



Board Report

Friday, June 24, 2016



Medical Officer of Health Report to the Board

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Together We Build Health Communities

In the past 15 years, we have worked with our municipalities, schools, hospitals, collaborating organizations and businesses to build a foundation of awareness and, with that, we have started to shape policy to support health. For what we have achieved to date, much thanks go to the many community people who have worked with us in Grey and Bruce counties.

The initiation of our community team deployment model for delivery of public health programs and services has been a unique and useful new way of looking at public health and community engagement. The model is being adapted and used in several other rural health units. The evaluation of the model has been widely used as well.

Credit for our success must also go to the Board of Health. Their vision to provide us with an award winning, Gold standard LEEDs building addresses the organizational challenge to provide public health programming in a large geographic area. For our people working in the municipalities laying the groundwork for healthy communities, the building is the hub for our communications, program planning, IT, HR, administration and support. While it is a wonderful building to work in, it is not just for us, it is a resource for the community, providing meeting and training place.

It is remarkable to think back on the important public health successes in the past 15 years. Each one could be a story in itself. We can look at environmental initiatives such as safe, small drinking water systems and the ability for the province to train water system managers at the Walkerton Clean Water Center.

Our smoke-free success are truly amazing with rental housing, indoor public spaces, recreational spaces and all of our 12 hospital buildings and grounds all smoke-free. We promote and offer smoking cessation programs.

We have advanced air quality testing; we are seeing higher standards in rental housing; safer built environment for the elderly and the children; emergency planning with municipalities; as well as our work with municipalities on creating recreational trails and bike lanes.

Enhanced food safety is another success particularly with the universal food handler's educational program.

We have created a 'One Health' group with the Grey Bruce Veterinarian Association to help control the diseases that are common to animals and ourselves and to control terrestrial rabies.

Our family health programs start with prenatal education, breastfeeding awareness and support for individuals but also for workplaces and businesses. Much of this information is now online and available through our accessible web site.

Our health unit piloted the provincial roll out of, 'Panorama', the electronic immunization record system soon to be common across the country.

Our school programs look upstream with healthy physical activities and mental health supports. We work with the schools and college to provide educational opportunities that can enable the young people to be successfully employed here. Communities are embracing and encouraging involvement of young people where they live.

All 17 municipalities now have alcohol policies for their municipal venues. We launched a clean needle exchange program across the area and have hosted one of the first rural Naloxone programs in the province.

These achievements would never have come about were it not for our highly engaged, educated, ambitious, and innovative workforce. These folks are consistently looking for new, more effective ways to deliver our programs and services. But, never content to rest on their achievements, they are constantly assessing programs and always looking for ways to improve our service. We need to look no further than being awarded "exemplary" status by Accreditation Canada on the first full assessment and granted the "Best Practice Organization" status by RAO as testament to the level of commitment to professionalism within this organization. I am very proud of the staff who worked so hard to make this happen.

I know the Grey Bruce Health Unit with MOH, Dr. Christine Kennedy, is well poised to continue to play a leading role in the delivery of rural public health initiatives and will continue to be at the forefront of Public Health practice as new opportunities present themselves.

Dr. Hazel Lynn



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Working with the Grey Bruce communities to protect and promote health

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Beach Management Update

The Beach Management plan for 2016 expands safety messaging along with revisions to testing protocols. Our messaging will continue to stress that bathers hold off from swimming for at least 24 hours after heavy rain and to avoid swimming in cloudy water. This supports beach goers to make timely decisions on water quality and corresponds with messaging about high waves and currents. Additional content will address injury prevention. The safe water messages are presented in a mix of traditional media, social media and public events to reach a broad range of beach users.

Evidence shows the 2-day delay in receiving results makes water testing of limited use for bathers. However, the long-term data to analyze trends provides useful information for beach management. As a result, the number of beaches sampled and the frequency of sampling is reduced in 2016. As with previous years, enhanced funding will offset the cost of water sampling at beaches.

In late April and early May, we met with seven municipalities and local parks authorities to communicate the changes at the beaches in their areas and to explore the possibilities of further partnership on sampling.

Best Start Funded - Hope Springs Breastfeeding Parenting Project

The Salvation Army of Canada, Wiarton, and the Grey Bruce Health Unit responded to a Best Start call for proposals with a submission for Hope Springs Breastfeeding Parenting Project. Best Start awarded a grant of \$25,000 for 2015.

The goals of the Project were to increase breastfeeding knowledge, skills and confidence for vulnerable breastfeeding mothers, to increase knowledge of healthy food choices while breastfeeding and support sustainable lifestyle change.

The program was hosted at The Salvation Army in Warton with 10 to 12 participants. This group met for two hours every Friday morning for 33 weeks. A successful breastfeeding mother was hired as a peer mentor. The group valued her experience and support. Activities included community kitchen cooking, guest speakers on a variety of topics and group support discussions.

Of 11 participants who completed a final evaluation, nine indicated they felt very confident breastfeeding. This was an increase from only two who indicated they felt confident about breastfeeding in the program entry questionnaire.

The Salvation Army in Warton is committed to sustaining the program and Best Start funding has been renewed for 2016. Hope Springs Breastfeeding Parenting Project was showcased at the Best Start conference this past February where both the peer mentor and Public Health Nurse Marilyn Lemon spoke about the Project.



Best Practice Spotlight Organization

Grey Bruce Health Unit has been a Best Practice Spotlight Organization for one year. During this time, we have continued to support the use of Best Practices throughout the organization and have had the opportunity to share our experiences locally, provincially and nationally. Highlights from the past year include:

- Implementation of two new Best Practice Guidelines: Engaging Clients Who Use Substances and Care Transitions.
- Presentation at the Canadian Community Health Nurses Conference on the process of completing an Advanced Clinical Practice Fellowship.
- Participating in the expert review panel for revisions to the “Client Centred Care” best practice guideline.
- Speaking at conferences including the Chronic Disease Management Institute, Nurse Executive Leadership Academy and Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario Summer Institute.
- Facilitating webinars on evaluating Best Practice Spotlight Organization at an organizational level and participating in an Advanced Clinical Practice Fellowship.

Goals for the second year of our Best Practice Spotlight Organization Designation include submitting a manuscript for publication and continuing to measure the impact of best practice implementation at Public Health.

Thames Valley Children's Centre to deliver Preschool Speech and Language

The Integrated Preschool Speech and Language Program provides speech and language services to children from birth to five years or until June of their junior Kindergarten year. Funded and administered through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, with additional funds from Bruce and Grey Counties, the Grey Bruce Health Unit took on delivery of the program in 2011.

Effective July 1, the program will transfer to the Thames Valley Children's Centre (TVCC). Services will be delivered from the TVCC regional offices in Owen Sound and Kincardine and existing service locations throughout Grey Bruce. TVCC is a well-established community partner in Grey Bruce with a proven ability to implement the preschool speech and language program to the fullest potential for clients, families, staff and the community.

The program change aligns delivery of Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language services for preschool children including those with special needs. This change follows a thorough review of the program and was endorsed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Clients and community partners have been advised. Children currently on the waitlist for preschool speech and language services will maintain their original date of referral.

Updates to Legislation and Vaccine Access

In May, the Chief Medical Officer of Health presented the report [Vaccines: the best medicine](#) outlining the achievements in vaccine history and charting the future for vaccines in Ontario.

The report celebrates the fact that immunization has saved more lives in Canada than any other health initiative in the last 50 years. However, the report emphasizes the need to be vigilant in ensuring adequate levels of vaccine coverage to achieve herd immunity and protection for those most vulnerable to vaccine preventable diseases. The following recommendations in the report are specific to Public Health:

- Maintain and build public confidence in immunization programs.
- Replace the "yellow card" by improving the collection of immunization data and inputting it into one comprehensive electronic information system.
- Make it easier for everyone to be immunized by increasing access to vaccines through health care providers and public health clinics.

New this year, the Ministry of Health and Long Term-Care announced an expanded school-based immunization program offering Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine to Grade 7 males and females. In the past, HPV was only offered to Grade 8 females. This expanded program ensures more coverage against the Human Papilloma Virus, including the types that cause head, neck and cervical cancer.

Legislative changes introduced in May strengthen the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* by requiring parents and guardians who are considering not immunizing their children for non-medical reasons to participate in an education session delivered by the local public health unit. The Act would also be amended to require health care providers to report to their local public health unit any vaccines they administer that are required for children and youth to attend school. Currently, parents are responsible for reporting their children's immunizations. If passed, this would reduce unnecessary suspensions resulting from incomplete immunization records at public health.