



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2015 December 10

SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES REVIEW

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 69-15 re Sexual Health Services Review be received for information.

Key Points

- MLHU Sexual Health Promotion Team and Clinical Services engage in evidence informed decision making in order to ensure the best available evidence informs our programming, services and policy work.

Background

The Sexual Health team (The Clinic and Sexual Health Promotion) conducted program reviews in an effort to validate current evidence-informed approaches, identify opportunities to enhance the use of evidence-informed strategies, and increase effectiveness and efficiency of programs and services. The program review was guided by the principles of need, impact, capacity, and collaboration and partnerships (Ontario, 2008), and framed by the National Collaborating Centre on Methods and Tools (NCCMT) Model for Evidence-Informed Decision-Making in Public Health (NCCMT, 2010), Health Promotion and Protection Act (HPPA), and Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS). The report entitled, *Effective Health Promotion Strategies for Middlesex-London Health Unit's Sexual Health Team*, is attached as [Appendix A](#). The report entitled, *Program Review Sexual Health Clinic*, is attached as [Appendix B](#).

Review Components

The Sexual Health team conducted a rapid review to determine the most current and effective health promotion strategies (primarily education and awareness) for reducing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among youth aged 15-24 in Middlesex-London. The rationale for focusing on this age group was based on the epidemiology of the infection rates from local context. This review was conducted to identify which team initiatives should be changed or discontinued, which should be continued or enhanced, and what new initiatives could be considered for implementation.

Components of the Clinic review included reviewing recent trends in sexually transmitted infections and blood-borne infections (STI/BBi) in the Middlesex-London region, determining the “reach” of The Clinic to priority populations, conducting an environmental scan of comparable health units and local community organizations offering sexual health services, reviewing best practices for harm reduction services, surveying The Clinic Physicians and clients, and reviewing literature regarding the delivery of sexual health clinic services.

Key findings

Clinic activities mostly aligned with the requirements of the Ontario Public Health Standards. Gaps in determining the reach of clinical services to priority populations and providing outreach and support to community physicians who provide care to confirmed STI cases were identified. Services offered at MLHU

Sexual Health Clinics are consistent and similar to the provision of sexual health services in the seven comparator health units. Among the literature that was reviewed outreach strategies were found to be successful in reaching populations that would not otherwise access mainstream sexual health services. Several recommendations for enhancing clinic practice and process were identified.

The Sexual Health Promotion review identified that facilitator and peer-led interventions demonstrated a reduced incidence in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) through the use of behavioural interventions. Social media and text messaging interventions are effective in increasing STI knowledge. Employing a train-the-trainer method demonstrates some effect in the reduction of the incidence of active syphilis and the prevalence of gonorrhoea.

Conclusion

Next steps include assessing the applicability and transferability of the SHP review findings and conducting another rapid review to focus on advocacy and supportive environment strategies. The recommendations from the Clinic review have begun to be implemented.

This report was prepared by Mr. Chris Blain, Health Promoter; Ms. Shaya Dhinsa, Program Manager; Ms. Deborah Fenlon, Public Health Nurse and Ms. Sameena Vadivelu, Program Evaluator.



Christopher Mackie, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health