

1

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS AND AWARENESS INITIATIVES

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated June 2, 2011, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council approve an increase in gross expenditures in 2011 of up to \$156,313 for the delivery of food safety initiatives, offset by 100% provincial subsidy with no impact to the 2011 budgeted net tax levy.
2. Regional Council approve an increase in gross expenditures in 2011 of up to \$59,542 for the delivery of safe water initiatives, offset by 100% provincial subsidy with no impact to the 2011 budgeted net tax levy.
3. Regional Council approve an increase in gross expenditures in 2011 of up to \$8,000 for public health awareness initiatives, offset by 100% provincial subsidy with no impact to the 2011 budgeted net tax levy.

2. PURPOSE

This report is prepared for Regional Council in order for it to carry out its legislative duties and responsibilities as the Board of Health under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. It seeks authorization for additional public health expenditures, offset by 100% provincial funding, in three areas:

- 1) Enhancements to the Food Safety Program
- 2) Enhancements to the Safe Water Program
- 3) Infection Prevention and Control Week education and awareness initiatives

3. BACKGROUND

The Province has announced Enhanced Food Safety and Enhanced Safe Water as ongoing 100% funded public health initiatives

In March 2011, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the Ministry) announced an Enhanced Food Safety Initiative and an Enhanced Safe Water Initiative for health units in

Ontario, with accompanying announcements on 100% provincial funding covering the period to December 31, 2011. However, the Province has indicated that these will be ongoing programs, with the aim of augmenting health unit capacity to deliver mandated Food Safety and Safe Water requirements of the Ontario Public Health Standards.

The Province will also provide funding to public health units for an Infection Prevention and Control Week awareness initiative

The Ministry has also announced 100% funding to health units for public health awareness initiatives related to Infection Prevention and Control Week. Through the Ontario Public Health Standards, boards of health in Ontario are mandated to work towards increasing the capacity of the public, health care providers and other service providers to prevent and control infectious diseases. Infection Prevention and Control week, observed the third week in October in Canada and the United States, provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of infection prevention and control and promotes the work of infection control professionals.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Public Health Branch 100% funded food safety enhancements will focus on increasing inspections

The Ministry is making \$156,313 available at 100% to enhance York Region Public Health's food safety activities for the nine-month period from April 1 to December 31, 2011. The Public Health Branch will use the bulk of this funding to assist in the delivery of food safety inspections in high growth areas of the Region. Specifically, Public Health will use provincial funds for:

- Two temporary full-time public health inspection resources
- Food safety promotional campaigns

These food safety enhancements will allow the Public Health Branch to augment initiatives identified in the Departmental Multi-Year Plan (e.g. next phase of Food Safety at Home Strategy).

Public Health Branch 100% funded safe water enhancements will augment various aspects of the program, including targeted promotions and mapping of small drinking water systems

The Ministry will provide \$59,542 in 100% funding to York Region Public Health as part of the Enhanced Safe Water Initiative for the nine-month period from April 1 to December 31, 2011. The Public Health Branch will use this funding to augment its

capacity to deliver the safe water program with a range of resources and services, including:

- One temporary public health inspection resource
- Media campaigns/special promotions (e.g. access to water quality results for private well owners)
- Additional staff training on drinking water systems and public recreational water facilities
- Enhancement of education for owners/operators of public recreational water facilities
- Augmentation of public beach program, including water sampling
- Title search for all small drinking water systems
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping of all small drinking water systems

The Public Health Branch will use 100% infection prevention and control awareness funding for educational materials and sessions

The Ministry will provide \$8,000 in 100% funding to York Region Public Health for public health awareness initiatives during Infection Prevention and Control Week 2011 (October 17 to 21, 2011). As required by the Province, the Public Health Branch will use these funds for:

- Development, purchasing, and distribution of educational materials
- Educational sessions

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no net cost to the Region to augment public health capacity in the areas of food safety and safe water, or to promote public health awareness during Infection Prevention and Control Week. The Province is providing a total of \$223,855 in 100% funding to York Region for these initiatives. The following tables outline how York Region Public Health will use the funding.

Table 1
Proposed Enhancements to Food Safety Program

Component	Cost
Two temporary full-time public health inspection resources	\$138,564
Food safety promotion	17,749
Total	\$156,313

Table 2
Proposed Enhancements to Safe Water Program

Component	Cost
One temporary public health inspection resource	\$13,042
Media campaigns/special promotions	10,000
Staff training	2,500
Education for owners/operators of public recreational water facilities	2,000
Augmentation of public beach program	10,000
Small drinking water system title search	20,000
Small drinking water system GIS mapping	2,000
Total	\$59,542

Table 3
Infection Prevention and Control Awareness Initiatives

Component	Cost
Infection prevention and control promotion	\$8,000
Total	\$8,000

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Additional funding will augment the capacity of the Public Health Branch to deliver its food safety and safe water programs in all local municipalities, and to promote infection prevention and control principles.

7. CONCLUSION

The Province has made 100% funding available to health units for specific health protection enhancements and educational initiatives. As required by the Province, the Public Health Branch will use this funding to augment its capacity to deliver activities mandated under the Food Safety Program Standard and the Safe Water Program Standard of the Ontario Public Health Standards, and to promote awareness during Infection Prevention and Control Week.

For more information on this report, please contact Dr. Karim Kurji, Medical Officer of Health at Ext. 4012.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.