

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2014 December 18

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## SUMMARY INFORMATION REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2014

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that Report No. 075-14 re Information Summary Report for December and the attached appendices be received for information.*

### **Key Points**

- The Middlesex-London Health Unit is the first Canadian recipient of the Association of Pool & Spa Professionals' Dr. Neil Lowry Memorial Award. The award honours and recognizes public health officials who have made outstanding contributions to advance the public's healthy and safe use of recreational water.

### **MLHU Awarded the Dr. Neil Lowry Memorial Award**

The Health Unit is the first Canadian recipient of the Association of Pool & Spa Professionals' (APSP's) [Dr. Neil Lowry Memorial Award](#). The work of Health Unit staff was highlighted in the APSP's latest edition of their professional magazine entitled [Pool and Spa Marketing](#) (pages 58-64). By utilizing the \$5,000 grant, the Environmental Health Team will create a new, enhanced, evidence-informed and comprehensive regulatory training program for public pool and spa operators. The Dr. Neil Lowry Memorial Award, which has been awarded since 2009, honours and recognizes public health officials who have made outstanding contributions to advance the public's healthy and safe use of recreational water, including pools, spas, hot tubs, natural waters, and water parks.

The MLHU project's goal is to improve compliance with pool and spa legislation among owners and operators of recreational water facilities in Middlesex-London by enhancing the Pool and Spa Operator Training Program offered by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. Findings are intended to provide guidance as to how the current Middlesex-London Health Unit materials and methods used in the Pool and Spa Operator Training Program can be revised and improved.

The following are key project activities:

- identifying the most commonly occurring non-compliance issues and current challenges in regards to safe operational practices;
- conducting an environmental scan to help identify strategies and training materials that have been used by other public health organizations across Canada;
- exploring effective programs and adult learning strategies so that the Middlesex-London Health Unit can ensure they are using evidence-informed training methods in their Pool and Spa Operator Training Program;
- organizing focus group sessions with pool and spa operators as well as Public Health Inspectors.

Using the information gathered from the aforementioned activities, the Middlesex-London Health Unit would like to develop a comprehensive training program that will address regulatory compliance knowledge gaps of owners/operators of public pools and spas. Ultimately, the overall goal is to increase bather health and safety by minimizing potential health hazards.

Public Health Inspectors conduct assessments of local public pools and spas to ensure that operators are following the regulations outlined for them under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. In addition, under the Ontario Public Health Standards Recreational Water Protocol, 2014, Ontario's local Boards of Health are required to have their staff inspect seasonal public pools and spas at least twice a year, while indoor public pools and spas must be checked at least four times a year.

Non-regulated recreational water facilities, like wading pools, splash and/or spray pads and water parks are also inspected based on the months or seasons that they are open. While the owners and operators are legally responsible for ensuring facilities are operated and maintained in accordance with the regulations contained in provincial legislation, Public Health Inspectors are considered partners in achieving these goals. This speaks to the training and support role inspectors have with owners and operators, in addition to their inspection and enforcement role.

By engaging owners, operators and those who work in roles that support recreational water facilities, and incorporating their feedback, it is anticipated that the MLHU's future training program will become a product that adds value to the recreational water facility landscape. The goal of this proposed new training program will be to provide those who are in positions of responsibility with the skillset necessary to operate their facilities in accordance with the respective regulations. The Dr. Neil Lowry Award will allow the MLHU to enhance its current training program, which could become the foundation for a system that other public health agencies could adopt and use for their own training purposes.



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