

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

October 1, 2002

To: Board of Health
From: Dr. Sheela V. Basrur, Medical Officer of Health
Subject: Toronto Public Health 2002-2003 School Communication Package

Purpose:

To share with the Board of Health the Toronto Public Health 2002-2003 School Communication Package. This is a tool which describes the school health programs and services available from Toronto Public Health, within the context of a Comprehensive School Health model.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications for this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) The Board of Health forward this report and attached sample packages to the Child and Youth Action Committee for information; and
- (2) The appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

On July 12, 2000, the Board of Health endorsed the Comprehensive School Health model for the delivery of public health services in Toronto schools. The model serves to standardize the level and mechanism of public health service delivery across the city, within a "best practice" framework. The model contributes to the health and well-being of the children and youth of Toronto, to enable optimal learning and to equip them to live healthy and productive lives. The attached School Communication Package is designed to communicate [to schools and school board officials] information about Comprehensive School Health and the school-related programs and services available within Toronto Public Health. This is the third year that a

School Communication Package has been distributed in the city, and feedback from teachers via our staff was incorporated in each successive version.

Comments:

The Comprehensive School Health [CSH] model is an approach that emphasizes collaboration between schools, families, communities, health care agencies, businesses, government, the media, and young people themselves, to help young people reach their maximum potential. Comprehensive School Health is defined as “a broad spectrum of programs, policies, activities and services that take place in schools and their surrounding communities in order to promote health and health-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, prevent specific diseases, disorders and injury, and intervene to assist those at risk.” The four main elements of the CSH model are:

- (1) instruction about health
- (2) support services for children, youth and families
- (3) social support from parents, peers, policy-makers, staff, local media and the community
- (4) a healthy physical environment.

The School Communication Package is currently the primary means to communicate to schools and school board officials the manner in which the various Toronto Public Health service areas contribute to school health. The following are some examples of school health services within the context of Toronto Public Health’s Comprehensive School Health approach:

Supporting Teachers in Educating Students About Health: Curriculum support resources and activities provided through Healthy Lifestyles programs and other service areas.

Health Services and / or Referral: Toronto Health Connection central telephone number; Immunization Infoline and services; Communicable Disease Reporting line and follow-up; AIDS and Sexual Health Infoline; Toronto Public Health web site; Dental and Oral Health Services; Sexual Health Clinics; Family Health Services.

Creating a Supportive Social Environment: Health promotion activities involving staff from Healthy Lifestyles programs, who work in partnership with students, school staff, parents and community agencies.

Maintaining and Monitoring a Safe and Healthy Physical Environment: Health inspections and consultation/training by Healthy Environments staff, including Animal Services. This also includes support from a team of Toronto Public Health staff in Healthy Environments and Healthy Lifestyles to ensure quality Student Nutrition Programs, e.g., breakfast, snack and lunch programs.

Healthy Lifestyles public health nurses are assigned to schools in a liaison role as well as a programming capacity. The School Communication Package lists the Healthy Lifestyles programs and activities available for elementary and secondary grades, and includes checklists for teachers to select programs and activities of interest. It also includes key Toronto Public Health telephone contact numbers for all service areas, the list of reportable diseases, key local

community health resources and a health theme calendar to assist teachers in planning health topics for the year.

The School Communication Package has been an extremely useful resource that has significantly assisted us in strengthening our linkages with school board officials and local school partners. Teachers and administrators find the information relevant. We have already had requests from schools for many of our programs and activities. Also, we have had meaningful collaborations with the Toronto District School Board in writing a draft Foundation Statement on Comprehensive School Health, and in sharing information with the Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board regarding the promotion of physical activity within the Comprehensive School Health framework.

The 2002-2003 School Communication Package is currently being distributed to the school board Directors of Education, superintendents, program coordinators, key department staff, and trustees, as well as multiple copies to school principals for their staff, school councils and parent and student representatives. It is also in the process of being translated into French for our two local French school boards. An evaluation of this communication tool is planned to measure the impact of this outreach strategy.

Conclusion:

Toronto Public Health is committed to working in partnership with school boards and school staff, parents, students and other community agencies within the Comprehensive School Health model to promote optimal health of the children and youth of Toronto. The School Communication Package is one useful tool to foster coordination and collaboration of public health programs with school partners.

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List of Attachments:

Toronto Public Health 2002-2003 School Communication Package

- Covering letter to Principal, Teacher, Parent/Student/School Council member
- Covering letter to school board Directors of Education, Superintendents, Program Coordinators, School Board Staff, Trustees
- Flipchart of School Health Services 2002-2003 Kindergarten to Grade Eight
- Flipchart of School Health Services 2002-2003 Secondary Schools
- Healthy Lifestyles Programs/Activities Checklist for 2002-2003 Kindergarten to Grade Eight
- Healthy Lifestyles Programs/Activities Checklist for 2002-2003 Secondary Schools
- Card with Toronto Public Health Key Telephone Numbers and Reportable Diseases 2002-2003
- Health Theme Calendar: Your Guide to School Health Promotion Planning 2002-2003

References

Toronto Board of Health Report. A Standardized Approach to the Delivery of Public Health Services in Schools. July 12, 2000

Health Canada. Comprehensive School Health: An Integrated Approach to Promoting Healthy Students in Healthy Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/children/english/sec1-1.htm>