

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO

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## **PRENATAL HEALTH PLANNING INITIATIVE: UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Recommendation***

*It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 047-19 re: “Prenatal Health Planning Initiative: Update on Implementation of Recommendations” for information.*

### **Key Points**

- Universal access to evidence-informed, local prenatal information is provided through a new online prenatal program, the MLHU website, the Preparation for Parenthood session, and Health Connection.
- Access to in-class group education for identified priority populations is increasing due to community partnerships, resulting in the addition of two to three new sites. Targeted home visiting support has increased with a Public Health Nurse shifted to the Nurse-Family Partnership Team.
- A full implementation plan for the recommendations related to prenatal mental health and wellness will be completed, with implementation underway before the end of the year.

### **Background**

Healthy Start engaged in an evidence-informed planning process to optimize resource allocation related to prenatal health, enhance cohesion in prenatal health programming, and ensure compliance with the 2018 Healthy Growth and Development Standard. Prioritized prenatal health outcomes and priority populations were identified. At the conclusion of the planning process, the Board of Health was informed of the resulting recommendations to optimize public health programming (see [Report No. 065-18 re: “Prenatal Health Planning Initiative: Process, Recommendations, and Implications”](#)).

### **Updates on Implementation of Program Recommendations**

#### *Universal Prenatal Support and Education*

In-person prenatal classes for universal populations were completed on March 31, 2019. The existing online prenatal e-learning program was retired and a new prenatal health e-learning program called InJoy, which includes local content and commences with early pregnancy, was launched in February 2019 after finalizing an annual licensing agreement. Average registration for e-learning from February through May was 40 pregnant women and their support persons per month. A social media advertising campaign is planned for June to increase awareness of the online program. One group prenatal education class on preparing for parenthood continues to be offered monthly to all pregnant women in London and Middlesex County, with approximately 12 couples registering each month. Information about healthy pregnancies has been enhanced and updated on the MLHU website and in all program curricula. The Health Connection telephone service continues to be available for pregnant women to access prenatal health information and support from a Public Health Nurse.

*Targeted Prenatal Education and Support*

In follow-up to the recommendation to enhance group education and support for pregnant women within priority populations, and as a result of community partnerships, two new sites have been added to the Smart Start for Babies/Prenatal Immigrant Program: one in partnership with the London Intercommunity Health Centre (located in northeast London) and another in collaboration with the South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre (in northwest London). With these two new sites, there are currently eight in total, with another pending in the fall of 2019 (also located in northeast London). Group prenatal health education and support sessions are run weekly; currently 110 women are registered. In addition to increasing the group prenatal sessions for priority populations, early in 2019 one full-time equivalent Public Health Nurse was shifted from the Reproductive Health Team to the Nurse-Family Partnership Team to enhance resource allocation for targeted home visiting.

*Prenatal Mental Health*

An internal Healthy Start workgroup is following up on the recommendations related to prenatal mental health, including prenatal mental health screening, use of a prenatal mental health self-assessment tool, provision of mental wellness resources on the MLHU website, and needs and opportunities for staff capacity building. A full plan is expected by the fall of 2019, with implementation of recommendations expected to commence this year.

**Conclusion**

Implementation of the recommendations, resulting from the Prenatal Health Planning Initiative, to optimize public health programming is well underway—in particular, the recommendations related to universal information and support, and targeted programs and services. A full implementation plan for the recommendations related to prenatal mental wellness will soon be in place, with implementation beginning before the end of the year. The evidence-informed planning process will ensure that MLHU meets the OPHS Healthy Growth and Development Standard and Guidelines on healthy pregnancies.

This report was prepared by the Healthy Start Division.



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