

BOARD OF HEALTH *Quarterly Report*

ACTIVITIES OF THE LEEDS, GRENVILLE & LANARK DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

September - November 2006



Introducing Dr. Anne Carter, the new Medical Officer of Health for Leeds, Grenville and Lanark

Submitted by Dr. Anne Carter, MD, MHS, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

It gives me great pleasure to introduce myself to the Board of Health and the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark community through the *Board of Health Quarterly Report*. I am delighted to have the privilege of serving this community as the Medical Officer of Health and look forward to a long and fruitful collaboration with the community in the pursuit of improved health for all.

The essence of public health is prevention, and as such it tends to be invisible to the public when done well. However, crises of recent years in Ontario have served to raise the profile of the role of Public Health and the importance of the health programs that we provide. However, these same crises have caused the public to focus on the need for protection from communicable diseases when the major burden of illness in our society is from chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer as well as injury. We must protect the community from communicable diseases but, at the same time, we must also work to prevent the chronic diseases and injuries, even if the public does not focus on these as intently.

The mandate of the Board of Health and the Health Unit is to protect and promote the health of the population of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties as directed by the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act. In order to carry out our duties, we have a strategic plan, entitled *Moving Upstream*, which was recently developed to cover the years 2006-2010. The title refers to the need to move upstream from the actual disease state to prevent disease or, even further upstream, to prevent the factors that lead to disease. These factors are often called the determinants of health and include lifestyle choices, the physical and socioeconomic environment and health care services. The Health Unit has programs dealing with all of these issues.

Ultimately, public health is a team effort that succeeds only with cooperation between many people and organizations. The Health Unit staff and the Board of Health may be the prime movers in the public health sector but we could never succeed without our partner agencies and the broader community that we serve. In the next few months I will be going out to meet with those working in our partner agencies to cement relationships and explore new partnerships. I look forward to meeting you and to working with you to protect and promote the health of our community.

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Summer 2006 Injury Prevention Program

Submitted by Tawnya Boileau BScN, RN, Public Health Nurse



For the second consecutive year, the Health Unit presented a summer injury prevention program. Four post secondary students delivered this program, to children aged two to twelve, across Leeds, Grenville & Lanark. Age-appropriate interactive activities were used to capture the children's attention and deliver safety messages. The Risk Watch curriculum served as a resource to develop and implement this program. The following injury prevention topics were the focus of the presentations: bicycle safety, pedestrian safety, water safety, sun safety, fire safety and poison prevention.

The sites for the presentations were schools, day cares, day camps, community festivals and fairs. The target group was split into two age groups: two to six years and seven to twelve years.

Ages 2-6

This group participated in an interactive puppet show that incorporated all of the main safety topics. Following the puppet show, circle time activities were used to reinforce these important safety messages. Examples of these activities included "Dress up" (children dressed paper dolls in safety apparel i.e. helmets, hats, sunglasses, sunscreen) and "Eat/Don't Eat" (children determined which objects/foods were safe to put in their mouths).

Ages 7-12

This group participated in interactive, fun and competitive activities such as the wheel of safety (children spun a roulette wheel and answered safety questions) and capture the safety gear game.

Following the presentations and activities, packages that included letters to caregivers, safety colouring books and relevant pamphlets were sent home to families to build on the messages introduced that day.

Data collected from the feedback forms were very positive.

The majority of respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the presentations were age appropriate, clear, informative and enjoyable. In addition, there was strong interest from the community to have the program delivered in the future.

The summer injury prevention program was a great success and we look forward to providing it again next year.

SUMMARY

Schools

1399 children were reached in 18 presentations.

Day cares

713 children were reached in 29 presentations.

Day Camps

463 children were reached in 15 presentations.

Festivals

Approximately 400 children were reached at 9 festivals.

Summer Statistics from the Health Protection Department

Submitted by

E. Jane Lyster, C.P.H.I.(C), CSW,
Director of Health Protection

The Health Protection Department is involved (wholly or in part with) nine Mandatory Health Programs and Services. Most Mandatory Health Programs are year-round but a number of Mandatory Programs have seasonal related activities.

A recent change in mandatory programs included the Smoke Free Ontario Act and Regulations, (which came into effect May 31, 2006).

The summer season often sees a higher exposure rate to a number of communicable diseases. This summer department staff investigated potential rabies exposures (including numerous exposures to bats), Lyme disease cases, and various other communicable diseases related to summer activities. The Health Protection staff investigates, makes recommendations, if necessary, issues directives and provides follow up to each case.



Health Protection staff are involved in monitoring of water quality at public beaches and communicating (via the media and the Health Unit website) closure (posting) of beaches due to unacceptable levels of bacteria.



The following consist of highlights from Health Protection activities related to some of the **Mandatory Programs** in the summer of 2006:

Smoke Free Ontario Information Packages and Signage:

Vendors packages (delivered to and picked up by vendors) 400
Day care operator packages 90
Public establishments 678
Long Term Care Facilities 24

Rabies:

Annual Rabies Clinics were organized throughout the Health Unit area:

1738 Dogs were vaccinated
928 Cats were vaccinated

Total 2666 animal vaccinations

Rabies Vaccine Issued:

19 people were issued rabies vaccine due to bat exposure
2 people were issued rabies vaccine due to raccoon exposure
2 people were issued rabies vaccine due to dog exposure

Lyme Disease:

3 people were confirmed with Lyme Disease

Beach Monitoring:

24 Beaches in the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark County area were sampled from June 26 until August 28
5 beaches for a total of 35 days were posted due to unacceptable levels of bacteria

Emergency Preparedness in the Physician's Office 2006

Submitted by Bonnie Erwin, RN, BScN, Public Health Nurse

The Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit, in partnership with **Sanofi Pasteur**, sponsored two evenings for physicians addressing emergency preparedness planning. The guest speaker was Allison Stuart, Director of Emergency Management Unit, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, who presented issues related to pandemic influenza preparedness. Allison gave a status update regarding avian influenza, and then spoke about office and personal / family preparedness and planning. She also discussed government planning, both at the federal and provincial level.

All physicians in Ontario will be receiving a pandemic kit from the Ministry. This kit will include supplies of masks, gowns and hand sanitizers.

Twenty-nine physicians, five nurse practitioners and five nurses attended the two evenings. Evaluations were positive with the topic seen as relevant to physicians needs. Several respondents requested more information on local preparedness and chain of command in the event of pandemic influenza.

Any physician who was unable to attend received a print-out of the speaker's presentation.

Infection Control in the Physician's Office: Breaking the Chain

As a follow-up to these presentations, education evenings for physicians' office staff regarding Infectious Diseases, were held in five locations in the tri-county area. These education evenings were held during the month of June 2006. 70% of the invited health care settings sent representatives.

Assumptions for all sectors in the event of pandemic influenza:

- ▶ all Ontarians are at risk; communities may be affected at different times
- ▶ little lead time before the first wave of 8 weeks; second wave will occur in 3 – 9 months
- ▶ attack rate of 35% means approximately 1/3 of the population will get sick at some point during duration of pandemic
- ▶ absenteeism modeled at 20% at peak of first wave
- ▶ vaccine not available in first wave, then initially in short supply and high demand
- ▶ antivirals in short supply for prevention and treatment
- ▶ community infrastructure may be affected; scarcity of food and power outages; fuel shortages, etc

Each office received a binder of infection control resources and information.

A poster presentation of this initiative will be presented at the Ontario Public Health Association October 2006 Conference.

RACING AGAINST DRUGS

2006

Community Coalition for Leeds, Grenville & Lanark Counties

Submitted by Rebecca Kavanagh, Smiths Falls FOCUS Coordinator and Public Health Nurse

RACING AGAINST DRUGS 2006, which ran from May 30th to June 1st, proved once again to be a success with its many organizing committee members, teachers, and participants. This year, approximately 1850 grade 4 and 5 students from across Leeds, Grenville and Lanark took part in an interactive day that featured 25 pit stops filled with information about the negative effects of alcohol and other drugs. Every year, the location alternates between Smiths Falls and Brockville. This year the event took place at the Smiths Falls Youth Arena over a 3-day period.

RACING AGAINST DRUGS is a community based program that brings together many different community agencies to convey the anti drug message to our young people. The London Detachment of the R.C.M.P., the Ford Motor Company of Canada and the former City of London Board of Education originally created the program. RACING AGAINST DRUGS uses the theme of sport car racing, which has no room for error and zero tolerance for drug and alcohol use.

Once inside the venue, students stopped in at one of the 25 "pit stops" that illustrated topics such as the effects of impairment, and safety in the home. The youth then rotated to other "pit stops" at seven-minute intervals to discover other prevention messages.

At the end of each session, teachers from each represented school engaged in a highly spirited FINAL remote car race around a large oval track. The winning teacher received a prize package of hiking clips and other educational material for their entire class.

Anti drug messages have been proven to be very effective in reducing the use of recreational drugs among our youth, if they are given out consistently over time. RACING AGAINST DRUGS 2006 was one strategy that helped deliver this message.

In March 2000, Smiths Falls played host to the area's first ever RACING AGAINST DRUGS Event. Over time, the event has grown to be a highly respected, high quality program that many community agencies and businesses are excited to be a part of.

This event could not have happened without the phenomenal partnerships and supports that exist in our community. RACING AGAINST DRUGS 2006 was a three-day event with the participation of the following partners:

- 6 Different Police Agencies
- 4 Volunteer Organizations
- 9 Different Health Care Agencies
- 5 Education Related Institutions
- 9 Community Groups
- 2 Businesses
- 32 Schools
- 120 School volunteers

Organizers are gearing up for next year's version of RACING AGAINST DRUGS. Brockville will host the event in May 2007.

