



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Graham L. Pollett, MD, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

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DINESAFE MIDDLESEX-LONDON AND FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM UPDATE

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 077-12 re DineSafe Middlesex-London and Food Safety Program Update be received for information.

Background

The Board of Health has received previous update reports on the progress and status of DineSafe Middlesex-London including Report No. 109-10 (City of London) and Report No. 030-11 (County of Middlesex). Those reports informed the Board of the development and introduction of municipal by-laws in the City of London and each of the municipalities in the County of Middlesex related to food premises inspections. All of the by-laws were created essentially the same, each requiring owners and operators to post colour-coded signs on site at their food premises, and mandating the presence of a certified foodhandler on site at specified premises. The City of London by-law required the posting of signs beginning October 1, 2010, and the presence of a certified foodhandler beginning October 1, 2011. The corresponding effective dates for the municipal by-laws in Middlesex County were July 1, 2011 (signage) and January 1, 2012 (certified foodhandler).

Sign Posting Requirement

Public Health Inspectors (PHI) check compliance with the sign posting requirements of the by-laws as a part of their routine inspection process. On the first inspections after the implementation of the by-laws, operators were granted a 48 hour grace period to avoid having to post a yellow sign. Subsequent visits indicate, with only a few minor exceptions, that compliance with the sign posting requirements has been good. Most infractions are minor and inadvertent (adjustment required on location of sign, obscured signs) and are corrected immediately on-site with no need for the issuance of a ticket.

Certified Foodhandler Requirement

In anticipation of an increase in foodhandler training and certification requests as a result of these new by-law requirements, staff carried out a needs assessment evaluation in May and June of 2011. The analysis resulted in changes being made to improve the efficiency of the foodhandler certification process. The number of foodhandlers certified began to increase significantly in mid 2011. There were 1,940 certificates issued in 2010 and 3,633 in 2011. To date in 2012, 1,418 certificates have been issued. This is a strong indication that owners and operators are actively working toward ensuring that all staff are obtaining the required certification. An electronic record is maintained of each certificate issued and is available to verify the certification status of all foodhandlers certified by the Health Unit.

The certified foodhandler requirement is now in effect in both the City of London and the County of Middlesex, and PHIs are monitoring the number of certified foodhandlers on site at food premises as a part of their routine inspection process. However, in the first year, PHIs have been continuing to educate and remind operators about this new requirement and providing information on available foodhandler

certification options. This is consistent with the flexible and cooperative approach used for the sign posting portions of the by-laws. Inspectors will begin enforcing the foodhandler certification sections on October 1, 2012, in the City of London and January 1, 2013, in the County of Middlesex County.

Accountability Agreement Performance Indicators – Food Safety Program

At the April Board meeting, the Board approved the acceptance of the 2012 performance indicator targets (Report No. 054-12) proposed by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care for measuring health unit compliance with the Accountability Agreements. The performance indicator related to the Food Safety Program is the inspection frequency completion rate for high risk food premises (% of high risk food premises inspected once every 4 months while in operation). The 2012 and 2013 targets for this indicator for this Health Unit have been set at 100%. These targets are based upon the baseline level of 84% which was slightly above the provincial baseline average of 82%. Health units with baselines greater than 70% are required to achieve 100% in 2012 and 2013. Those health units with baselines less than 70% are being required to achieve 85% in 2012 and 100% in 2013. At the end of the first 4 month period of 2012, staff are on target having achieved 100% of the required inspections of high risk food premises. In addition, although they are not used as an Accountability Agreement Performance Indicator, inspection frequencies for moderate and low risk food premises are also on track to be completed at 100% in 2012.

Conclusions

The implementation of DineSafe Middlesex-London has been a rewarding challenge for the staff of the Environmental Health Team over the last two years. They developed and launched the DineSafe Middlesex-London website; they worked with municipal partners in developing new by-laws in each of the municipalities; they met one on one with the owners and operators of each food premises in Middlesex-London to introduce the program; and they have certified close to 7,000 (and counting) foodhandlers to accommodate the needs of the program. Staff members accomplished the above while also trying to meet Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care inspection frequency requirements. Now that the DineSafe program is substantially in place, staff members are now able to focus on meeting the 100% inspection frequency completion target for the Accountability Agreement Performance Indicator. They are on track to meet that target in 2012 and are well-positioned to begin enforcing the foodhandler certification requirement of the municipal bylaws later this year.

This report was prepared by Mr. David Pavletic, Manager, Environmental Health, and Mr. Wally Adams, Director, Environmental Health and Chronic Disease Prevention Services.

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Medical Officer of Health

This report addresses the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Section 7 of the *Food Safety Standard* requiring the Board of Health to inspect food premises and provide all the components of the Food Safety Program within food premises as defined by the Health Protection and Promotion Act and in accordance with the Food Premises Regulation (O. Reg. 562).

Section 4c of the *Food Safety Protocol* requiring the Board of Health to establish a procedure for disclosure of information from food premises compliance inspection reports, to be provided upon request by the public. Reference to the process by which the public may obtain such information shall be posted on the board of health's website.