

Tuesday June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019**Middlesex-London Health Unit – Cannabis Program and Response to the Legalization of Non-Medical Cannabis  
Funding Proposal – Cannabis Legalization Implementation Fund**

Cannabis for non-medical purposes became legal in Canada in October 2018. Public health work related to cannabis has historically been included within the broader program area of “substance use”. With the legalization of non-medical cannabis, there is increased and dedicated attention to this topic from both a health and policy perspective.

Current research indicates that much of the health-related harms of non-medical cannabis use fall into the following categories:

- Respiratory effects: smoking and negative respiratory symptoms;
- Cannabis use disorder: problematic pattern of cannabis use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress;
- Mental health issues: increased risk of schizophrenia and psychosis;
- Cannabis and driving: increased risk of motor vehicle collision;
- Effects on the brain: long-term effects of cannabis on the brain can include an increased risk of addiction and harm to memory, concentration, intelligence, and decision-making. The effects on brain development are of particular concern for youth and young adults, since the brain is not fully developed until around the age of 25 years.
- Health effects on pregnancy and children: heavy use during pregnancy can lead to lower birth weights of the baby and has been associated with longer-term developmental effects in children and adolescents, such as decreased memory function and negative impacts on the ability to pay attention and problem-solve.

These areas are the focus of cannabis program work at the Middlesex-London Health Unit, with target populations/stakeholders including: youth, parents, young adults, schools, hospitals, workplaces, healthcare providers, municipalities and places of entertainment. The smoking and vaping of medical and non-medical cannabis is regulated provincially by the *Smoke-free Ontario Act, 2017*. The promotion and enforcement of the *Smoke-free Ontario Act, 2017* and responding to complaints and inquiries about exposure to second-hand smoke and vapour from cannabis use is also a component of this program. Additional Tobacco Enforcement Officers are required to respond to complaints related to cannabis consumption in public spaces. In addition, some funding is required to increase program assistant staff capacity to manage the growing call volume of the Health Unit's Smoke-Free Information Line, where individuals call to request enforcement support (complaint line), signage and assistance with policy development to support voluntary compliance. Some funding is also required to increase health promotion capacity within the Health Unit to provide workplaces, schools, hospital administration, housing providers and other stakeholders with information/education about cannabis and the *Act's* interaction with existing municipal Bylaws/policies, and to support the amendment/creation of new housing/workplace/school policies and municipal bylaws. Public education on the new provincial regulations will be conducted by health promotion staff (radio, social media, and web), including targeted messages for older youth/young adults, and evidence-informed messages related to edible cannabis (in consultation with Public Health Dietitians), which will be legalized by October 2019. Lastly, greater expectation has been placed on public health to monitor the trends associated with the use of cannabis and the impact of legalization on the health of our community, placing increased demands on the Health Unit's Public Health Surveillance and Assessment Team.

As part of the Q3 2018 Standards Activity Reports, the Health Unit took advantage of an opportunity to apply for one-time funds, which included \$73,300 for cannabis enforcement; this funding was approved by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on March 29, 2019. The Health Unit was advised of the approved funding on May 8, 2019. The funding was intended for the period April 1, 2018, to March 31, 2019. Spending for cannabis enforcement in the first quarter of 2019 exceeded the \$73,300 of funds granted. There has been no indication by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that provincial funding for cannabis will be awarded to the Health Unit for the 2019/2020 funding year. For a full breakdown of our funding request, please refer to Table 1.

**Table 1. Middlesex-London Health Unit Cannabis Funding Request 2019 – Cannabis Legalization Implementation Fund**

<b>City of London Cannabis Funding 2019</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Projected</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Revenue - MOHLTC</b>	<b>Funding Requested</b>
<b>Staffing Costs</b>	<b>Jan 1 to May 3</b>	<b>Costs - May 4 to YE</b>	<b>Costs 2019</b>	<b>One-Time Grant Apr '18 to Mar '19</b>	<b>City of London - 2019</b>
Tobacco Enforcement Officers - 2.0 FTE	63,661.50	127,323.00	190,984.50	50,149.90	140,834.60
Health Promoter - 0.6 FTE	17,052.21	34,104.42	51,156.63	0.00	51,156.63
Program Assistant - 0.2 FTE	4,981.00	9,962.00	14,943.00	11,313.90	3,629.10
Program Management and Administration*	<i>True costs not being factored in the request.</i>		<i>0.00</i>	<i>11,184.72</i>	<i>3,000.00</i>
<b>Program Supplies</b>					
Signage	2,918.40	3,000.00	5,918.40	651.48	5,266.92
<b>Public Education and Advertising</b>					
Campaign (costs incurred in Jan - majority of expense in 2018)	7,399.28	0.00	7,399.28	0.00	7,399.28
Informational Postcards and Factsheets	1,446.02	0.00	1,446.02	0.00	1,446.02
Target Audience Advertising (parents, law ads for specific spaces)	2,171.46	0.00	2,171.46	0.00	2,171.46
Banner Display for Events	416.19	0.00	416.19	0.00	416.19
Edible Cannabis Educational Material	0.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
Older Youth/Young Adult Campaign - may include edible element	0.00	7,000.00	7,000.00	0.00	7,000.00
<b>Travel</b>	2,029.25	4,000.00	6,029.25	0.00	6,029.25
	<b>\$102,075.31</b>	<b>\$187,889.42</b>	<b>\$289,964.73</b>	<b>\$73,300.00</b>	<b>\$230,849</b>

\*Funding requested for purchase of equipment for new TEOs and some overhead costs