



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2016 November 17

A COMPREHENSIVE NUTRITION STRATEGY FOR MIDDLESEX-LONDON

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 066-16 re: “A Comprehensive Nutrition Strategy for Middlesex-London” be received for information.

Key Points

- Middlesex-London Health Unit Registered Dietitians utilize a comprehensive nutrition strategy to promote the health of Middlesex-London residents and reduce health inequities.

At the [March meeting](#) of the Board of Health, Health Unit staff were directed to bring forward additional information to outline how the Health Unit collaborates with local and provincial partners, utilizing a comprehensive nutrition strategy, to create more supportive environments for healthy eating, including reducing health inequities.

Education and Awareness

Registered Dietitians work with local:

- Community partners to engage priority populations in hands-on education and awareness about food literacy, food skills, nutrition, and chronic disease prevention (e.g, Family Court Clinic, Residential Programs for Youth at Risk, Family Centres, Neighbourhood Resource Centres).
- Community partners to disseminate the Nutrition Screening Tool for Toddlers and Preschoolers ([NutriSTEP®](#)), which in turn provides parents with feedback about how their child is eating.
- Elementary and secondary school communities using the [Foundations of a Healthy School](#) by providing credible resources to create healthy school nutrition environments.
- Urban and rural partners to support local [agri-food initiatives](#) that empower residents and improve their knowledge of where food comes from.

Registered Dietitians provide evidence-informed information about food and healthy eating through:

- The production and distribution of a Health Unit monthly community [meal calendar](#).
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter) and traditional media ([television](#), radio, [newspaper interviews](#)).
- Written content on the [MLHU website](#).
- The provision of ongoing training for and being a resource to colleagues and community partners.
- Research conducted to inform public health nutrition practice and policy.
- The promotion of the role of the Registered Dietitian in public health.

Policy and Advocacy

Registered Dietitians collaborate with colleagues from across the province to:

- Advocate for [food security](#) and adequate incomes for all Ontario residents.
- Conduct research to support municipal policy to support healthy beverage choices in facilities owned and operated by local municipalities.
- Improve the Ontario Public Health Standards through the modernization consultation process.

- Summarize the attributes of [food literacy](#), including food skills, in the literature, and determine priorities for measurement and tool development.
- Develop key indicators that measure the attributes of food literacy including food skills.
- Develop and test a tool to measure food literacy with identified target populations, considering validity (e.g., attribute, face, and content), reliability, sensitivity to change, and feasibility.
- Ensure accurate, evidence-informed, and consistent nutrition messaging is shared provincially.

Registered Dietitians work collaboratively with local:

- Colleagues to develop policies to reflect the principles of the [Baby Friendly Initiative](#).
- Community partners in establishing and supporting the [Middlesex-London Food Policy Council](#).
- School boards to help support the [School Food and Beverage Policy](#) (PPM 150).
- Schools to implement [school level policy](#) that impacts healthy eating (e.g., school rewards, school celebrations, healthy fundraising using local food, and farm to school curriculum).
- Sports associations and sports teams to implement standards for healthy drinks and snacks.
- [Workplaces](#) to develop healthy eating policies that support healthy eating at work.

Skill Building

Registered Dietitians work with local:

- At-risk populations (e.g., youth in care, women living in poverty, young mothers, and new immigrants) to teach them food literacy skills that enhance life skills and improve mental and physical health and well-being.
- Community partners to train them to facilitate food literacy and [food skill programming](#) in schools and community agencies using a set program that includes cooking sessions and hands-on activities.

Supportive Environments

Registered Dietitians work collaboratively with local:

- Community partners, including municipal governments, post-secondary institutions, and agri-food organizations to assess and improve food environments to facilitate the healthy choice as the easy choice.
- Community partners to support [Ontario Student Nutrition Programming](#) in local elementary and secondary schools.
- Community partners to improve emergency food distribution and reduce the impact of poverty.
- Healthy Kids Community Challenge [City of London](#) and [Middlesex County](#) partners to develop resources and materials to support the nutrition related themes (e.g., “Water does Wonders”).
- Licensed child care centres regarding menu development in order to meet provincial requirements from the [Child Care and Early Years Act 2014](#).
- School boards, schools, internal colleagues, and other health units to develop resources and materials with consistent messaging to create more supportive school nutrition environments.
- [Workplaces](#) to make changes to the workplace environment to help support healthy eating at work.

Middlesex-London Health Unit Registered Dietitians continue to evolve their nutrition activities over time, capitalizing on strategic partnerships and opportunities as they arise, while meeting community need, organizational priorities, and provincial standards and requirements.

This report was prepared by Abby Bryan-Pulham, Christine Callaghan, Ellen Lakusiak, Ginette Blake, Heather Thomas, and Kim Loupos, Health Unit Registered Dietitians, and reviewed by Anita Cramp, Linda Stobo, Mary Lou Albanese, and Tracey Gordon, Health Unit Managers.



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

This report addresses the following requirements of the Ontario Public Health Standards (Revised May 2016): Foundational Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; Chronic Disease Prevention 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12; Reproductive Health 2, 4, 6; Child Health 4, 5, 7, 8, 11.