



MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT

REPORT NO. 128-12

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health  
FROM: Bryna Warshawsky, Acting Medical Officer of Health  
DATE: 2012 October 18

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**PROGRAM EVALUATION FOR THE ALTHOUSE COLLEGE SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION SESSIONS, 2011 & 2012**

***Recommendation***

*It is recommended that Report No. 128-12 re “Program Evaluation for the Althouse College Sexual Health Education Sessions, 2011 & 2012” be received for information.*

**Key points**

- The Health Unit has been providing education sessions about growth and development, including sexual health, to teacher candidates at Althouse College for approximately 10 years. These sessions are designed to assist teacher candidates in teaching a part of the curriculum that may not be totally comfortable for them.
- An evaluation of these sessions found they were useful in improving the knowledge and ability of teacher candidates to teach about growth and development, including sexual health.

**Background**

Growth and development education is an essential strand of the Ontario school curriculum that teaches young people about the anatomy and physiology of reproduction. Other important aspects include learning about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and ways to prevent them, pregnancy, and different types of contraception to prevent unplanned pregnancies.

Parents and guardians are the primary educators of their children; however, parents/guardians may not discuss certain aspects of growth and development with their children. School-based programs add an important dimension to a child’s ongoing learning. During Teachers College, teacher candidates may or may not be exposed to learning about how to teach the Growth and Development strand of the curriculum, a part of the curriculum that some teachers may not be totally comfortable teaching.

Western University’s Faculty of Education, located at Althouse College, is one of the largest Teachers Colleges in Ontario. To help teach the Growth and Development strand of the Elementary Physical Education curriculum to teacher candidates, the professor usually requests assistance from health professionals from the Health Unit who are subject matter experts in puberty, birth control and STIs. These health professionals have been providing sexual health education sessions to teacher candidates at

Althouse College for approximately 10 years. During this time, the Health Unit has not formally conducted a program evaluation.

A program evaluation was conducted to assess whether the sexual health education sessions that occurred on December 14, 2010 and February 29, 2012 improved the knowledge, comfort and ability of teacher candidates to teach the Growth and Development strand of the Ontario curriculum.

### **Methods for the Sexual Health Education Sessions**

Health professionals from the Health Unit's Sexual Health Promotion and Child Health Teams conducted a 1.5 hour Sexual Health Education session on each of December 14, 2011 and February 29, 2012 to two different sets of teacher candidates. For both sessions, the health professionals first provided a 30 minute introduction to all teacher candidates. During the December 2011 session, for the remaining hour, candidates received a presentation focused on one of the following topics: puberty, birth control or STIs. Teacher candidates participated in only one of these aforementioned sessions. During the February 2012 session, after the 30 minute introduction, teacher candidates received a 15-20 minute condensed presentation on each of the aforementioned topics. After 20 minutes, teacher candidates rotated to the next group. Using this method, all teacher candidates were able to attend the presentations on each of the topic areas.

Before each sexual health education sessions began, teacher candidates were administered a pre-test survey to assess their knowledge, comfort and ability in teaching different areas of sexual health education. After each session was completed, teacher candidates were asked to complete a post-test survey with identical questions to those asked in the pre-test survey.

### **Results of the Program Evaluation**

Regardless of the session style, results from the survey analysis indicate that the sexual health education sessions provided by health professionals from the Health Unit were useful. Teacher candidates indicated improvements in their knowledge of the requirements of the Growth and Development strand of the curriculum, and in different areas of Growth and Development, specifically, puberty, birth control and STIs. The sexual education session significantly improved teacher candidates' views that s/he is prepared to teach the Growth and Development strand of the curriculum. It also increased teacher candidates' awareness regarding resources to assist in teaching puberty, STIs and birth control topic areas.

### **Conclusion**

The sexual health education sessions provided to teacher candidates at Althouse College by health professionals from the Health Unit are useful in improving the knowledge and ability of teacher candidates to teach the Growth and Development strand of the Ontario curriculum. Because of the usefulness and benefits to public health, Health Unit staff will continue to offer these sessions.

This report was prepared by Dr. Simerpal Gill, Contract Epidemiologist, Ms. Alison Locker, Epidemiologist, and Ms. Leanne Powell, Public Health Nurse, Sexual Health Promotion Team.



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This report addresses the following requirement(s) of the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines: Sexual Health Services.