

Food Safety Program - Provincial Funding Enhancement

Date:	December 22, 2010
To:	Toronto Board of Health
From:	Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report is submitted to request an amendment to the Toronto Public Health (TPH) Operating Budget for 2011. This amendment is required as result of the provision of one-time, one hundred percent. Provincial funding in the amount of \$329,972 as part of the Ontario Government's response to Justice Haines' recommendations in his report "Farm to Fork; A Strategy for Meat Safety in Ontario."

This funding enhancement will assist in compliance with the Ontario Public Health Standard Food Safety Standards. The provincial government requires that this one-time funding be used to enhance the current food safety program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. City Council increase the Toronto Public Health Recommended 2011 Operating Budget for one-time funding of \$329,972 gross and \$0.0 net as provided by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to enhance the Toronto Food Safety Program; and
2. this report be forwarded to the Budget Committee meeting of January 10, 2011 for consideration.

Financial Impact

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has approved a one-time grant of \$329,972 gross and \$0.0 net to TPH for the Farm to Fork; A Strategy for Meat Safety in Ontario

(Haines' funding). 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 enhancement. The funding goals will be achieved through expanded after-hours (overtime based) activity that is equivalent to eight full time equivalent positions for the duration of the funding (January 1, 2011 through March 31, 2011).

The table below summarizes the requested one-time budget adjustment to the Toronto Public Health 2011 Operating Budget.

	Gross	Revenue	Net
Enhancement of Food Safety Program	\$329,972	\$329,972	\$0.0

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of April 15, 2009, the Board of Health approved the report *Food Safety and Foodborne Illness in Toronto* and approved a series of recommended actions including:

Recommendation 1

That the government of Ontario implement the outstanding recommendations of the 2005 Report of the Meat Regulatory and Inspection Review (the Haines Report), including:

iv) Develop and implement uniform consumer food safety education programs;

and

Recommendation 5

That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) ensure that Boards of Health receive sufficient provincial funding to comply fully with the Food Safety Protocol of the Ontario Public Health Standards.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto Public Health has a very active Food Safety Program implementing the requirements of the Ontario Public Health Food Safety standards. Approximately 30,000 food safety inspections are conducted each year and approximately 9,000 members of the public receive certified food handler training. The April 20, 2009 *Foodborne Illness in Toronto* report to the Board of Health estimated that the full burden of foodborne illness in Toronto is 437,000 cases per year, or one in every six residents; the report estimates the economic impact in health care costs and lost productivity to be in the range of \$500 million annually. The accompanying report *Food Safety in Toronto* identified weaknesses

in current food safety systems and inter-agency cooperation and calls for improvements to be made by federal and provincial agencies.

The enhanced funding will result in increased inspections of food safety premises and increased training capacity for an anticipated increase in requests for the food handler program from the community.

COMMENTS

Toronto Public Health received notification from the Minister of Health and Long Term Care in November 2010 that a budget enhancement would be provided for the Toronto Public Health Food Safety Operating Budget as part of the Provincial strategy for Meat Safety in Ontario.

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care subsequently provided accountability and administrative details relating to this funding, which underscored the fact that the funding must be used for the sole purpose of enhancing implementation of the Ontario Public Health Food Safety Standards and that the funding must be fully expensed by March 31, 2011.

These funds will be used to increase food safety inspections, deliver additional food-handler training and provide public education on food safety.

The enhanced funding will allow TPH to undertake further developmental work on expanded and targeted Home Food Safety education, for future implementation.

Additional food safety inspections will allow for a catch-up on both lower risk food outlets and establishments that primarily operate outside of regular business hours (e.g. nightclubs). This will allow TPH to better meet provincial inspection targets for medium and lower risk facilities.

CONTACT

Wolf Saxler
Manager, Healthy Environments
Tel: 416-338-8361
Fax: 416-338-8510
E-mail: wsaxler@toronto.ca

Ron de Burger
Director, Healthy Environments
Tel: 416-338-7953
Fax: 416-392-0713
E-mail: rdeburg@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Dr. David McKeown
Medical Officer of Health