

## **100% Provincial Funding for Toronto Public Health Needle Exchange Program**

<b>Date:</b>	February 8, 2011
<b>To:</b>	Budget Committee
<b>From:</b>	Medical Officer of Health
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

### **SUMMARY**

---

This report is submitted to request an amendment to the Toronto Public Health (TPH) recommended 2011 Operating Budget. This amendment is required as a result of the provision of one-time, one hundred percent Provincial funding in the amount of \$175,800 as part of the Provincial Government's response to increasing demand for needle exchange services across Ontario.

This funding will assist in compliance with the Ontario Public Health Standards defined in the Health Protection and Promotion Act. The Provincial Government requires that this funding be used to purchase needles and syringes and for biohazardous waste disposal and must be fully spent by March 31, 2011.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:**

1. City Council increase the Toronto Public Health 2011 Recommended Operating Budget for one-time funding of \$175,800 gross and \$0.0 net as provided by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to address service pressures; and
2. This report be forwarded to Executive Committee meeting of February 17, 2011.

## Financial Impact

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has approved a one-time grant of \$175,800 gross and \$0.0 net to TPH to support the purchase of needles and syringes and their associated disposal costs. This enhancement is one-time, one hundred percent provincial funding and must be fully expensed by no later than March 31, 2011.

No new positions are being requested to implement this funding.

	Gross	Revenue	Net
<b>One Time 100% Support Needle Exchange Program</b>	\$175,800	\$175,800	\$0.0

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Health Protection and Promotion Act requires Boards of Health to provide access to harm reduction supplies through needle and syringe exchange programs. The funding will enable the Toronto Public Health needle exchange program to continue to meet the standards as defined in legislation and comply with relevant Best Practice Recommendations for needle exchange programs.

The goal of the needle exchange program is to reduce the spread of communicable disease in drug using populations. The rate of HIV for people who use drugs in Toronto remains low, with the most recent seroprevalence rate of 4.4%. This compares favourably to the rate in other Canadian cities of 14% in Ottawa and 25% in Vancouver. Drawing on an extensive review of scientific research, the World Health Organization concludes that there is overwhelming evidence that needle exchange programs are effective in substantially reducing HIV transmission.<sup>i</sup> In addition, a 1999 British Columbia report notes that “for every HIV infection averted in injection drug users in BC, a total lifetime medical cost of \$145,344 is avoided”.<sup>ii</sup>

In 2009, the needle exchange program operated through Toronto Public Health saw an increase in visits of 16% compared to 2008. All indications are that this trend continued in 2010.

## COMMENTS

Toronto Public Health has received notification from the Minister of Health and Long Term Care in January 2011 that additional 100% provincial funding would be provided to Toronto Public health for the purchase of needles and syringes and associated biohazardous waste disposal.

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has provided accountability and administrative details relating to this funding, including the fact that the funding must be used to purchase needles and syringes and for disposal costs and that this funding be fully expensed by March 31, 2011.

This funding will assist TPH in meeting the requirements of the Ontario Public Health Standards and will assist in addressing current service pressures.

## **CONTACT**

Dr. Barbara Yaffe  
Director, Communicable Disease Control & Associate Medical Officer of Health  
Toronto Public Health  
T: (416) 392-7405 F: (416) 392-0713

## **SIGNATURE**

---

Dr. David McKeown  
Medical Officer of Health

---

### References:

<sup>i</sup> WHO. Department of HIV/AIDS WHO. Policy and programming update guide for HIV/AIDS prevention and care among injecting drug users. World Health Organization, 2005.

<sup>ii</sup> Wong E, MacDougall RG, Patrick DM, Rekart ML, Barnett J. *HIV/AIDS update: semi-annual 1999*. Vancouver: British Columbia Centre for Disease Control Society; 1999.