



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 14, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton's Healthy Kids (Childhood Obesity) Strategy - BOH14007 (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Not Applicable

Information:

Background

On March 14th 2014, an Information Update was submitted to the Board of Health outlining details of the City of Hamilton's application to the provincial Healthy Kids Community Challenge (HKCC) (Appendix A). Due to the provincial election, the outcome of applications has not been announced. This Information Report provides a brief background about childhood obesity, highlights of the "No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy" report developed by the Healthy Kids Panel, a high-level summary of how the work of Public Health Services (PHS) is addressing the report recommendations, and opportunities that remain. A Recommendation Report will be presented if our application to the HKCC is successful.

What is Obesity and How is it Measured in Children?

At the basic level, overweight and obesity are a result of energy imbalance, where the amount of energy consumed by an individual (food and beverage intake) is greater than the amount of energy expended by that individual (physical activity)¹. However, the

social determinants of health have a significant influence on food and beverage intake and physical activity, making obesity a complex issue to address.

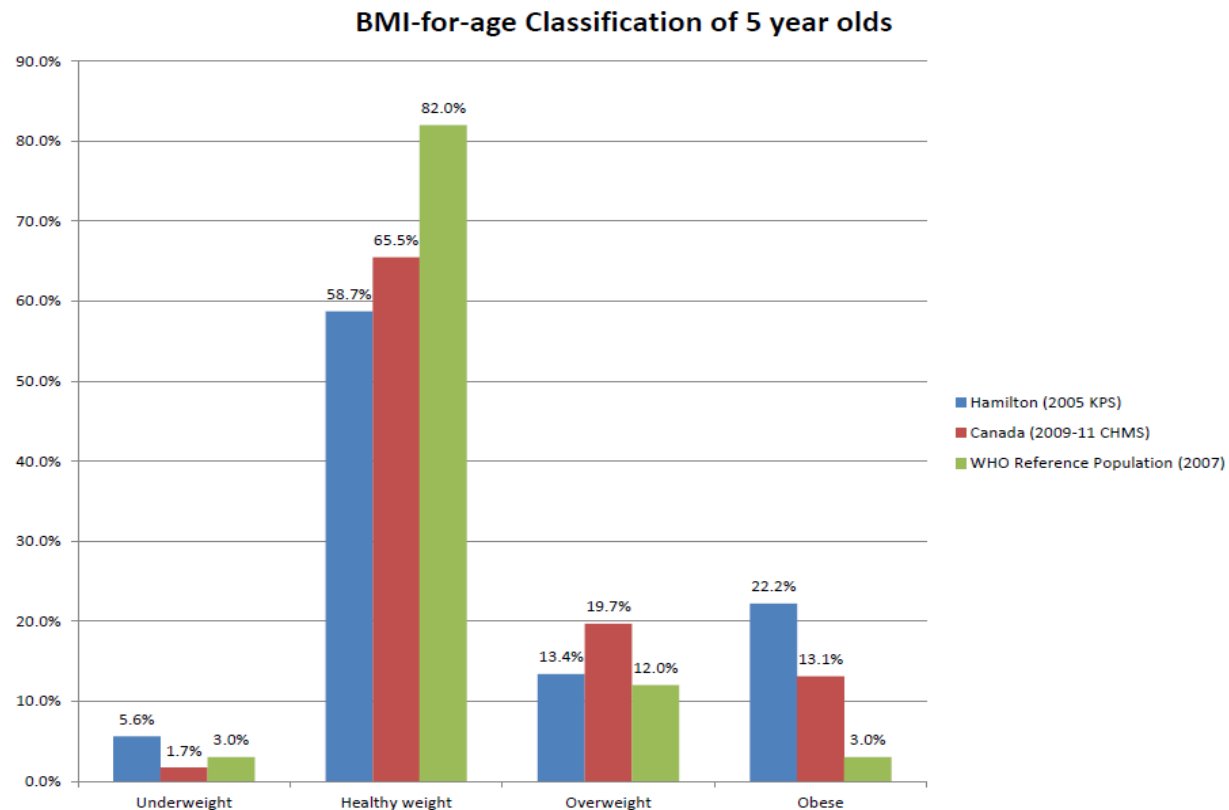
The World Health Organization (WHO) defines overweight and obesity as “abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health”². The most common approach to classifying weight is the body mass index (BMI), which is an estimate based on weight relative to height³. In 2007, the WHO released a new set of age/sex specific classification cut-offs for children and adolescents to correctly interpret a child’s BMI (separate charts for boys and girls, 2-19 years of age). These charts are used to assess whether a child is obese or overweight.

Why Is Obesity an Important Issue to Address?

Overweight and obesity are threatening the future of our children. Overweight and obesity have been linked to an array of health and psychological consequences, including Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, low self-esteem, depression and behavioural problems⁴. Research also shows that overweight and obese children and youth are likely to become obese adults⁵. Health risks linked to overweight and obesity into adulthood include heart disease and stroke, diabetes, arthritis and some cancers². Overweight and obesity also impact our health care system and our economy. In 2009, obesity cost Ontario nearly \$4.5 billion: \$1.6 billion in direct health care costs due to hospital care, pharmaceuticals, physician care and institutional care; and \$2.87 billion in indirect costs due to lost productivity of people unable to work as a result of premature death, short or long-term disability or because they are unable to find employment due to discrimination⁶. The City of Hamilton is committed to being the best place in Canada to raise a child, and overweight and obesity are issues that must be addressed to ensure our children grow up to lead healthy, productive lives.

Childhood Obesity Rates

Overweight and obesity rates in Canada have risen tremendously in the past 30 years. In 1978-79, Canadian self-report data (where a child or parent is asked to report the child’s height and weight) showed that 15% of 2-17 year olds were overweight or obese. The 2009-11 Canadian Health Measures Survey, the most recent measured data (where a health care professional measures a child’s height and weight) for children and adolescents shows that 32.8% of 5-11 year olds and 30.1% of 12-17 year olds are overweight or obese⁷. The City of Hamilton’s limited data show that 31.8% of 12-17 year olds and 35.6% of 5 year olds are overweight or obese^{8,9}. Local rates are based on self or parent-report data, which research has shown to under estimate obesity rates¹⁰. The graph below compares rates of obesity for 5 year olds using global (WHO Reference Population), national (Canadian Health Measures Survey) and local (Hamilton’s Kindergarten Parent Survey) samples. Significant benefits can be achieved by working to reduce these rates in Hamilton.



Hamilton's Healthy Kids: A Strategic Priority

PHS has been working on obesity prevention for nearly a decade, highlighting the need for a long-term strategy. In 2012, the City of Hamilton's Corporate Strategic Plan identified a prosperous and healthy community as a strategic priority. Within this priority, the Corporate Strategic Plan identified a need to support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents, including a strategy to prevent childhood obesity.

This work intersects with multiple priorities, including active transportation, food strategy, Pan/Para Pan American games, physical literacy (the ability to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments), prenatal programs, the Healthy Babies/Healthy Children program, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, and the work with schools and school boards, including the school Health Action Teams.

Childhood Obesity vs. Healthy Kids

Research literature and experts in the field emphasize the importance of moving away from the use of stigmatizing language, such as "obesity" and towards positive language such as "healthy kids". Learning from Hamilton's Healthy Birth Weights Strategy (language shift from Hamilton's Low Birth Weight Strategy), positive framing of issues

can have a positive influence on community engagement. Therefore, Hamilton's Childhood Obesity Strategy is being renamed the Hamilton Healthy Kids Strategy (HHKS). Healthy kids come from healthy families, attend healthy schools, and live in healthy communities. Through collaborative, coordinated action, the City of Hamilton can ensure our City is the best place in Canada to raise a child.

Ontario's Healthy Kids Panel

Also in 2012, the Government of Ontario set a provincial target of reducing rates of childhood obesity by 20% over 5 years. The government created the Healthy Kids Panel (HKP), a multi-sectoral group of 18 leading experts in their fields who have a broad understanding of childhood obesity. The HKP was tasked with providing recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to achieve this reduction target. The panel reviewed the literature and strategies in Ontario and other jurisdictions and conducted broad consultations with parents, other caregivers, youth and experts in the field. In 2013, the HKP released their report, "No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy", which outlines 23 specific recommendations to reduce obesity rates, grouped into 3 prongs:

- Start all kids on the path to health
- Change the food environment
- Create healthy communities

The report can be found here:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/healthy_kids/healthy_kids.pdf. A list of recommendations is provided in Appendix B.

Since the HKP report was released, the Government of Ontario has announced a number of initiatives to address the recommendations outlined in the report. A high-level summary of these announcements can be found in Appendix C.

Provincial leadership, commitment and investment in reducing the rates of childhood obesity present a key opportunity to align local action with the provincial strategy to create synergy and maximize impact.

Environmental Scan

The initial step in the development of the HHKS was to conduct an environmental scan (November 2013 – January 2014), in consultation with a broad spectrum of staff across PHS and Community & Emergency Services (CES), to describe how the work being done by the City and its' partners aligns with the recommendations outlined in the HKP report. In addition, informal discussions with other Public Health Units (PHUs) were held to learn about their work related to obesity prevention and the HKP report recommendations. From these efforts, gaps and opportunities for further action were identified.

Some key highlights from this environmental scan:

- Most PHUs are still at the preliminary stage of looking at how their current work aligns with the provincial recommendations and identifying gaps.
- Hamilton is the only municipality in Ontario that has a dedicated staff member in place already to lead the childhood obesity prevention strategy.
- The City of Hamilton's PHS and CES Departments work with many partners to provide and support a variety of evidence-based programs and services aimed at starting all kids on the path to health, changing the food environment and creating healthy communities.
- Opportunities to strengthen efforts in key areas exist, such as:
 - Finding the information we are missing on the extent of the obesity issue for children in Hamilton.
 - Getting the whole community on board with addressing this important issue - from recreation centres to school boards to private businesses, to physicians (among others).
 - Making sure our whole community is giving the same clear message about the importance and meaning of good nutrition and regular physical activity.
 - Using the 2015 Pan/Para Pan American Games as a way to make participating in physical activity attractive to our City's children and youth; before, during and after the Games.

Healthy Kids Community Challenge

On January 24, 2014, the HKCC was announced and the HHKS shifted focus to engage stakeholders to submit an application. This funding opportunity will provide successful communities with:

- Up to \$1.5 million over 4 years,
- Up to 50% of the annual salary of a Project Manager over 4 years, and
- Training and support to develop implement and evaluate local action plans.

The City of Hamilton's application included the support of three Councillors, 22 community partners and six City of Hamilton divisions from within PHS, C&ES and City Housing Hamilton with a focus on the Hamilton Mountain (Wards 6, 7, 8). This population size aligned well with the proposal requirements to be focused on communities with a population between 10,000-200,000. Given the City of Hamilton's focus on the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, with many resources to date supporting downtown neighbourhoods, this created an opportunity to focus on and dedicate resources to underserved mountain areas.

Successful communities will work collaboratively with their partners to develop and implement community-based action plans to address childhood obesity.

Next Steps

The results of the HKCC will shape how the HHKS will evolve in the coming months. If the Hamilton Mountain is selected to participate in The Challenge, this will be the focus of the HHKS. If not, we will move forward with our internal and external partners to explore other funding opportunities to implement the activities outlined in our HKCC application, including a plan to collect high quality, local data to support the HHKS.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report BOH14007 – Healthy Kids Community Challenge Information Update

Appendix B to Report BOH14007 – Healthy Kids Panel Recommendations

Appendix C to Report BOH14007 – Government of Ontario Announcements

References

- ¹ Caballero B. The Global Epidemic of Obesity: An Overview. *Epidemiologic Reviews* 2007; 29 (1): 1-5.
- ² World Health Organization. <http://www.who.int/topics/obesity/en/>
- ³ de Onis M, Onyango A, Borghi E, Siyam A, Blossner M, Lutter C. Worldwide Implementation of the WHO Child Growth Standards. *Public Health Nutrition* 2012; 15(9):1603-10.
- ⁴ Reilly J, Methven E, McDowell Z, Hacking B, Alexander D, Stewart L, Kelnar C. Health consequences of obesity. *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 2003; 88(9): 748-52.
- ⁵ Nader PR, O'Brien M, Houts R, Bradley R, Belsky J, Crosnoe R, Friedman S, Mei Z, Susman EJ. Identifying Risk for Obesity in Early Childhood. *Pediatrics* 2006; 118(3):594-601.
- ⁶ Katzmarzyk PT. The economic costs associated with physical inactivity and obesity in Ontario. *The Health and Fitness Journal of Canada*, 2011; 4(4):31-40.
- ⁷ Roberts KC, Shields M, de Groh M, Aziz A, Gilbert JA. Overweight and obesity in children and adolescents: Results from the 2009 to 2011 Canadian Health Measures Survey. *Health Reports* 2012; 23(3)39-43.
- ⁸ Statistics Canada. Table 105-0501–Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). Accessed September 13, 2013.
- ⁹ Hamilton Kindergarten Parent Survey, 2005.
- ¹⁰ Shields M, Gorber SC, Janssen I, Tremblay MS. Obesity estimates for children based on parent-reported versus direct measures. *Health Reports* 2011; 22(3):47-58.