



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Dr. Gayane Hovhannisyian, Acting Medical Officer of Health  
Laura Di Cesare, Acting Chief Executive Officer

DATE: 2017 June 15

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## SUMMARY INFORMATION REPORT FOR JUNE

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 034-17 re: Summary Information Report for June for information.*

### **Key Points**

- The Prenatal Immigrant Program (PiP), launched in July 2016, provides Arabic-speaking Newcomers with culturally mindful, accessible and relevant prenatal education and supports, with an emphasis on health and food literacy. Ongoing delivery and expansion of the program are required to meet community need.

### **Prenatal Immigrant Program (PiP) Update and Expansion**

The Prenatal Immigrant Program (PiP), offered in partnership with the South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre (SLNRC), was launched in July 2016 in response to an identified community need (see Report No. 041-16). The weekly program is focused on providing prenatal education, nutritional skills, health literacy and psychosocial supports to Arabic-speaking Newcomers who have lived in Canada less than two years. Since it was initiated, fifty-one women and their families have participated in PiP. The majority of participating women are multiparous Syrian refugees preparing to give birth in Canada for the first time. Active promotion of PiP has not been necessary; recruitment for the program is primarily through settlement workers at SLNRC and word-of-mouth among Newcomer families. To date, thirty women who have attended the program have given birth. During early postpartum, many of these women identified the important role that PiP played in creating social supports, increasing knowledge related to the prenatal and postpartum period, and increasing understanding of and access to the healthcare system. Need for this program is greater than its current capacity, and this has created a wait list of several months, with a minimum of twelve women on the list at any given time. This is problematic, as women may be quite far into their pregnancy before they are allowed to enter the program, or may give birth and miss the opportunity to participate altogether. Current trends indicate that the number of Arabic-speaking Newcomers who would qualify for the program is increasing. Expanding the program would alleviate the wait-list issue, but must take into consideration the availability and capacity of MLHU staff and resources. To mitigate resource and capacity issues, a partnership with the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration (MRCSSI) has been initiated. In collaboration with the MRCSSI, expansion of the program, including a second site in Northwest London, is planned for September 2017.

This report was submitted by the Reproductive Health Team, Healthy Start Division.

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Dr. Gayane Hovhannisyian, MD, PhD, FRCPC  
Acting Medical Officer of Health

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Laura Di Cesare, CHRE  
Acting Chief Executive Officer