



Medical Officer of Health Verbal Report

Board Meeting November 21, 2019

Organization Update

Opportunities are being developed for all employees to participate in the development of the Health Unit response to the Ontario Ministry of Health Discussion Paper: Public Health Modernization. Information will be provided at department meetings, and a Forum open to all employees will be held to explore answers to each of the Discussion Paper Questions.

The use of the information management platform FileHold has expanded to all departments and all employees. It is proving to be very effective with a major advantage to have all versions of a document in the same place rather than in multiple places with different people.

Program Update

The new Ministry of Health Seniors Dental Program is now officially launched, and seniors can start applying for the program that funds dental prevention and treatment services for low income seniors. We are working out the details for a media launch to ensure all eligible residents are aware of the program. Information about the program and application forms are available on our website. <https://healthunit.org/health-information/oral-health/ontario-seniors-dental-care-program/>

Each year, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit conducts [Nutritious Food Basket costing](#). The results show that individuals and households living with a low income struggle to buy enough nutritious food after paying rent, bills, and other living expenses. From the 2017 Canadian Community Health Survey, 9.4% or 6449 households in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark reported some level of food insecurity. Food insecurity is not having enough income to buy healthy food.¹ When money is tight there is less money for healthy food. This leads to poor mental, physical and oral health and a greater risk of chronic disease and less healthy growth and development for children.

The Radon Awareness Program that encourages homeowners to test for levels of radon in their homes is off to a strong start.

- One community meeting in Carleton Place has been held with 25 participants with 2 more scheduled for Smiths Falls (Nov 21), and Gananoque (Nov 27). We are also presenting at a radon public awareness evening in Kemptville on Nov 26, hosted by North Grenville and CAARST.
- A Facebook-Live event on Nov 14 has had 506 views with 1221 people reached to date.
- We have given out 36 free kits (26 at the Carleton Place event and 10 from the Facebook-Live event). We have sold 150 kits and are expanding sales to the outer offices due to demand. North Grenville will also be giving out 100 free kits at their event.

Being fully immunized protects against many communicable diseases, like measles and polio that can be quite serious and are easily spread in our community, especially in our schools. The Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) is an important piece of legislation that requires students to be immunized against certain diseases or to have a valid exemption on file with each public health unit. Each year the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit conducts immunization record assessments for students in JK, and for students age 7 and 17. The 2018/19 school year had an overall coverage rate for Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Polio vaccine of 87%, and a 94% coverage rate for Measles, Mumps

and Rubella vaccine - see the Disease Coverage report. Work is underway to increase the coverage rates particularly for high school students. In many cases the students have been immunized and we lack this information. Parents are now able to submit information on-line for immunization done by their primary care provider.

Recent media reports profiled the possible risk of exposure of children to lead in the drinking water at schools and childcare centres. The School Boards and Childcare Centre's are required by law to test all the possible sources of drinking water accessible to children in schools and day cares. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit receives these reports, and works with School Boards and Childcare Centre's to ensure that children are not exposed to high levels of lead in the drinking water. The Health Unit website includes valuable information on reducing lead exposure in the home which is important for all residents, including children. <https://healthunit.org/health-information/home-health-safety/household-hazards/>