



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health  
FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health and CEO  
DATE: 2014 April 24

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## PROVINCIAL POVERTY PROJECT

### **Recommendations**

*It is recommended that the Board of Health:*

- 1. Endorse Report No. 031-14 and the Provincial Poverty Project Briefing Note attached as [Appendix A](#); and*
- 2. Encourage all members of the Board to participate in the poverty simulation event planned in Middlesex-London for November, 2014.*

### **Key Points**

- The Provincial Poverty Project is scheduled to occur this fall in communities across Ontario.
- The project includes three main initiatives: awareness of the 2014 Nutritious Food Basket survey results, a municipal candidate survey, and coordinated, local poverty simulation events.
- Local and provincial partnerships are currently being formed and will directly impact the project's success and impact.
- The Provincial Poverty Project supports the Board of Health's local advocacy efforts related to food security, as well as increases the collective impact by coordinating efforts with communities across Ontario.

### **Background**

Annually, the local Nutritious Food Basket survey results are presented to the Board of Health along with recommendations to help reduce the rate of food insecurity in Middlesex-London and increase access to healthy food. The Nutritious Food Basket survey results repeatedly demonstrate that people with low incomes do not have adequate funds to afford healthy food after meeting other essential needs for basic living. Poor nutrition increases risk of chronic and infectious disease and negatively affects child development.

Historically, the Board of Health has been very supportive of the Nutritious Food Basket survey results and initiatives to address food insecurity in Middlesex-London. The Board of Health has acknowledged the negative impact of poverty on health outcomes. The Provincial Poverty Project supports the Board of Health's local advocacy efforts related to food insecurity, as well as increases collective impact by coordinating efforts with communities across Ontario.

The Provincial Poverty Project is an initiative that originated from the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH) Food Security Workgroup. OSNPPH is a network of Registered Dietitians working in Public Health across Ontario who work collectively to advocate and respond to advance the public health nutrition agenda. OSNPPH is playing a leadership role in coordinating the planning and evaluation of the Provincial Poverty Project.

The Provincial Poverty Project includes two main initiatives occurring this fall: advocacy related to the results of the 2014 Nutritious Food Basket survey results and a municipal candidate survey, and coordinated, local poverty simulation events. The Provincial Poverty Project Briefing Note, attached as [Appendix A](#), provides details on the initiatives.

The goals of the Provincial Poverty Project are to:

- Increase the coordination and impact of Nutritious Food Basket advocacy efforts;
- Educate voters on municipal candidates' views on poverty and food-related public policies; and,
- Influence government officials' and service providers' attitudes toward people living in poverty and increase awareness of barriers they face resulting in long-term impacts to programming and policy decisions.

### Next Steps

The project's success and impact will be directly influenced by the strength of local and provincial partnerships. Interested Health Units are currently forming local planning committees with community partners (e.g., United Way, Food Banks, local Poverty Networks, etc.). In Middlesex-London local events are being coordinated by members of the Child and Youth Network Ending Poverty Priority Social Awareness Committee, along with a Registered Dietitian and Public Health Nurse from the Chronic Disease Prevention and Tobacco Control Team.

A project update and additional recommendations will be presented to the Board of Health in September, along with the annual Nutritious Food Basket survey results.

This report was prepared by Ms. Kim Leacy, Registered Dietitian, and Ms. Linda Stobo, Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention and Tobacco Control Team.



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Medical Officer of Health

<p><b>This report addresses</b> the following requirements of the Ontario Public Health Standards (2008): Foundational Standard 3, 5, 8, 9, 10; Chronic Disease Prevention 2, 7, 11, 12.</p>
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