

INFORMATION REPORT

TO: Mayor and Members Board of Health	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: September 16, 2013	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Public Health School Asthma Program (BOH13014) (City Wide)	
SUBMITTED BY: Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services Department	PREPARED BY: Marie Verbickas (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3548
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Council Direction:

Not Applicable

Information:

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) informed Hamilton Public Health Services (PHS) on June 27, 2013 that the 100% provincially funded Public Health School Asthma Program would be discontinued effective October 30, 2013.

Background:

In 2000, following recommendations from a Coroner's Inquest into the death of a teen with asthma, the MOHLTC announced an Asthma Plan of Action that included several pilot projects. In 2002, the Public Health School Asthma Pilot Project began in five health units: Hamilton, Durham, Halton, Peel and Sudbury.

From 2002-2006, the Public Health School Asthma Pilot Project team successfully implemented and evaluated the asthma education pilot program in elementary schools. This program included education groups for students with asthma, support for school administrators, staff education sessions and support in developing School Board

policies. The pilot project in Hamilton involved 34 schools and reached 242 children, resulting in improvements at the individual and school level (e.g, health services use, asthma free days, and school absenteeism).

The Public Health School Asthma Program, as a non-mandated program, was not included in the 2008 Ontario Public Health Standards. Since 2008, the focus of the Public Health School Asthma Program shifted to include the development of provincial dissemination strategies so that all Public Health units and communities across the province could readily access resources to support children and youth with asthma.

As shown in the chart below, the elementary school uptake of the Public Health School Asthma Program in Hamilton has declined significantly since 2009. A similar trend occurred in the other Public Health units delivering the Public Health School Asthma Program which was identified during consultations with the MOHLTC and the other Public Health unit managers.

**Public Health School Asthma Program
School/Student Uptake 2008 - 2013**

	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013
# of Schools requesting asthma support	5	0	1	0	3
# of Asthma Education Series (6 sessions each) provided to children with asthma	5	0	0	0	0
# of Children attending asthma education series	40	0	0	0	0

As referred to in previous reports, (Public Health School Asthma Project Budget BOH09022 - June 24, 2009 and BOH10025 - September 27, 2010) and in response to the decline in elementary school uptake; there was support to expand asthma education to other child focused settings, such as child care centres and recreation programs. The priority was to educate the care providers of children regarding asthma and to work to develop protocols to support staff in caring for children with asthma. While expanding into these other settings, the MOHLTC directive was for the Public Health School

Asthma Program to continue promoting school based education groups for students with asthma as an essential part of the program.

Since 2009, the majority of requests from schools, child care centres and summer camps have been for asthma resources. There has also been consultation and support for one of the School Boards in their development of an Asthma Management Plan.

In the Spring of 2013, the MOHLTC indicated that discontinuing the Public Health School Asthma Program was being considered. To avoid potential staffing implications, a decision was made at PHS to defer filling the vacant Public Health Nurse (PHN) Coordinator position pending the MOHLTC's decision. In April, the possible discontinuation of the Public Health School Asthma Program was discussed with our English and French School Board partners. There was acknowledgement that asthma education was not a priority health issue for elementary schools.

Given the extensive resource development by the Public Health School Asthma Program, requests for asthma education programs and supports can now be addressed by provincial resources (See Appendix A). The Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea) is a non-profit provincial organization that provides high quality programs and services to support healthy schools and communities. Ophea's resources are easily accessible on-line. School Board partners indicated that these resources meet the needs of their educators who are already accessing the Ophea website for resources on a variety of health topics.

Confirmation that the Public Health School Asthma Program would be discontinued was received from the MOHLTC on June 27, 2013. PHS will be sending a letter announcing the discontinuation of the Public Health School Asthma Program to our stakeholders including the School Boards and Child Care Networks this Fall (See Appendix B). Ophea is currently finalizing this letter. This letter identifies how to access resources and where stakeholders can direct requests for information about asthma.

Summary

Much progress has been made over the past decade as a result of the successful collaborative work of local and provincial partners involved in the Public Health School Asthma Program. The overall goal of the program was to create asthma friendly and supportive schools, child care settings and other child-focused environments. PHS, in collaboration with the MOHLTC, provincial partners and other participating Public Health units contributed to the development of an extensive inventory of resources that are now available to support children with asthma where they live, learn and play. Although 100% provincial funding for the Public Health School Asthma Program will end in October 2013, communities will continue to be able to access information and support to assist them in creating asthma friendly environments.

Appendices

Appendix A - Public Health School Asthma Program Resources

Appendix B - Letter to Stakeholders, Draft version

Public Health School Asthma Program Resources

Provincial Resources

The Public Health School Asthma Program (PHSAP), working in partnership with the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea) and the Ontario Lung Association (OLA) developed many free resources that support the creation of asthma friendly environments. Moving forward, these two provincial organizations will continue to develop and disseminate asthma resources for child and youth- focused settings across Ontario. The key asthma resources are highlighted below:

Ophea www.ophea.net

- www.asthmainschools.com (includes link to “Child Care Centres”)
- Keeping Children and Youth with Asthma Active – webinar
- Managing Asthma In Our Schools - DVD Resource Package
- Asthma in Schools: What Educators Need to Know
- Asthma and Physical Activity: What Educators and Coaches Need to Know

The Ontario Lung Association www.on.lung.ca

- Creating Asthma Friendly Child Care Centres manual
- 7 Steps to Help You Make Your School Asthma-Friendly
- Managing Asthma Attacks poster
- Student Asthma Management Plan
- Child Asthma Management Plan
- The OLA also offers free phone access to Certified Respiratory Educators through their Asthma Action Helpline 1-888-344 LUNG (5864)

Local Resources:

Hamilton has excellent asthma programs that offer a variety of services for children and their families. These include:

- St. Joseph’s Healthcare Family Asthma Education Program - King Campus
- St. Joseph’s Healthcare Family Asthma Education Program- Charlton Campus
- Allergy/Asthma Clinic at McMaster Children’s Hospital
- North Hamilton Community Health Centre
- Hamilton Family Health Team

Draft

- Email, letter
- To be adaptable for each public health unit as per underlined text
- Stakeholders

Dear insert name,

On behalf of insert organization name thank you for your participation in/support of the Public Health School Asthma Program (PHSAP) over the past 10 years. It has been a privilege to support creating asthma-friendly child_care centres, schools and recreation programs.

As of insert date, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care will be discontinuing the Public Health School Asthma Program. The Asthma Coordinator at insert Health department name will no longer be providing PHSAP services. Ophea (www.ophea.net), in partnership with the Ontario Lung Association (OLA), will be building on the important work of PHSAP in leading an integrated approach to continue to create and maintain asthma-friendly child and youth focused environments throughout the province. Thank you to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care for their support of this initiative. The Ministry will continue to fund Ophea and the Ontario Lung Association as part of their continued commitment in striving to make every Ontario school and child environment asthma-friendly.

In support of asthma-friendly child and youth focused environments Ophea offers a variety of free asthma resources developed in partnership with PHSAP which are available at www.ophea.net/order. The following resources will also be disseminated to all Ontario publicly funded schools in September 2013:

- Ophea's *Managing Asthma In Our Schools DVD Resource Package*. The DVD provides educators with knowledge to support students in managing their asthma independently, and by enhancing educators' understanding and confidence in responding to asthma-related situations.
- *Asthma in Schools: What Educators Need to Know*
- *Asthma and Physical Activity: What Educators and Coaches Need to Know*
- *7 Steps to Help You Make Your School Asthma-Friendly*

In addition, www.asthmainschools.com created by PHSAP and key partners continues to provide step by step implementation support to create asthma-friendly child and youth focused environments.

The Ontario Lung Association has Certified Respiratory Educators on staff, available to provide advice, training and resources at 1-888-344-LUNG (5864) or go to www.on.lung.ca to order free asthma resources including:

- *Creating Asthma Friendly Child Care Centres* manual
- *7 Steps to Help You Make Your School Asthma-Friendly*
- *Managing Asthma Attacks* poster
- *Student Asthma Management Plan*

- *Child Asthma Management Plan*

Ophea , OLA and other key stakeholders are committed to continuing to develop relevant resources, supports and training to address gaps in asthma awareness, knowledge and management. If you identify gaps in resources and/or support, please contact Muriel Rounthwaite at Ophea at mrounthwaite@ophea.org or 416-426-7157 and/or Carole Madeley at OLA at cmadeley@on.lung.ca or 416-864-9911 ext. 281.

Again, we thank you for your support of the program,

Sincerely,

Insert Name
Title
Organization