



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Public Health: 125 Years Toward a Healthy City

Date:	February 8, 2008
To:	Board of Health
From:	Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to outline the activities being planned to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of Toronto Public Health (TPH) during 2008. The anniversary presents an opportunity to recognize Public Health as a foundation in the evolution of the City and to promote awareness of the continuing role of TPH in building a healthy city where everyone enjoys the highest level of well-being.

The theme for the anniversary celebrations is “125 Years Toward a Healthy City” and this will be reflected in a range of activities being planned for internal staff engagement and for outreach to the community. One project being planned as a legacy initiative of the 125 anniversary is the Public Health Champions Awards. This award will recognize the outstanding contribution of an individual or group to public health in Toronto. It is recommended the Board of Health establish a sub-committee to develop a nomination and selection process and a schedule to inaugurate the award in the fall of 2008.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. the Board of Health create Public Health Champions Awards as a legacy of celebrations marking the 125th Anniversary of Public Health in Toronto in 2008.
2. the Board of Health appoint a sub-committee of the Board to develop a nomination process and criteria for the selection of recipients of the Public Health Champions Awards.

3. The Public Health Champions Awards sub-committee report back to the May, 2008 Board of Health meeting with a proposed schedule for the inaugural award to be presented in the fall of 2008.

Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

DECISION HISTORY

This report is being presented to provide information to the Board of Health about activities being planned to celebrate the 125 Anniversary and to involve the Board in these activities, particularly the creation of a Public Health Champions Awards.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

On March 6th, 1883 the Council of the former City of Toronto established the Department of Public Health by appointing Dr. William Cardiff as the city's first permanent Medical Health Officer. One hundred years later, the centenary of Toronto Public Health was marked by the publication of a monograph authored by Heather MacDougall, "Activists and Advocates: Toronto's Health Department, 1883-1983". This book is an essential source for tracing the evolution of the practice of public health in Toronto and is one resource being used to plan a schedule of activities in 2008 to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Public Health in Toronto.

COMMENTS

The theme "125 Years Toward a Healthy City" has been adopted to reflect the historical context while emphasizing the mission of public health as a work in progress.

Activities in the first half of the year are directed toward an internal process of engagement, celebration and professional development among Toronto Public Health staff, and include: an all-staff meeting combining information and networking to celebrate "who we are and what we do"; a 125 historical quiz highlighting key timelines and events; an ambassadors bureau to promote networking and information-sharing across the Division; a memory yearbook to record the activities of 2008; and a time capsule with artefacts from current TPH work and a message of goodwill to public health practitioners of the future.

In the second half of the year, a number of projects involving community outreach and education are being planned, including: a photographic exhibit documenting the work of Public Health, co-sponsored with Toronto Archives; the publication of a historical booklet, presenting a plain-language summary of key issues and events; a web page presenting on-line versions of the exhibit, booklet and other resources; a Symposium on Social Determinants of Health, co-sponsored with the Centre for International Health at the University of Toronto, and featuring the Charles Hastings Lecture in Public Health; and the selection of the first Public Health Champions Awards recipients.

It is expected that a number of partnerships with community agencies will be developed as the outreach activities unfold. While involvement by members of the Board of Health

will be encouraged in all the 125 celebrations, leadership by the Board is seen as a vital aspect of creating and implementing the Public Health Champions Awards.

Toronto Public Health Champions Awards

The Public Health Champions Awards are recommended as a legacy initiative of the 125 Anniversary celebrations. Its purpose is to recognize the outstanding contribution of an individual or group to public health in Toronto. There may be different categories for recipients, covering for example, the non-profit and private sectors, and criteria may be developed for various types of contribution such as community leadership, policy innovation and impact on the city's overall quality of life. A process must be established to call for and receive nominations and to coordinate the selection according to criteria that have been publicized. To this end, it is recommended the Board of Health establish a Public Health Champions Awards sub-committee to work with staff and report back to the Board at its meeting in May 2008 with a proposed nomination and selection process and a schedule for the inaugural awards to be presented in the fall of 2008.

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SIGNATURE

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