



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Dr. Alexander Summers, Medical Officer of Health
Emily Williams, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: 2023 November 16

NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP (NFP) ANNUAL REPORT

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 72-23 re: “Nurse-Family Partnership Annual Report” for information.

Key Points

- Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) is an evidence-based intervention with demonstrated positive effects on prenatal health outcomes, children’s subsequent health and development, and parents’ economic self-sufficiency.
- The Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) is the Ontario NFP license holder. Additional health units implement NFP under this license through Memorandums of Agreement with MLHU.
- The 2022 Annual Report was submitted by MLHU to the NFP licensor. Areas of focus for 2023 include expanding implementation to additional health units, increasing referrals across sites, improving early enrollment, transitioning the Canadian NFP website to a new server, exploring recruitment of additional nursing practice lead support, developing educator guidance documents, and including additional indicators for the 2023 reporting period.

Background

The Nurse-Family Partnership® (NFP) is an evidence-based intensive home visiting program for young first-time parents experiencing social and economic disadvantage, with demonstrated positive effects on prenatal health outcomes, children’s subsequent health and development, and parents’ economic self-sufficiency. The strong evidentiary foundation of NFP has led to international implementation and evaluation. NFP is a licensed program currently delivered in eight countries (USA, Canada, England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Bulgaria, Australia, and Norway). Since 2008, a series of rigorous studies have been conducted in Ontario and British Columbia (BC) to pilot, adapt and evaluate NFP in Canada. In 2019, the Middlesex London Health Unit (MLHU) became the provincial license holder for five Ontario public health units delivering NFP to eligible clients. Each year, license holders are required to submit an annual report to the NFP licensor to guide discussion of implementation successes and challenges, as well as emergent outcome variations. By using quantitative and qualitative data, the annual report supports reflection on progress and development of quality improvement plans for the following year. The 2022 annual report submitted by the MLHU to the NFP International Office at the Prevention Research Center for Family and Child Health, University of Colorado, includes information from the five sites implementing NFP in Ontario during that year.

2022 Annual Report Summary

In 2022, 364 clients participated in the program and a total of 3595 visits were completed. At program intake, clients ranged in age from 12 to 26 years, 50% reported an annual income < \$25,000, 40% reported

tobacco or nicotine use, 38% reported alcohol use, 47% reported cannabis use, 60% reported concerns with their mental health, and 59% percent reported current or recent experience of intimate partner violence. All clients participated voluntarily, were assigned a single NFP Registered Nurse, were visited on the standard schedule (with adjustments as needed based on the client's needs), were first-time parents, and met the socioeconomic disadvantage criteria. All sites reported 100% compliance for gestational age at time of first visit, and enrolling clients prior to the end of the 28th week of gestation. There was an 8% improvement in the overall percentage of participants referred before 16 weeks gestation, however, the increase in earlier referrals did not significantly improve the number of clients enrolled before 16 weeks gestation. Ontario continues to maintain one of the highest enrollment rates internationally, at 85%. Of 199 discharges, 84 were graduates of the program (i.e., maintained enrollment from pregnancy until discharge at the time of their child's second birthday), 36% were lost due to non-addressable attrition (e.g., client moved out of service area), and 18% were lost due to addressable attrition (e.g., client-initiated discharge after care transferred to another nurse). The remaining 4% included transfers to other NFP sites. Ontario's lifetime graduation rate is 44%. It is important to note that NFP is a strengths-based program and therefore some clients are discharged early if they achieve their self-identified goals (e.g., client has returned to school/gained employment and child is enrolled in childcare). While these situations are not captured in graduation rates, they are considered successes of the program. The program is exploring how to capture and report on this data moving forward. 2023 areas of focus for NFP in Ontario include expanding NFP implementation to additional health units, increasing referrals across sites, improving early enrollment, transitioning the Canadian NFP website to a new server, exploring recruitment of additional nursing practice lead support, developing educator guidance documents, and including additional indicators for the 2023 reporting period.

2023 Interim Highlights

British Columbia Randomized Controlled Trial Findings

Our colleagues in BC announced, "In 2022, the Canadian scientific evaluation of NFP was completed – the first randomized controlled trial of an early prevention program embedded within public health in British Columbia (BC) and Canada. The scientific evaluation of NFP, led by the Children's Health Policy Centre at Simon Fraser University, has shown key results to date including:

- Reducing prenatal substance exposure, specifically decreasing cannabis exposure and also reducing cigarette use in smokers ([Catherine et al., 2020](#));
- Benefits for maternal-reported child language and mental health problem behaviour by age two years ([Catherine et al., 2023](#)) – these early benefits have the potential to positively impact long-term child health and development;
- New evidence on the feasibility and importance of reaching and including families experiencing inequities in BC ([Catherine et al., 2021](#)"); and

The key findings were published in the [Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry \(JCPP\)](#).

Phase 4 of International Replication

With the completion of the BC RCT, the MLHU was granted approval by the licensor to move into the expansion phase of NFP program delivery in Ontario. This has included supporting additional health units to plan for, onboard and implement NFP in their communities. In 2023, two cohorts of NFP education were held for Hastings Prince Edward Public Health and Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Public Health, as well as Peterborough Public Health and Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit. This has created two additional NFP sites as each health unit pairing has developed a partnership to ensure they can meet the fidelity requirements for the program in their smaller, more rural communities. Southwestern Public Health recently announced that they would begin implementation of NFP in 2024.

This report was submitted by the Healthy Start Division.

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Alexander Summers, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

Handwritten signature of E. Williams in black ink.

Emily Williams, BScN, RN, MBA, CHE
Chief Executive Officer