

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO

DATE: 2019 February 21

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## **UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF BREASTFEEDING PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Recommendation***

*It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 012-19 re: “Update on Implementation of Breastfeeding Program Recommendations” for information.*

### **Key Points**

- A comprehensive planning process was completed to maximize the impact of breastfeeding programs and services within a public health mandate and using available resources.
- Planning work resulted in recommendations in the areas of direct service, client and community partner education, policy implementation, and staff breastfeeding certification.
- Healthy Start has made significant progress in implementing these recommendations.

### **Background**

A comprehensive planning process was completed to ensure that breastfeeding programs and services offered by the Middlesex-London Health Unit maximize the public health impact within its mandate and using available resources. Board of Health Report No. 034-18, Update On MLHU Breastfeeding Services and Supports, provided information on the components of the planning process, as well as the resulting program 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, and home-visiting breastfeeding support.

### **Update on Implementation of Program Recommendations**

- Beginning on June 1, 2018, all breastfeeding mothers would receive a phone call within 48 hours of hospital discharge to assess breastfeeding needs. This resulted in 690 such 48-hour calls by the Early Years Team (this is in addition to the 48-hour calls made under the HBHC program).
- A breastfeeding home visit was offered to mothers experiencing breastfeeding challenges. The Early Years Team began breastfeeding home visits in June 2018, with 430 visits to 282 clients completed between June 1 and December 31, 2018 (108 clients received a second home visit, 31 a third, and 9 a fourth). These visits are in addition to the breastfeeding support provided to clients under the HBHC program.
- Further telephone support was provided as needed to mothers receiving a 48-hour call or home visit during the first six weeks postpartum.
- Ongoing information and support from a PHN has continued to be available through Health Connection, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, with up-to-date information on the MLHU website. From January 1 to December 31, 2018, a total of 1,025 calls were received via the Health Connection line, of

which 540 were identified with breastfeeding as the primary reason for the call (53% of the total). These figures do not include calls where breastfeeding/infant feeding was a secondary reason for the call.

- Healthy Start infant drop-ins have been provided, as outlined in the previous report. From January to December 2018, there were 1,091 drop-in visits, with breastfeeding/infant feeding the primary reason for the visit.
- PHN facilitation of the weekly on-site, pilot peer breastfeeding group was discontinued as of May 2018, as were the stand-alone, one-session prenatal breastfeeding classes.
- MLHU continues to take steps to ensure that adequate numbers of PHNs attain and/or maintain International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) certification. In Healthy Start, there are currently three certified lactation consultants who receive support to maintain certification. Support is also provided to four others to work toward attaining certification.
- In 2018, MLHU offered three twenty-hour breastfeeding courses to enhance community capacity for the provision of breastfeeding support. A diverse mix of sixty-one healthcare providers attended, including physicians, PHNs, registered dietitians, doulas, Indigenous midwives, hospital nurses, nurse practitioners, and CPRI staff. Planning for 2019 is underway.
- Key indicators were drafted and used in 2018, with additional revisions currently being made to ensure effective monitoring of breastfeeding interventions and strategies.
- The Middlesex-London Infant Feeding Surveillance System has been modified to measure breastfeeding outcomes more effectively and efficiently.

## Conclusion

As a result of engaging in a comprehensive breastfeeding planning and review process, Healthy Start is providing evidence-informed breastfeeding services and supports. Progress has been made on implementing the recommendations made in 2018. It is expected that, over time, positive trends in breastfeeding outcomes will be observed in the surveillance data gathered in the City of London and Middlesex County.

This report was prepared by the Healthy Start Division ([Appendix A](#)).



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