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ARTIFICIAL TANNING AND SUN SAFETY

The Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, September 12, 2005, from the Commissioner of Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The Chair of the Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee write a letter to the Minister of Health Promotion urging the provincial government to develop an awareness campaign regarding the potential dangers of ultraviolet radiation from sun exposure and artificial tanning.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Regional Council with information on the risks of ultraviolet radiation exposure from the sun and artificial tanning and effective public health strategies that foster awareness and education.

3. BACKGROUND

At the June 23, 2005 meeting of the Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee, the Middlesex-London Health Unit communication "Artificial Tanning Use in London-Middlesex" was received and referred to staff for a report.

York Region Health Services (YRHS) is mandated by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to provide community-wide education to reduce the risk of skin cancer by using strategies that focus on decreasing exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun and artificial tanning sources (*Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, 1997*).

The YRHS skin cancer prevention program provides residents and workplaces with education and resources on the health risks associated with exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun and artificial tanning equipment. The program promotes the Canadian Cancer Society's skin cancer prevention guidelines and Health Canada's fact sheet on the health risks of artificial tanning, and utilizes a variety of health promotion strategies, such as the Sun Safety calendar outlined to Council on February 19, 2004, in Clause No. 3 of Report No. 2 of the Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Prevalence of Skin Cancer

According to Cancer Care Ontario, skin cancer is the most common cancer in Canadians, with an estimated 80,000 Canadians to be newly diagnosed in 2005. (This estimate refers to all forms of skin cancer). Broad spectrum ultraviolet radiation from both the sun and artificial tanning equipment are known to be human carcinogens. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that exposure to UV radiation during childhood and adolescence greatly increases the risk of developing skin cancer later in life. Specifically, the use of artificial tanning equipment increases the risk of developing melanoma, the most fatal and prevalent form of skin cancer in young adults.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, a female between ages 17-18 is the most likely user of artificial tanning equipment. Experts from Health Canada estimate that there are over 3,000 tanning establishments in Canada, and that approximately 10% of 15-to-35-year olds use them. No current data is available related to the number of establishments that provide access to artificial tanning equipment or the population that access these services in Ontario or York Region.

4.2 Legislation and Guidelines

The federal *Radiation Emitting Devices Act (RED Act)* requires artificial tanning equipment to be labelled at the point of sale and provides guidelines for UV output and maximum annual dose. There are no regulations governing the consistency of artificial tanning equipment UV outputs after the point of sale.

Ultraviolet lamps used under professional supervision by medical doctors to treat certain skin conditions are considered medical devices and, therefore, are regulated under the *Food and Drugs Act (Medical Devices Regulations)*.

Health Canada's *Guidelines for Tanning Salon Operators and Users* provides information on UV radiation, the *RED Act*, and the risks of tanning. This document recommends restricting the use of artificial tanning equipment by clients under 16 years of age. However, Health Canada only has jurisdiction over the manufacturing of the equipment and is not able to legislate age of use.

4.3 Education and Advocacy

The Ontario Sun Safety Working Group (OSSWG) promotes healthy behaviours and policies in relation to ultraviolet radiation exposure. The OSSWG is comprised of representatives from the Canadian Dermatology Association, Canadian Cancer Society, Cancer Care Ontario, Environment Canada, Health Canada, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and provincial public health units (Toronto, Sudbury, London and York Region), and participates in activities such as the development of elementary health and science curriculum materials and the production of a sun-safety manual for outdoor workers.

The OSSWG is in the process of developing activities to address the health risk associated with the use of artificial tanning equipment. One activity included the hosting of the Artificial Tanning Symposium in April 2005 with the London-Middlesex Skin Cancer Prevention Coalition.

4.4 Effective Strategies

There is much scientific evidence associating an increased risk of skin cancer with the use of artificial tanning equipment. According to Craig Sinclair, Director of the WHO's Collaborative Centre for the Promotion of Sun Protection, a comprehensive approach is necessary to effectively address the operation and use of artificial tanning equipment.

This type of approach would involve key stakeholder agencies such as Health Canada, the Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Dermatology Association to develop consistent messaging in order to raise awareness of the risks associated with tanning bed use. Specifically, such an awareness campaign needs to be directed to youth and young adults, particularly females, who tend to utilize tanning equipment most frequently.

4.4.1 York Region Strategies

At this time, the most effective means of addressing the risks of ultraviolet radiation exposure and artificial tanning use in York Region is through YRHS's current mandate of education and awareness initiatives that encourage informed health choices. YRHS will also continue to participate as a member of the OSSWG to develop new strategies to increase awareness of the risks of sun bathing and artificial tanning bed use.

It has been proposed that data will be collected in 2006 through the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS), a monthly telephone survey conducted by the Institute of Social Research at York University on behalf of 22 health units in Ontario. RRFSS results will provide preliminary information on tanning bed use among York Region residents.

4.5 Relationship to Vision 2026

Public education related to sun safety and artificial tanning use promotes wellness by encouraging healthy lifestyles, thus supporting the principles of Vision 2026.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional costs associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

This report has no local municipal impact.

7. CONCLUSION

Through advocacy and education, health agencies and all levels of government can work in collaboration to develop consistent messages to reduce the risk of skin cancer for residents. To this end, it is recommended that the provincial government be urged to develop an awareness campaign on the potential dangers of ultraviolet radiation exposure and artificial tanning.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.