

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Bryna Warshawsky, Acting Medical Officer of Health

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## **TRANSFER OF FUNDS AGREEMENT – SHARED LIBRARY SERVICES PARTNERSHIP WITH PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO**

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that that the Board of Health approve the renewal of the Transfer of Funds Agreement – Shared Library Services Partnership with Public Health Ontario for an additional two years.*

### **Key Points**

- The Health Unit Library became a hub library, providing services to five other health units, under a Shared Library Services Partnership agreement with Public Health Ontario signed in March of 2012.
- The services have been well received by the client health units, but it is too soon to conduct a full evaluation of the Partnership due to delayed start-up.
- The Health Unit hired a temporary Librarian using the funding provided by Public Health Ontario. It is recommended that the Board of Health approve the renewal of the Transfer of Funds agreement for two years ending March 31, 2015, provided that the terms are not changed significantly. This will allow the position of the Shared Library Services Partnership Librarian to be filled on a permanent basis.

### **Background**

This Health Unit has been acting as a Library Hub for five health units (referred to as client health units) in Southwestern Ontario since the summer of 2012. There are also three other health units in the province that are serving as hub libraries for other health units under the Shared Library Services Partnership. This Partnership ensures that most, if not all, Ontario health units have access to professional librarians with expertise in public health. Library services enable health units to make evidence-based decisions, and fulfill the requirements of the Ontario Public Health Foundational Standard by advancing knowledge transfer.

### **Budget Expenses**

Public Health Ontario (PHO) is the government agency that initiated this partnership and provides ongoing funding and support to the hub libraries. The original funding arrangement with PHO was approved by the Board of Health in March 2012 (Please see [Report No. 039-12](#)). Currently, the client health units are receiving the services of the hub libraries at no cost. Each hub library received funding from PHO to hire a new librarian, as well as a budget for subscriptions, and expenses related to providing services to the client health units (e.g. courier, photocopying, long distance charges, meeting expenses). The fiscal year for PHO runs from April of each year to the following March. With PHO's consent, unspent funds from March of 2012, which resulted from a delayed start-up, were carried into the fiscal year for April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013. An additional request has been made for unspent funds for the year ending March 31, 2013 to be carried forward into the next fiscal year. With this carry-over, it anticipated that the funding from PHO will be sufficient to cover all salary and benefits costs for at least the next two years.

## **Shared Library Service Partnership Services to Client Health Units**

Public Health Ontario (PHO) has postponed a formal evaluation of the Shared Library Services Partnership until 2014, due to the fact that it took time for each of the hub libraries to recruit and orient new staff, and conduct training for the staff of the client health units. Positive feedback regarding the training and the new services has been received in an informal way from the client health units across the province. More formal client service feedback will be solicited after the first anniversary of the roll-out to the client health units, commencing in the fall of 2013.

Statistics have been compiled to show what services have been provided to the client health units. These will be reported at a later time, as it will be more meaningful to have a longer reporting period during which the services have been provided.

## **Transfer of Funds Agreement and Librarian**

The Transfer of Funds Agreement outlines the conditions of the shared arrangement for library services with the client health units. Public Health Ontario (PHO) has indicated that the wording of the Transfer of Funds Agreement will remain the same for the second year of the Partnership. The appendices, which provide details of the allocation of funds, the coordination of the delivery of services, and financial reporting, will be updated. The Partnership is expected to continue on an ongoing basis for many years and therefore the Service Agreements with the five client health units will be renewed. At the time of writing this report, the Transfer of Funds Agreement for 2013 to 2014 had not been received; however, it is expected in advance of the March 2013 Board of Health meeting. It will be provided to the Board of Health as soon as it is available.

The Health Unit hired a temporary Librarian using the funding provided by PHO. It is recommended that the Board of Health approve the renewal of the Transfer of Funds Agreement for two years ending March 31, 2015, provided that the terms have not changed significantly from the previous agreement. This approval will allow the position of the Shared Library Services Partnership Librarian to be filled on a permanent basis.

## **Conclusion/Next Steps**

Continued participation in the Shared Library Services Partnership supports this Health Unit and client health units to meet the requirements of the Ontario Public Health Standards Foundational Standard with regard to evidence-informed practices and knowledge transfer. As well, this partnership enhances the delivery of public health services throughout the southwest region of the province. It is therefore recommended that the Board of Health approve the Transfer of Funds Agreement.

This report was prepared by Ms. Louise Tyler, Director, Human Resources & Labour Relations; Ms. Yvonne Tyml, Librarian; and Ms. Carolynne Gabriel, Librarian.



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This report addresses the following requirements of the Ontario Public health Standards:  
Foundational Standard – Public health programs and services that are informed by evidence are the foundation for effective public health practice.