



Medical Officer of Health Verbal Report
Board Meeting September 20, 2018

Organization Update

Work has begun on preparing the 2019 budget. The MOHLTC Population and Public Health Branch has told us to plan for a 0% increase in the provincial grant. This means we will have a significant shortfall in meeting the costs of all current employees. All operating costs are being reviewed for savings, and we are using Program Budgeting Marginal Analysis (PBMA) to identify new revenue, efficiencies, and program activities that will be discontinued to manage the estimated budget shortfall.

Program Update

The Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit, in partnership with active school travel stakeholders in Brockville, Smiths Falls & Almonte, was successful in receiving \$100,000 over 2 years, through an Ontario Active School Travel Fund grant to pilot the "Walking the Rural Way" Project. This grant is a program of Green Communities Canada with funding from the Government of Ontario (Ministry of Education). Our funded project will operationalize "community tailored" Walking School Bus (WSB) models for LGL elementary students (Grades K-8) using paid and volunteer supervisors to walk with elementary school children, on established routes to and from school. The following six schools will participate in the first year of the "Walking the Rural Way" Project:

- Westminster Public School (Brockville)
- Commonwealth Public School (Brockville)
- Chimo Elementary School (Smiths Falls)
- Duncan J Schouler Public School (Smiths Falls)
- St. Francis de Sales Catholic School (Smiths Falls)
- R. Tait McKenzie Public School (Mississippi Mills)

Parent Information sessions on cannabis and youth are being provided by public health nurses across our region in collaboration with the Upper Canada District School Board and the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario. The goal of these presentations is to help give parents a better understanding of cannabis use and its effects on the body, and to help prepare parents with strategies to communicate with their children about cannabis use. Our website also includes good resources on cannabis for parents and young people. <https://healthunit.org/cannabis-presentations/>

Dental screening has begun with school children in accordance with the newest protocol related to dental – the Oral Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol, 2018. It will identify low income children and children in need of treatment who can benefit from the provincial Healthy Smiles Program.

The Health Unit's Healthy Communities Municipal Initiative has reviewed the Official Plans of Leeds and the Thousand Islands and Edwardsburg Cardinal, and provided input to each municipality focussing on active transportation, supporting local healthy food and healthy environments. We have received positive feedback about our recommendations, and are looking forward to working with other municipalities on their Official Plans.

Low cost community rabies immunization clinics are now taking place across the region. These clinics are a great partnership between the health unit and local veterinarians to decrease the risk of rabies in our communities.

New signage has been provided to food premises to indicate that they have been inspected by the Health Unit and where people can access information about the inspection.

Our work to respond to the opioid challenge continues. The number of visits to the Emergency Departments related to overdoses continues to increase. We had a spike in overdoses in July with some deaths related to “purple heroin” which is heroin laced with fentanyl – a trend seen across the province. A recent incident in Gananoque where fire responders were able to reverse an opioid overdose in an unconscious person emphasizes how important the collaboration is among all first responders to respond to opioid overdoses. We are also working with our partners to track where discarded used needles are being found around the region so that strategies can be developed to reduce the problem.