
TO:	Board of Health
MEETING DATE:	November 1, 2017
PREPARED BY:	Melissa Potwarka, Acting Manager, Healthy Communities and Public Policy
APPROVED BY:	Rita Sethi, Director, Community Health and Wellness
SUBMITTED BY:	Dr. Nicola J. Mercer, MD, MBA, MPH, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health and CEO

Key Points

- The goal of the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) healthy eating portfolio is to create a local community where all children and youth will have the access, food skills/literacy and environments supportive of healthy eating to meet their dietary needs.
- To achieve this, an evidence-informed plan was developed that focused on three key priority areas: Food skills/literacy, food access and equity, and supportive environments.

Strategic Directions & Goals

Building Healthy Communities - We will work with communities to support the health and well-being of everyone.

- We will enhance our understanding of the local needs and priorities of the communities we serve and develop programs and services in response to those needs.
- We will promote healthy environments that support physical and mental health and well-being.

Operational Plan Objectives

- Support licensed local child care centres, schools, and school boards in the development of healthy eating policies.
- Collaborate with license child care centres, Ontario Early Years Centres and the school board to promote and distribute NutriSTEP® screening tool and parent education materials.
- Promote NutriSTEP® online through social media.
- Support the endorsement of the Headwaters Food Charter and Action Plan through the Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance (HFFA).
- Implement recommendations from the Headwaters Food Charter action plan
- Support the development of municipal policies that encourage access to affordable, fresh food and food systems that promote local food.

- Support licensed child care centres and Ontario Early Years Centres through ongoing healthy eating education & training.
- Support local poverty reduction activities to address food insecurity.
- Implement comprehensive food literacy media communication plans, including social media outlets.

Summary of OPHS Program Requirements

OPHS Program: Chronic Disease Prevention

Goals:

- To reduce the burden of preventable chronic diseases of public health importance.
- To enable all children to attain and sustain optimal health and developmental potential.
- To enable individuals and families to achieve optimal preconception health, experience a healthy pregnancy, have the healthiest newborn(s) possible, and be prepared for parenthood.

Strategy:

- Assessment and Surveillance
- Health Promotion and Policy Development
- Disease Prevention

Requirements:

- Chronic Disease Requirements 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,11 & 12
- Reproductive Health Requirements 3,4 & 5
- Child Health 5,6,7 & 8

Accountability Indicators:

- NutriSTEP®

Performance variance or discrepancy identified:

- No

Highlights

The goal of the WDGPH healthy eating portfolio is to create a local community where all children and youth will have the access, food skills/literacy and environments supportive of healthy eating to meet their dietary needs. In order to achieve this goal, public health nutritionists have developed an evidence-informed comprehensive plan focused on three key priority areas: food skills/literacy, food access and equity, and supportive environments. Provincial and local strategies include education, capacity building, community action and development, and healthy public policy. The following outlines a brief summary of key

achievements and activities from June 2016 to June 2017 to implement the evidence-informed plan in each priority area.

Healthy Eating Projects and Initiatives

Child Care Nutrition

A public health nutritionist reviewed 40 child care menus between June 2016 and June 2017. The reviews were conducted to ensure that the menus were in compliance with the Child Care and Early Years Act (2015). Education and training was also offered to child care cooks at their local network meetings and at the Child Care Cooks Conference in April, where 50 child care cooks attended. In March 2017, the In-Motion Children and Youth Committee hosted a workshop focused on how to engage parents in health messaging, with a focus on water consumption. This workshop received funding from the Guelph Healthy Kids Community Challenge (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care), and over 70 early childhood educators and child care staff attended the workshop.

Prenatal Nutrition

Pregnancy to Parenting is funded by the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) through the Public Health Agency of Canada. This weekly program in Guelph supports pregnant and early postpartum women who have challenging life situations that may put them at risk for poor birth outcomes. A public health nutritionist along with a public health nurse provides education on healthy eating, infant care and feeding, parenting, breastfeeding, labour and delivery, and healthy lifestyles. Child minding, bus tickets and language interpreters are provided when needed for women to attend the program. From April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017 a total of 85 women accessed the program. Approximately 60% of participants are recent immigrants, and 95% of participants initiated breastfeeding. Pregnancy to Parenting launched a private Facebook page to further engage and support participants outside the weekly class.

Food Skills/Literacy Initiatives

In 2016, a literature review was conducted to identify best practices for food skills/literacy initiatives that target parents and caregivers of children and youth. A community scan was then completed on food skills programming in Wellington County to assess what is currently being done, gaps in programming reach and opportunities for collaboration. As a result, online food skills/literacy messages were created and promoted for two days each month through Let's Talk Parenting social media platforms and WDGPH social media platforms and blog. In collaboration with a community partner, a public health nutritionist developed a Family Food Skills Manual for facilitators of Headwaters Food and Family Alliance's Farm to School programs.

NutriSTEP®

Since 2014, WDGPH has been mandated to implement Preschooler NutriSTEP® as part of the Public Health Funding and Accountability Agreement. NutriSTEP® (Nutrition Screening Tool for Every Preschooler) is a valid and reliable, parent-administered tool for assessing nutrition risk in toddlers (18 - 35 months of age) and preschoolers (3-5 years of age). In 2016, WDGPH met the requirements for the advanced category for implementation of the NutriSTEP® Preschooler screen by promoting it on the WDGPH website, social media platforms, and KIDS LINE. In addition, 2,991 Nutri-eSTEP® postcards were distributed in kindergarten registration packages. In 2017, Nutri-eSTEP® postcards were also distributed to licensed child care centres through

public health inspector visits. NutriSTEP® for toddlers continues to be distributed to parents during their 18-month enhanced well-baby visits with primary care providers.

School Nutrition

In 2016, WDGPH established the School Health Curriculum Resource Line to support teachers and school staff with questions about the Health & Physical Education curriculum, resources and health initiatives for schools. A public health nutritionist is the designated contact for Healthy Eating and Nutrition requests. During the first school year of implementation (August 2016 to June 2017), healthy eating was the most common health topic requested through the intake line. A total of 29 requests on healthy eating were received primarily from elementary schools, which was 24.4% of the total inquiries.

Headwaters Food & Farming Alliance (HFFA)

In 2016, HFFA embarked on the development of a local food charter. This included hosting four stakeholder consultations (n= 86) and a public online survey (n= 261). In April 2017, HFFA unveiled the food charter and action plan with six key areas of focus: health and well-being, food access and equity, culture and celebration, economic vitality, agricultural sustainability, and environmental responsibility. In follow-up, HFFA presented the charter and action plan to Dufferin County Council and all municipal councils to ask for endorsement. A more detailed Board of Health (BOH) report on the Headwaters Food Charter and Action Plan will also be presented.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is a major public health issue as there are numerous impacts on physical, mental and social health. Families with lower incomes are at a higher risk of being food insecure, as poverty is the root issue. WDGPH works collaboratively with local and provincial groups such as the Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination (Poverty Task Force), the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health's Food Security Work Group, Dufferin Poverty Task Force, The Seed Community Food Hub, and HFFA to support numerous activities that address food insecurity. In 2016, a public health nutritionist worked with community partners to establish the Dufferin Poverty Task Force. The public health nutritionist also provided consultation and support for the development of the two reports "Reducing Poverty in Dufferin County: A Proposed Strategic Framework" and the "Evaluation Report: 2016 Market Bucks Program". In May 2017, public health nutritionists participated in a regional roundtable discussion for a provincial food security strategy. As a follow-up, with the support from a public health nutritionist, the Guelph Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination developed a Position Statement on Household Food Insecurity.

Nutritious Food Basket

The 2008 OPHS, requires the BOH to monitor food affordability in accordance with the Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) guidance document. The NFB is a survey tool that measures the cost of basic healthy eating that represents current nutrition recommendations and average food purchasing patterns. In May 2016, a public health nutritionist completed food pricing in seven grocery stores. Case scenarios were created to compare income and expenses for the purchase of food and rental housing for families and individuals in a variety of settings. The most recent NFB report was presented to BOH in October 2016 and the next NFB report will be presented in November 2017.

Related Reports

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health BOH report - BH.01.OCT0516.R17 - Nutritious Food Basket for Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph 2016 [Internet]. 2016 October 5. [cited 2017 Jul 17]. Available from: <https://www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca/nutritious-food-basket-wellington-dufferin-and-guelph-2016>