

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Municipal - Public Health Networking Call

Friday, November 10, 2023

Recording: https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/nEgd-lwgWHa55kEyNxYgnhsNvdUvuLKYe0LddnZhkYgfDG9FuxP_jblsz4br8ua2.Qt-dyoJp4vdBAAdln

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Topic(s) of Discussion

1.0 **Welcome** – Peter McKenna, Board of Health Chair

- Welcome greetings were extended. We have been trying to meet on a monthly basis with different levels of participation.
- This is a very interesting topic today. With this new report out, sees the direct correlation between the work we do as municipalities and the work for this population that we are going to talk about and the opportunities that are there.
- Turned the floor over to Danielle Shewfelt – thank you.

2.0 **Topic** – Older Adult Review Tool for Stakeholders, Danielle Shewfelt, Public Health Nurse – Municipal Team Lead

Introduction:

- Recognized that we needed to address public health topics with this age group and to take a look at what is happening with this population.
 - We included a variety of documents in the Older Adult Review; we identified guidance documents, pulled together best practice documents, research articles, and did a literature review. We connected with other health units and with community stakeholders in a very open-ended interview format to allow for qualitative detail.
 - Spoke to older adult groups, individuals, spoke with groups that were not as isolated as well to try and get their feedback, (i.e. seniors walking group), etc.
 - This document is for the Health Unit and community stakeholders to help with program development, letters of support, proposals, etc. and can promote an age friendly approach that could be used for one theme or the entire age friendly approach.
 - Caveat was the pandemic that delayed completion for 3 years – we did not want to see this pushed aside; one of our community partners saw the value of this report and helped to push this report to completion.
- If you know of groups we should be reaching out to, please let us know.
- PowerPoint Presentation of Older Adult Review (*attached*)

Q&As:

1. Q: Mayor Brant Barlow – Kind of an unfair question but given that you were intensely involved with this and given that it is a large document, can you provide (at a high-level) the top 3 or 5 things that municipalities can do to help this target audience?
 - A: Danielle Shewfelt - There are sections within the report where you can go into each of the themed areas; there are recommended actions for each of the themed areas. There is a part in each section that asks, “What is happening and what could we be doing?”
- Mayor Barlow commented that they would like to be able to show some successes quickly and then dig deeper and deeper in the coming years.

- Danielle added that in the context of rural areas, the isolation piece stood out; in particular women who are alone and needing access to services and transportation, as well as their vulnerability to abuse. LGBTQ seniors also stood out – in particular those needing to go into care; transitioning is a challenge whereby some did not feel socially accepted so they would hide their identity in order to feel safe.
- 2. Q: Bev Holmes – Hearing from rural people is the whole ability to be able to age in place (rather than moving to a nursing home). Have you taken a look at what is needed to allow people to age in place?
 - A: Danielle Shewfelt – It came out loud and clear that aging in place is important and doing what we can to help them age in place is important. Some pieces that came out on the report is to assist them with – for example, property maintenance, maintaining social relationships, dealing with social isolation, etc. In June, we did a Seniors Day Event at the Pakenham Arena where we surveyed seniors that basically reinforced this message – that they identified needing help in those areas such as property maintenance and social isolation. Another piece to consider is not being able to afford to move.

Discussion:

- Bev commented that municipalities can start to look at what helps seniors stay in place such as affordable housing in the village, transportation, etc.
 - Danielle added that there could also be policy changes such as allowing seniors to have co-ownership (share their homes) – the report from Pakenham is interesting – **see link below**.
- Mayor Barlow agreed with Bev and picked up on the comment regarding affordable housing in the villages – would love to say that we can do that, but the laws around drinking water and septic for a small municipality for example is a huge burden on the budget – so many layers to this onion. Wanted you to understand the complexity of this issue – if you don't see anything happening it is not because we don't want to, it is because there are many barriers.
 - Danielle agreed that there are challenges and that we need to try and be creative around policy. We are different than urban centres.
- Peter McKenna – Councillor representing Smiths Falls & Lanark County - Both of the lower tier municipalities and at the county level are doing a lot of work (maybe not as deliberately with seniors) and a lot of policy work, and this document can help inform us perhaps on how to do it better or differently. Counties are considering a county-wide transportation plan - feasibility of public transportation; looking at end of life hospice palliative care issues. There are many examples of work we are already doing and would like to think that this document will open new ideas and help us do a better job at that. Thank you.
- Bev reiterated that there are different solutions to housing with some work to be done by the citizens such as 3 or 4 seniors getting together for shared living.
- Peter McKenna added that 70% would like to die where they want and view a good death as part of the continuum – cradle to grave.

Older Adults of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Report

- The focus of this report is on public health and wellness and how to maintain health and well-being:
 - https://healthunit.org/wp-content/uploads/Older_Adults_in_Leeds_Grenville_Lanark-.pdf

Bridging Generations-Age Friendly Pakenham – Health & Wellness Fair Report

- [General - Bridging Generations \(mailchimpsites.com\)](mailto:General-BridgingGenerations@mailchimpsites.com)

3.0 **Next Call:** Friday, January 19, 2024 at 10:00 AM

- **January Topic:** TBA