



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 September 19

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## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP MIDDLESEX-LONDON UPDATE

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that Report No. 106-13 re Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London Update be received for information.*

### **Key Points**

- The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care provides funds to healthy community partnerships through its Healthy Communities Fund – Partnership Stream to coordinate planning and action around policies that make it easier for Ontarians to lead healthy and active lives.
- Policy that supports physical activity helps reduce physical inactivity and obesity which are risk factors for many chronic diseases.
- The Health Unit continues to provide leadership to Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London which has been successful in introducing physical activity policy initiatives that align with the Ontario Public Health Standards.

### **Background**

Physical inactivity and obesity are significant risk factors for many chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes. Research indicates physical activity is one of the most cost-effective means of having a physically, mentally and socially healthier population. According to the 2006 Census, only 8% of those aged 15 and older in Middlesex-London reported having an active form of transportation to work such as walking or cycling. In 2009/2010, approximately half (47%) of Middlesex-London residents (12+ years old) reported being inactive during their leisure time. During the same timeframe, more than half of adults (52%) were considered overweight or obese. The trend over time shows an increase in the overweight/obesity rate in Middlesex-London since 2003. Hence, policies that support and promote physically active lifestyles where people live, work and play are viewed as an important strategy in enhancing population health and are the focus of the Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London.

### **Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London Update**

Through the Healthy Communities Fund (HCF), the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) continues to support the vision of *Healthy Communities working together and Ontarians leading healthy and active lives*. The HCF has three components: 1) Grants Project Stream 2) Partnership Stream, and 3) Resource Stream. In 2009, under the Partnership Stream, health units were requested to take the lead locally to promote coordinated planning and action with community partners and stakeholders in creating local policies that make it easier for Ontarians to be healthy. The Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London (HCP) successfully completed three sets of Ministry approved work plans in 2010, 2011, and 2012 up until March 2013, each with a focus on physical activity policy.

As per the HCF guidelines, the basis for the grant is to move forward healthy public policy in either physical activity or healthy eating in the local public health region. The receipt of HCF funding has coincided with the time that our local municipalities have begun the process of reviewing their Official Plans, which are comprehensive plans created by municipalities dictating public policy in terms of: transportation; recreation; use and management of land and infrastructure; protection of the environment and resources; and opportunities for employment and residential development, including support for a mix of uses. This opportunity has enabled the Health Unit, in partnership with the HCP, to submit recommendations to those municipalities engaged in their Official Plan review. Along with Official Plan submissions, municipalities have been approached to endorse the international Toronto Charter for Physical Activity thus further demonstrating their support for physical activity and the health of their residents.

For a complete list of strategies to date in both the City of London and Middlesex County over the past two and a half years, please refer to [Appendix A](#).

### **Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Partnership Stream Funding Agreement**

In May 2013, the Health Unit submitted a grant application for the next round of MOHLTC Healthy Community Partnership Funding, April 2013 to December 2013. This was designed to sustain the evolving healthy communities work which is currently focused on physical activity in the City of London and Middlesex County. The Health Unit was notified in late August by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that our grant proposal was approved for the amount of \$69,770.00. This funding is to be spent by December 31, 2013 on the Healthy Communities Partnership program plans. The current program plans include continued funding for improving healthy eating, developing policy, and working toward an environment that is supportive of physical activity.

### **Conclusion**

The Healthy Communities Fund from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allows the Health Unit and Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London to continue to work toward healthy public policy that supports physical activity in Middlesex-London communities. These efforts meet obligations under the Ontario Public Health Standards and the Health Unit's strategic plan objective of "Advocating for and supporting the implementation of municipal policies that facilitate physical activity in the community".

This report was prepared by Ms. Marylou Albanese, Manager, and Ms. Bernadette McCall and Ms. Emily Hill, Public Health Nurses, Healthy Communities and Injury Prevention Team.

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Medical Officer of Health and CEO

**This report addresses** the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Chronic Diseases and Injuries Program Standards of Chronic Disease Prevention 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12 and that of Prevention of Injury and Substance Misuse 2, 4, 5 and the 2011 MLHU Strategic Direction: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for all.