municipalities with this Pool Safety Campaign, our goal is that safety messages reach each household via municipal spring newsletters. To achieve this goal, we have requested that each municipality promote their pool-fencing regulations and pool safety in their upcoming spring newsletter. Additional pool safety resources have been provided to each municipality for further awareness of injury prevention.

Most Injuries are Predictable and Preventable (SMARTRISK Foundation).

"Nothing holds greater fascination for a toddler than water. For many, it can act like a magnet to them and these toddlers often make little noise when they tumble into a pool. It can take an incredibly short time for a wonderful day to turn into a tragedy"

— Life Saving Society, 2003.



“Spring Forward, Don’t Fall Back ... It’s Time To Prevent A Fall”

Submitted by: Tawnya Boileau, Public Health Nurse

Falls are a serious health and safety issue among older adults. They account for more than half of all injuries and are the sixth leading cause of death in this age group (Active Independent Aging Website, 2003). Not only do falls significantly impact the lives of older adults by jeopardizing their independence and quality of life, they also impact health care costs. “Canadians spend about \$3 billion a year on medical care for fall related injuries to seniors” (Ministry of Health Planning, Health File #78, 2001).

Falls by older adults are often the result of environmental factors and/or an individual’s health status. Fortunately, studies show that health promotion strategies can reduce or eliminate these factors contributing to falls. Although some falls prevention knowledge exists, there is still little public awareness of this serious issue (Health Canada/Veterans Affairs Canada Falls Prevention Initiative, Fact Sheet No.8).



The Ontario Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines states that the Board of Health must address “risk factors associated with fall-related injuries and strategies to prevent these injuries”. As a minimum, we are required “to provide at least one community-wide campaign annually” including the use of “three of the following: television, radio, newspapers, posters/pamphlets and the internet”. As well, we are required “to provide at least one community event... open to the general public and/or specifically targeted groups” that “must involve public interaction and participation, and provide information and /or skill building” (Ministry of Health Public Health Branch, 1997).

Therefore, in order to fulfill our mandate and broaden public awareness, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is launching a Falls Prevention Campaign in April 2004. Our plan is to reach family members of older adults (65+) and older adults who attend Diners’ Clubs in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark.

The objectives of our campaign are to:

- Increase awareness of the risk factors of fall-related injuries.
- Increase awareness of strategies to prevent fall-related injuries.
- Build skills among older adults (65+) in order to maintain their independence.

Our plan to achieve these objectives is multi-strategic.

The campaign will include:

- Media awareness targeted at the general population by means of sending press releases to the community newspapers and radio stations.
- Submission of falls prevention articles to our Health Unit Newsletters.
- Promotion of our campaign on the Health Unit website including tips on how to prevent falls.
- Invitations to Diners’ Clubs to request an interactive presentation. Will provide a campaign poster to the club and a Home Safety Checklist for the participants to take home, in order to identify risk factors for falls.