



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 June 20

STUDENT BUS PASS ADVOCACY UPDATE #1

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 087-13 re Student Bus Pass Advocacy Update #1 be received for information.

Key Points

- Delegation was made before the London Transit Commission who motioned to bring this issue forward during the 2014 budget planning; they provided their full support for an equalization grant to be offered by the City of London.
- The youth did not present to the Civic Works Committee and the Community and Protective Services Committee as the request is viewed as a provincial issue and was passed on to the provincial contacts.
- Youth have been invited to present to the Honourable Deb Matthews, MPP when the Civic Administration arrange a meeting to discuss income redistribution.

Initiative Update

Youth Create Healthy Communities (YCHC) has continued their advocacy initiative since being endorsed by the Board of Health at the February 19, 2013 meeting. Following the Board of Health meeting, the youth developed two specifics to continue their initiative.

- 1) The first was directed towards the City of London Civic Works Committee, asking for their support before continuing on to the London Transit Commission (LTC), to propose the implementation of a youth pass.
- 2) The second was directed towards the City of London Community and Protective Services Committee to ask for the implementation of an equalization grant similar to that offered to our senior population. This social pricing is based on income redistribution.

YCHC began the second phase of their advocacy by connecting with the Civic Works Committee, and they recommended the youth present their concern to the LTC. Upon discussion with Mr. Larry Ducharme, General Manager of LTC, the youth were granted delegation status for the April 24, 2013 Commission meeting.

At the Commission meeting a motion was approved to bring this issue to administration during their 2014 budget planning. Following this meeting, Mr. Ducharme and his staff met with the youth to discuss the future of this initiative. He provided the youth insight into the history behind social pricing and the full support from the LTC to gain an equalization grant from the City of London.

In May, the youth learned that their request to attend the Community and Protective Services Committee to present and request an equalization grant would not proceed as Committee members felt it was a provincial issue. A letter addressed to both Ms. Michelle Cowin, Public Health Nurse, and Mr. Grant Hopcroft, Director of Intergovernmental and Community Liaison, from the Deputy City Clerk, L. Rowe, stated the municipal council resolved that

“the Civic Administration be directed to arrange a meeting with the local members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, as soon as possible, in the matter of income redistribution to be further discussed in order to facilitate a program such as the one proposed”.

Mr. Hopcroft connected with Ms. Cowin to discuss the potential of a delegation before the Honourable Deb Matthews, MPP. Additional information was sent to Mr. Hopcroft about the Bus Pass Initiative and the youth are waiting for a scheduled meeting.

The youth have secured a meeting with Ms. Denise Brown, as Chair of the Community and Protective Services Committee, who will explain the decision for passing this issue forward to the province. This meeting will provide an opportunity for the youth to share their perspective and get further details about the committee’s decision. This meeting will take place on June 13 after the submission of this report.

Conclusion/Next Steps

The youth are committed to continuing to advocate for this initiative by speaking for the most vulnerable youth that do not often have a voice. The youth also understand that other age groups (adults, seniors, post-secondary and students) have the opportunity to purchase a discounted monthly bus pass. The youth believe that adolescents should be allowed the same opportunity. They believe that they should be classified as a special interest group, an important population of the London community.

The students feel it is important to the health of this community to allow for everyone to have accessible, affordable transportation. They plan to provide a quality presentation to the local MPP when the meeting occurs. It is their intent to have the objectives of the bus advocacy initiative met so all youth can become an integral part of their London community.

This report was prepared by Ms. Michelle Cowin, Public Health Nurse, and Ms. Christine Preece, Manager, Young Adult Team, with input from the student representatives of the Youth Create Healthy Communities.

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Medical Officer of Health

This report addresses the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Chronic Disease Prevention Standards 3, 6, Child Health Standard 4 and the Foundational Standard.