

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Bryna Warshawsky, Acting Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 February 19

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## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP MIDDLESEX-LONDON UPDATE

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Board of Health endorse the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Healthy Communities Fund - Partnership Stream funding agreement attached as [Appendix A](#) to Report No. 016-13 re “Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London Update”.*

### **Key Points**

- The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care provides funds to healthy community partnerships through its Healthy Communities Fund – Partnership Stream to coordinate planning and action around policies that make it easier for Ontarians to lead healthy and active lives.
- Policy that supports physical activity helps reduce physical inactivity and obesity which are risk factors for many chronic diseases.
- The Health Unit continues to provide leadership to the Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London which has been successful in introducing physical activity policy focused initiatives that align with the Ontario Public Health Standards.

### **Background**

Physical inactivity and obesity are significant risk factors for many chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes. Research indicates physical activity is one of the most cost-effective means of having a physically, mentally and socially healthier population. According to the 2006 Census only 8% of those aged 15 and older in Middlesex-London reported having an active form of transportation to work such as walking or cycling. In 2009/2010, approximately half (47%) of Middlesex-London residents (12+ years old) reported being inactive during their leisure time. During the same timeframe more than half of adults (52%) were considered overweight or obese. The trend over time shows an increase in the overweight/obesity rate in Middlesex-London since 2003. Hence, policies that support and promote physically active lifestyles where people live, work and play are viewed as an important strategy in enhancing population health and are the focus of the Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London.

### **Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London Update**

Through the Healthy Communities Fund (HCF), the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) continues to support the vision of *Healthy Communities working together and Ontarians leading healthy and active lives* (Reports No. [114-10](#), [054-11](#), and [035-12](#)). The HCF has three components: 1) Grants Project Stream, 2) Partnership Stream, and 3) Resource Stream. In 2009, under the Partnership Stream, health units were requested to take the lead locally to promote coordinated planning and action with community partners and stakeholders in creating local policies that make it easier for Ontarians to be healthy. The Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London (HCP) successfully completed two sets of Ministry approved work plans in 2010 and 2011 respectively with a focus on physical activity

policy. The January to March, 2012 work plan activities were completed and a final report was submitted to the MOHLTC in April 2012 which included a summary of the following activities:

1. London City Council Endorsement of the International Toronto Charter for Physical Activity on June 26, 2012 (Attached as [Appendix C](#))
- 2.
3. Production of the Healthy City – [Active London Video](#)
4. Writing the position paper entitled, [Healthy City - Active London](#), which was submitted to the City of London's ReThink London Official Plan Review

### Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Partnership Stream Funding Agreement


The MOHLTC continues to provide the HCF - Partnership Stream with funding for the period January 2013 through March 2013 for policy-focused initiatives. The Health Unit submitted work plans in July 2012 on behalf of Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London, requesting funding in the amount of \$50,000 for the following main activities with a focus on promoting physical activity policy in London and Middlesex County (see [Appendix B](#)):

1. Seek endorsement of the international Toronto Charter for Physical Activity from Middlesex County municipalities.
2. Complete a position paper 'What Makes a Healthy Community' that identifies rural design and infrastructure elements that support an active community in rural settlements.
3. Develop a Healthy Communities Checklist that sets a standard for public health to assess area plans and land use plans to foster the development of an active community.
4. Partner with local networks and organizations that have physical activity policy in their mandate to pursue physical activity policy opportunities.

### Conclusion

The Healthy Communities Fund from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allows the Health Unit and Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London to continue to direct efforts toward healthy public policy that supports physical activity in Middlesex-London communities. These efforts are instrumental in meeting obligations under the Ontario Public Health Standards and the Health Unit's strategic planning objective of "Advocating for and supporting the implementation of municipal policies that facilitate physical activity in the community".

This report was prepared by Ms. Bernadette McCall, Public Health Nurse, and Ms. Marylou Albanese, Manager, Healthy Communities and Injury Prevention Team.



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**This report addresses** the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Chronic Diseases and Injuries Program Standards of Chronic Disease Prevention 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12 and that of Prevention of Injury and Substance Misuse 2, 4, 5 and the 2011 MLHU Strategic Direction: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for all.