

**SCARBOROUGH LOCAL HEALTH COMMITTEE  
SCARBOROUGH CIVIC CENTRE- COMMITTEE ROOM 1  
TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2008**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Vaij Chari (chair), Marisa Charles, Abdul Fattah, Khaliq Jabbar, Ed Castro, Colin Hughes, Bryan Hyndman, Salem Haniff, Linda Napier, Carol Timmings, Tracy Sheridan (recorder)

**Regrets:** Jean Liburd, Heidi Sin, Haweiya Egeh, Lucy Bonanno

**1 Agenda**

Motion to approve Agenda with the addition of Public Forum and New Member under Other Business. Colin and Khaliq

**2 Minutes – March 2008**

Motion to approve Minutes of March 18<sup>th</sup> with amendments including the addition of Public Forum to Business Arising and New Member Approval in Other Business. Colin and Bryan

**3 Business Arising**

- 3.1 **Ontario Child Benefit (OCB)** Colin provided an overview of the paper that he had prepared on the Ontario Child Benefit- *“The Ontario Child Benefit and the Deception of Ending the NCBS Claw back”* and the corresponding negative impacts of other benefits and claw backs including the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) . The paper analyses the impact various supplements, claw backs and policies that are claiming support for the idea of eliminating child poverty. The thesis of the paper states that: “On the face of it, the new program treats all children in low income families in the same way. Closer examination, however, reveals that the OCB has by no means ended the claw back of \$122 of the \$166 monthly National Child Benefit Supplement from welfare. Worse is that the new OCB consolidates and expands benefits for children with two new outright welfare cuts/claw back. Whereas working poor families will be ahead by the full amount of federal and Ontario child benefits by 2011, families on social assistance will not.” A draft motion to be put forward to the Toronto Board of Health has been prepared by Colin and others.

**Motion**

Colin Hughes and Brian Hyndman. Motion Carried

Whereas the Toronto Board of Health has urged that the province:

- end the claw back/cut of up to \$122/month/child of the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) from social assistance;
- increase social assistance benefit rates to reflect the real costs of basic and shelter needs; and,

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- publish annually the details of what the components of social assistance rates are and how these are determined.

And whereas:

- a result of rate cuts in 1995 and inflation is that current Ontario Works (OW) benefit rates for a lone parent with a child are now so inadequate that they fall below low income lines for a single person in Canada and in Toronto;<sup>1</sup>
- The NCBS claw back/cut was not ended and the new Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) also replaces social assistance benefits deemed as child related (i.e. benefit rate cuts and ending winter clothing and back to school allowances).
- out of \$214 in child benefit funds (\$122 of the NCBS and the \$92 OCB), a lone parent with a child will only net \$50 per month due to welfare rate and benefit cuts by 2011.
- without indexation of welfare and OCB benefits, the real value of the \$50/child recipients net will be silently erased as inflation reduces purchasing power from 2007 to 2011 and beyond such that recipients may be no better off.

Be it resolved that the Toronto Board of Health urge that the province as part of their comprehensive poverty reduction plan:

1. set social assistance benefit rates at levels that allows recipients to meet their needs (including nutrition, transportation, shelter, clothing, personal care, shelter) and detail the components of rates and how they are determined;
2. allow families to receive full child benefits without social assistance claw backs or rate/benefit reductions;
3. examine the feasibility of extending Back to School and Winter Clothing Allowances to families who are not in receipt of social assistance and who are living in low income;
4. fully index social assistance rates and the new OCB; and,
5. fully index the minimum wage.

<sup>1</sup> The current (December 2007) OW rate for a lone parent with a child under age 12 is \$1,029/month or \$12,348/year. The after-tax Low Income Measure for a single person in Canada in 2005 is \$14,604/year. The after-tax Low Income Cut-Off for a single person in a large urban area in 2006 is \$17,570/year. Ministry of Community and Social Services (2007) *Social Assistance, Pension and Tax Credit Rates*, October – December 2007; Statistics Canada (May, 2007) Catalogue # 75F0002MI – No. 004.

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**4 Toronto Environmental Alliance Presentation**

Item deferred to May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008 meeting when speaker can attend and present.

**5 Board of Health Update**

There have been no cost of living adjustments for any programs. The province committed to 5% for 2007 and announced new funding for three programs including Social Housing repairs, Dental services and student nutrition programs.

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**6 Scarborough Civic Action Network (SCAN)**

Vaij provided the Committee with an update on the SCAN Summit held on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007. There were three priority issues that were identified in SCAN's annual Survey of Scarborough residents, which in 2007 reached 1000 residents.

- Access to Community Services
- Health Care
- Good Jobs for Youth

There have been 3 sub-committees struck to work on the issues discussed by residents. Staff and some SLHC members are participating on the Health Care Sub-Committee.

SCAN hosts the survey and Summit each year.

**7 Other Business**

**7.1 Public Forum**

The Committee discussed the possibility of hosting a public forum in the fall. The following suggestions were made.

- Plan for an evening during a week day
- address a range of topics or one specific issue: discussion on this point suggested that it would be more effective to select one specific issue that has prominence in the local news and that affects the citizens of Scarborough
- An issue based forum with a publicly recognized key note speaker
- Design the event so that it will engage people on different levels
- Develop an effective and thorough outreach strategy
- Aim for early October
- There was discussion about providing a barbeque, music and other activities to attract the broadest possible cross section of people
- Gathering public input on Toronto Board of Health priorities to inform the action plan
- Recommendation by Committee: Determining one key issue that will attract a strong interest among the general public
- Piggy back on pre-existing event

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- Define target audience
- Define primary goal of the event
- Consider interpreter services
- Host in a local park such as Thompson park and make the forum an accessible and less formal event that brings community together

**ACTION:** A small group will meet to discuss goals, activities and possible format for the public forum and be prepared to report back at the May 13<sup>th</sup> SLHC meeting. Linda, Khaliq, Colin, Brian, Marisa, Ed, Saleem and Abdul are interested in participating in the small group planning of the forum

**7.2 The Scarborough Hospital Community Consultation**

The Scarborough Hospital has two community consultations taking place on April 14<sup>th</sup> and April 22<sup>nd</sup> at McGregor Community Centre.

**7.3 The Central East LHIN**

The Central East LHIN is committed to developing culturally competent models of service delivery. They have a funding stream dedicated to community based initiatives that will further these aims and objectives. It would be helpful to receive clarification on the 1% of total LHIN budget that are dedicated to community based activities that increase access to services.

**ACTION:** Vaij to follow-up and report back at May meeting

**7.4 New Member: Resignation and approving alternate new Member to SLHC**

Motion to accept the resignation of Nafisah Chowdhury from the SLHC.

Motion to replace the vacancy on the SLHC with alternate designated member, Dhinesh Sivananthan.

Marisa Charles and Colin Hughes. Motions carried.

**7.5 Next Meeting: May 13<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM Scarborough Civic Centre**

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