



# **Board Report**

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## PROGRAM REPORT JULY 2019

101 17<sup>TH</sup> Street East, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 0A5

Phone: 519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456

WEBSITE: [www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca](http://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca)

**Working with the Grey Bruce communities to protect and promote health**

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### Infant Mental Health Community of Practice

The Grey Bruce Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Community of Practice was formed this year. Plans are to meet at least twice a year and hold a Community of Practice event annually to support professional development.

The goals of the group:

- Establish consistency across the region in the use of standardized screening tools for socio-emotional and milestone development.
- Offer an ongoing network to collaboratively support families.
- Build capacity and expertise to support Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.
- Provide a mechanism for sharing information and communication with early learning and childcare communities.

The new Community of Practice partners include Grey County Children’s Services, Bruce County Children’s Services, Owen Sound and District Community Living, Walkerton and District Community Living, Keystone Child and Family Services and Grey Bruce Health Unit.

On June 24, the Community of Practice hosted a virtual conference at the health unit to review and discuss recorded presentations from the April 2019 conference in Toronto, *Expanding Horizons for the Early Years: From Science to Practice*. This event attracted 54 participants from social services, mental health agencies, school boards, hospitals, family health teams, library staff and county staff to view the conference presentations.

Feedback from participants identified:

- The virtual conference to be a highly effective way to share information (67%).
- Heightened engagement and networking (41%);
- Was cost-effective (26%);
- Enhanced access and improved accessibility with scheduling (21%)

From one participant...“If you had forwarded this material to me I likely would not have made the time to view. Because of today’s format, I was engaged and able to reflect on impacts to practice.”

## Catch My Breath Vaping Prevention

The federal *Tobacco and Vaping Products Act*, effective May 2018, allows the legal sale of e-liquids with nicotine. Previously, e-cigarettes with nicotine could not be sold or advertised without approval. Not surprisingly, there has been an increase in retail access and advertising of these products. Comparative research conducted in August/September 2017 and again in August/September 2018 shows that, amongst youth, both vaping and smoking of tobacco cigarettes is on the rise in Canada.

- Vaping among 16 to 19 year-olds increased by 74% to 14.6% in 2018, up from 8.4% in 2017.
- Cigarette smoking among 16 to 19 year-olds increased by 45%, to 15.5% in 2018, up from 10.7% in 2017.

Prior surveys up to 2017 had shown a decline in youth smoking. The rising national rates of youth engaging in vaping and smoking reflects what health unit staff are seeing locally. The tobacco program and school nurses are jointly addressing youth vaping with resources directed to support youth, parents, school staff and community agencies. Since the fall 2018, more than 2700 students received education on vaping prevention and industry marketing tactics.

The Grey Bruce Health Unit has partnered with the Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board and Bluewater District School Board to deliver Catch My Breath. Launching the fall of 2019, this evidence-based prevention curriculum provides students with the skills to resist peer pressure and media influences to try e-cigarettes. The curriculum was developed by the University of Texas School of Public Health and is widely used across the U.S. This partnership is the first of its kind in Ontario. The local program includes an evaluation to gauge students' attitudes and intentions before and after the lessons.

### References:

Hammond D., Reid J. L., Rynard V. L., Fong G. T., Cummings K. M., McNeill A., et al. *Prevalence of vaping and smoking among adolescents in Canada, England, and the United States: repeat national cross sectional surveys* BMJ 2019; 365 :l2219 accessed at: <https://www.bmj.com/content/365/bmj.l2219>