

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

November 7, 2002

To: Board of Health
From: Dr. Sheela V. Basrur, Medical Officer of Health
Subject: Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition: Roundtable Recommendations

Purpose:

This report describes the outcomes of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition's roundtables and seeks support from the Board of Health and City Council for the future directions, strategies and priorities contained in the Action Plan and Frameworks for Implementation.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no direct financial implications for the City of Toronto in 2002 – 2003. In 2004 and beyond, any required resources will be considered through the budget processes of the applicable divisions.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) City Council endorse The Action Plan of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition as the cornerstone of cancer prevention in the City of Toronto;
- (2) The Board of Health endorse the continued efforts of the Coalition and its work groups to implement the strategies recommended by the roundtables as outlined in Appendix 1;
- (3) City Council direct that action be taken by the relevant city divisions on the following priority initiatives:
 - a) that the Sustainability Roundtable (SRT) work with the Toronto Interdepartmental Environment (TIE) Committee through the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to develop a Right-to-Know strategy as a priority under the City's Environmental Plan and that TIE work with the City Solicitor and other appropriate City officials to recommend tools to implement such a strategy;

- b) that TPH work with City of Toronto departments to co-ordinate development of a healthy eating policy that encourages and supports consumption of safe and nutritious food at City events when refreshments are served;
 - c) the Medical Officer of Health convene a multi-disciplinary team, in consultation with the Ultraviolet Radiation Working Group of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition, to produce a comprehensive policy and related guidelines aimed at providing and maintaining adequate shade (in both built and natural form) within the City's jurisdiction.
- (4) the Medical Officer of Health continue to take a leadership role in facilitating the implementation of the strategies developed from the May 1, 2002 roundtables, and report back to the Board of Health on a regular basis on progress to date; and
- (5) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting on May 22, 2001, the Board of Health considered a report from the Medical Officer of Health entitled, "Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition: Action Plan for Toronto". This report outlined a broad and far-reaching Action Plan for Cancer Prevention with accompanying frameworks for implementation. The twenty-one recommendations focus on clear priorities for policy and action. The implementation frameworks outline how these recommendations can be carried out and by whom, building on existing activities and capacities of relevant agencies. The Action Plan was unanimously adopted by the Board of Health.

At its meeting on May 30 – June 1, 2001, City Council requested the Medical Officer of Health to convene a roundtable comprising City departments and divisions, together with provincial and federal partners and members of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition to determine the means for phasing in the proposed Implementation Frameworks and to report back on the results of this roundtable through the Board of Health.

Over the following twelve months, each working group of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition embarked on planning for the roundtables by identifying and following up with relevant stakeholders at the City, provincial and federal levels who were working on the framework recommendations and/or related issues, in order to ensure appropriate representation at the roundtable. Many working group members held prior discussions with key stakeholders in order to set the tone for collaboration. Most important during this timeframe, working groups were able to see clear evidence of progress in many areas of the Framework's recommendations, and groups set out to further build on these efforts.

On May 1, 2002, 144 stakeholders attended the Roundtable Forum – From Planning to Action at Metro Hall in Toronto. City staff from key divisions attended the roundtables. The roundtables extended the reach of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition beyond municipal departments and divisions to include such community partners as the Toronto District School Board, the

Toronto Catholic District School Board, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Worker's Health and Safety Centre, Cancer Care Ontario's Division of Preventive Oncology, the Canadian Cancer Society, and Health Canada's Cancer Division.

Comments:

The roundtables correspond to each of the major cancer risk factor areas: alcohol; diet; environmental and occupational carcinogens; ultraviolet radiation; and physical activity / tobacco. The roundtables were facilitated by a member of the Coalition or by TPH staff. All risk factor areas showed evidence of progress in implementing the Action Plan. Therefore, a key interest for the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition was to maintain momentum and progress at all levels of government and within all jurisdictions.

Participants made a strong commitment to ongoing prevention, and each roundtable designed a series of strategies to move their issue forward, referencing the relevant implementation framework. The recommended strategies are tabulated in Appendix 1. Endorsement of these strategies is requested of the Board of Health and City Council in order to further strengthen this work.

The Early Detection and Screening Working Group position paper on the primary prevention, early detection and screening of breast, ovarian and cervical cancers was developed after the other six working papers from the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition had been submitted as part of the Action Plan to the Board of Health in May 2001. Their position paper was adopted by the Board of Health in October 2002, and its recommendations will be incorporated into the Action Plan at a later date.

Ultraviolet Radiation Roundtable:

Discussions at the ultraviolet radiation roundtable focussed primarily on sun safety policies across the City and the development of a comprehensive shade policy. This roundtable highlighted the policy requirement regarding sun-protective attire for all City employees (which was adopted by City Council in January 2002) and recognized this as a significant step forward. The roundtable requested an assessment of progress on implementation of the new policy.

There is no municipal or provincial legislation with respect to provision of shade. However, the Toronto Official Plan presents an opportunity to incorporate the provision of shade into planning design principles for the City. Furthermore, since every capital project in the City of Toronto requires an official site evaluation, shade considerations could be incorporated into such evaluations. The "shade audit" concept introduced in Australia's guidelines for Shade Planning and Design could be useful for this purpose. Plans are underway to hold a "Designing for Shade" conference in Toronto in Spring 2003 and John Greenwood, the architect behind Australia's shade guidelines, will be invited. This conference will be a collaborative effort between the ultraviolet radiation working group of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition, Ryerson University and many other partners, and it could be a major catalyst for progress on enhancing the amount of shade in public places in the City of Toronto.

Physical Activity and Tobacco Roundtable:

The physical activity working group had focussed its recommendations on increasing physical activity among children and their parents. Based on input through city-wide community consultations, this focus was expanded to include youth.

The tobacco working group determined that issues concerning youth and tobacco parallel those of the physical activity workgroup. Thus, a joint physical activity and tobacco roundtable was established. The roundtable was divided to focus on the two priority areas: the Municipal Vision for Physically Active Children and Families and strategies to achieve Quality Daily Physical Activity (QDPA) in all Toronto schools. The Vision was endorsed in 1999 by Parks and Recreation, Toronto Public Health, Children's Services and the Children and Youth Action Committee (CYAC), thereby establishing physical inactivity as an important health issue on the municipal agenda for children and youth because the majority of children and youth spend a significant portion of their week in school. QDPA is crucial for increasing physical activity for children and youth. Strategies developed to implement these priority areas are underway within TPH and other divisions and will be the subject of upcoming reports to the Board of Health on the health impacts of physical inactivity among children and youth.

Dietary Risk Factors Roundtable:

The primary focus of the dietary risk factors roundtable was to develop strategies to increase the availability of vegetables and fruit and/or to promote the consumption of vegetables and fruit. In this context, City staff and community partners highlighted the various initiatives currently underway in Toronto (e.g. within TPH, Community Health Centres, and Cancer Care Ontario) that are aimed at increasing vegetable and fruit consumption and that provide food and nutrition programming to diverse communities. This roundtable also developed three new recommendations respecting: mechanisms to offer increased options for vegetable and fruit consumption in publicly owned and operated facilities; mechanisms to increase access to green grocers in local neighbourhoods; and a request that City Council direct City departments to develop a healthy eating policy that encourages and supports the consumption of healthy food (i.e. more vegetables and fruit) at City events when food is served. TPH staff are available to provide consultative assistance to City departments who are interested in preparing and implementing policy in this area.

Environmental and Occupational Carcinogens Roundtable:

The environmental and occupational carcinogens roundtable (the largest one, with 33 participants) developed three key strategies. The first requests City Council to direct the Sustainability Roundtable (SRT) to work with the Toronto Interdepartmental Environment (TIE) Committee through the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to develop a Right-to-Know strategy as a priority under the City's Environmental Plan; and to work with the City Solicitor to recommend tools (legal and otherwise) to implement such a strategy. The occupational and environmental carcinogens working group will work with the SRT on this initiative. Reducing exposure to carcinogens via air pathways and reviewing implementation of

the City's Environmentally Responsible Procurement Policy were two other strategies stemming from the roundtable discussions.

Alcohol Roundtable:

Advocating for enforceable controls and regulations that restrict access to alcohol were among the key strategies developed through the alcohol roundtable. Other strategies focused on building a wider interest in alcohol policy, monitoring the impact of international, national and provincial changes in alcohol trade and policy, ensuring an evaluation of the City's Municipal Alcohol Policy, and continuing to support the promotion of Low Risk Drinking Guidelines. TPH continues to work with its many partners on healthy public policy related to alcohol and has been involved in the development of provincial Low Risk Drinking Guidelines.

Provincial and Federal Cancer Prevention Initiatives:

The Coalition's work complements activities underway at both provincial and federal levels, and overall there is tremendous synergy in regard to the prevention of cancer. The report entitled, "Ten Key Carcinogens in Toronto Workplaces and Environment: Assessing the Potential for Exposure", which was prepared in response to recommendations contained in both the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition's Action Plan as well as the City's Environmental Plan, was approved by the Toronto Board of Health in April 2002. Officials with the Ontario Ministry of Labour met with Cancer Care Ontario to discuss the report's recommendations, and Cancer Care Ontario has agreed to facilitate additional meetings including the Ministries of Health and Long Term Care, Environment, and Agriculture and Food.

Cancer Care Ontario has also embarked on a 20-year cancer prevention and early detection plan, Cancer 2020. This initiative includes collaborative prevention programs focussed on tobacco use, diet, sunlight, and other risk factors including occupational and environmental carcinogens, and the plan will be launched in November 2002. The Coalition has been consulted at various stages of this initiative and has acted as a model of concerted action for cancer prevention.

The Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control (CSCC) Council, a national initiative for cancer control, will soon be meeting for the first time to launch the implementation phase of the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control. Setting up appropriate structures for implementation in five priority areas, including prevention, will be a key item on the agenda. The Council will advance the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control by encouraging, facilitating and supporting collaborative initiatives within the network of cancer control organizations and agencies, including the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition.

Role of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition:

Cancer prevention is a fundamental mandate of public health. As the burden of illness from this set of diseases increases steadily, so too does the need for comprehensive prevention strategies. TPH has facilitated the development of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition into a collaborative initiative of more than sixty organizations working together and engaging other sectors and levels of government to take concerted action.

The Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition has given cancer prevention a prominence and momentum that could not have been achieved solely through Public Health or any other single organization on its own. Over the four years of its existence, it has proved to be an innovative and highly effective vehicle for establishing a municipal cancer prevention agenda with far-reaching implications for federal, provincial and other institutional policy and activity. With the encouragement of provincial cancer agencies and with TPH support, the coalition established a website in November 2001 to share best practice in collective action for comprehensive cancer prevention (www.toronto.ca/health/resources/tcpc/index.htm).

The coalition has also leveraged support for cancer prevention from other sources. Over the past four years, Cancer Care Ontario has granted close to \$90,000 to the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition and its working groups. In addition, working within the coalition has brought together diverse partner organizations that are influential in the broader society. It has created credibility through members' collective knowledge of the issues, expertise in bringing together different views and achieving consensus, and resourcefulness in navigating a path towards a comprehensive action agenda.

Conclusion:

Toronto Public Health goals have been well served by the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition's collective capacity to identify local prevention needs, galvanize support, research issues and formulate evidence-based strategies that have the potential to reduce the incidence, mortality and overall burden of illness from cancer. The ongoing collaborative relationships that have been established through the workgroups and the roundtables have been invaluable in making progress towards shared objectives.

The Medical Officer of Health will continue to take a leadership role in facilitating implementation of the strategies developed through the roundtables. This, together with the City's recognition of the Action Plan as the cornerstone of support for cancer prevention in Toronto, will help the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition to continue its important work.

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List of Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Strategies developed at the May 1, 2002 roundtables to implement the Action Plan of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition