

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / Chief Executive Officer

DATE: 2018 May 17

UPDATE ON MLHU BREASTFEEDING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 034-18 re: “Update on MLHU Breastfeeding Services and Supports” for information.

Key Points

- A comprehensive planning process was completed to maximize the impact of breastfeeding programs and services within public health’s mandate and available resources.
- Planning work resulted in recommendations in the areas of direct service, client and community partner education, policy implementation, and staff breastfeeding certification.
- Breastfeeding supports in early postpartum will be enhanced with telephone contact to all breastfeeding mothers within 48 hours of discharge, and home visits offered to mothers experiencing breastfeeding challenges. Ongoing information and support for infant feeding will be offered through Healthy Start Infant Drop-ins, Health Connection, and the MLHU website.

Background

A comprehensive planning process was completed to ensure that breastfeeding programs and services offered by the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) maximize public health’s impact within its mandate and available resources. The planning process included the following:

- Population health assessment: to identify current breastfeeding rates and assess core breastfeeding outcomes in the community
- Capacity and reach assessment: to clarify the Public Health Nurse (PHN) complement currently allocated to breastfeeding programs and try to assess current reach of breastfeeding programs
- Community services assessment: to understand other breastfeeding programming available in the community and identify potential duplications and gaps
- Literature review: to determine if current programs were supported by research, and identify effective breastfeeding interventions that could be considered for implementation

This planning work resulted in recommendations in the areas of direct service, client and community partner education, policy implementation, and staff breastfeeding certification. The most significant recommendation to enhance breastfeeding outcomes highlighted the need for proactive, early, home-visiting support. Opportunities were identified to shift resources from less effective to more impactful interventions.

Program Implications

As a result of this planning process, the following programming shifts will be made:

- Beginning June 1, 2018, all breastfeeding mothers will receive a phone call within 48 hours of hospital discharge to assess breastfeeding needs.
- A breastfeeding home visit will be offered to those mothers experiencing breastfeeding challenges

- Additional telephone and home visiting support will be provided, as needed, during the first four to six weeks postpartum.
- Ongoing information and support from a PHN will continue to be available through Health Connection, 8:30 – 4:30, Monday to Friday, as will up-to-date information on the MLHU website.
- Infant Growth/Development & Breastfeeding Drop-ins will now be called Healthy Start Infant Drop-ins, will focus attention on providing support to families who 1) have an infant between the ages of six weeks and six months, who need help with breastfeeding; 2) are using formula to feed their babies; 3) want to know more about their baby’s growth and development; and 4) want to learn more about becoming a parent. Drop-ins will be staffed by fewer PHNs, and will be offered at the following locations:
 - Glencoe Presbyterian Church (every other week)
 - Strathroy MLHU (every other week)
 - Strathroy *Early On Centre* (every other week)
 - Dorchester Library (every other week)
 - Lucan Library (every other week)
 - Parkhill Library (every other week)
 - Komoka Wellness Centre (once a month)
 - Ilderton *Early On Centre* (once a month)
 - Sherwood Forest Mall (every week)
 - Family Centre Argyle (every week)
 - South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre (every other week)
 - Family Centre Westmount (every week)
- The pilot peer breastfeeding group, offered weekly in one east London location with an average of eight to ten clients attending, and an annual total of 40 clients, will no longer be facilitated by a PHN after May 24th, 2018.
- Stand-alone one-session prenatal breastfeeding classes (attended by approximately 50 people per year) are no longer offered, although prenatal breastfeeding education remains part of the prenatal on-line education and the prenatal in-person series at this time.
- MLHU will take steps to ensure adequate numbers of PHNs attain and/or maintain IBCLC certification with the International Board of Lactation Consultants.
- MLHU will increase the number of 20-hour breastfeeding course opportunities offered to health care providers, to enhance community capacity for provision of breastfeeding support.
- Consistent key indicators will be used by all teams providing breastfeeding support.
- The Middlesex-London Infant Feeding Surveillance System will be modified to more effectively and efficiently measure breastfeeding outcomes.

Conclusion

As a result of engaging in a comprehensive breastfeeding planning and review process, MLHU is providing evidence-informed breastfeeding services and supports that are expected to maximize outcomes within the currently available resources.

This report was prepared by the Healthy Start Division.



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