



## **Medical Officer of Health Verbal Report**

**Board Meeting June 20, 2019**

### **Organization Update**

Work has begun to fix the roof on the Brockville office building. There have been significant leaks on the second floor over the past few years and this will resolve this problem.

The 2018 Annual Report for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) is nearing completion for the June 28 deadline. This report includes a summary of activities completed by the Health Unit in 2018 related to specific Ontario Public Health Standards, and a report on the program outcome indicators identified by the ministry along with our suggestions for program outcome indicators. The MOHLTC recognizes that health units may not have all the required outcome data available now for the outcome indicators, and plans to work with all health units to enable their collection in the future.

### **Program Update**

Work is underway by the Health Unit to collect the data needed to identify the annual Living Wage calculation for the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark communities, and it will be released on November 4, 2019. The living wage is the hourly rate of pay at which a household can meet its basic needs and participate in community life. A living wage is different than the provincially mandated minimum wage as it reflects the local cost of living and is not legislated. Employers are encouraged to pay the living wage as a minimum to all employees. The Board agreed in 2018 to have the Health Unit work toward becoming a Living Wage Employer.

The Health Unit has received a \$25,000 grant from Health Canada to promote awareness of the health risk of radon exposure in houses, and the importance of testing and remediation. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark area has the highest proportion (19%) of houses in Ontario tested by Health Canada who were over the recommended limit of home radon exposure.

Funding for the North Grenville Walking School Bus Project has been approved by Green Communities Canada to build local capacity, partnerships, resources, and a lasting commitment to active school travel in the North Grenville Community. This is the second phase of the Walking School Bus Project which was funded for Brockville, Almonte and Smiths Falls in 2018.

After many years of hard work from staff, and dedication to the families in our community, the Health Unit is moving forward with the next step towards Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) Designation. On Monday, August 12, 2019 a BFI Lead Assessor will be spending the day at our Brockville office as part of our "Pre-Assessment Site Visit". The BFI Designation signifies that the organization has met Canada's Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) 10 Steps and WHO Code to ensure a Health Unit-wide consistent and effective response that promotes, protects, and supports breastfeeding. The Health Unit also provides information and support to parents who choose to bottlefeed their baby.

Tick season is here and a letter was sent to all parents with the assistance of both major school boards about how to prevent tick bites and respond if one occurs.

The new Municipal/Public Health initiative is off to a strong start with presentations that were well received at Council meetings and/or meetings with Mayors/Reeves and staff in North Grenville, Augusta, Edwardsburg Cardinal, Perth,

Drummond North Elmsley, Front of Yonge, Lanark Highlands, Carleton Place, and Mississippi Mills completed to date, and Tay Valley planned for this summer. The presentations include a brief overview of the Health Unit Strategic Plan, and a description of how the public health nurse liaison can support the municipality to contribute to the fourth goal of the Strategic Plan:

“Individuals and families live in healthy vibrant communities with a natural environment and “public realm” that support health, quality of life and prevent health problems.”

Linked to the Municipal/Public Health initiative, the Health Unit was very pleased to support the City of Brockville Municipal Declaration: Renewed Commitment to a Healthy Environment.

Beach testing has begun for the 22 designated public beaches in our region. The water is tested for the presence of a significant level of bacteria that could cause health problems. Other variables, which are assessed and evaluated, are the presence of a blue-green algae bloom, accidental spills that may pollute the water and any safety issue that could affect the health of the bathers. At any time if these variables are believed to have an impact on the beach’s safety, the beach will be posted as “Unsafe for Bathing” and will be identified as such on the Health Unit website.

The Health Unit organized an Enforcement Course with the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors in June for Public Health Inspectors and Tobacco Enforcement Officers. Enforcement is a critical part of the role the Health Unit plays to ensure the environment is safe and healthy for people.