

# Board of Health Meeting Summary

*September 12, 2012*

Peterborough County-City  
**HEALTH UNIT**  
...because health matters!

## **Introductions: New Board of Health Member**

The recently elected Chief of Curve Lake First Nation [Phyllis Williams](#) was introduced as the Board of Health's newest member. She has a great deal of past experience working in the health and social services field, and formerly served as the Manager of Health Services at Curve Lake. She is replacing long-time Board of Health member former chief, Keith Knott.

## **Day in the Life – Sewage Inspector**

Public Health Inspector Kathleen Shepherd provided an overview of a typical day in her role with the [Sewage Inspection Program](#). She helps customers at the counter with sewage system permit applications, and spends most of her day in the field inspecting sewage disposal systems such as privies, leaching pits, cesspools, septic tank systems and holding tanks, and also handles complaints. She is responsible for ensuring building code guidelines are properly followed when sewage systems are installed, and issues permits once compliance is ensured. The Health Unit is the agency responsible for privately-owned sewage systems in the County and City of Peterborough.

## **Q2 2012 Program Report**

Larry Stinson, Director of Public Health Programs, presented the compliance status of Health Unit programs according to the Ontario Public Health Standards for the first half of 2012. He noted that the Health Unit is compliant in most program areas, and partially compliant in areas where there is limited capacity due to chronic underfunding and staff reductions. He also reported that the Health Unit's program activity performance was on track for all indicators required by the Accountability Agreement.

## **Q2 2012 Financial Report**

Brent Woodford, Director of Corporate Services, reported on the Health Unit's financial position for the second quarter. All program areas are on track according to the 2012 budget for this point in the year.

## **Cuts to Social Assistance Benefits: A Public Health Perspective**

Health Promoter Christine Post provided a comprehensive overview on the expected impact of [cuts to provincial social assistance benefits programs](#), including Discretionary Benefits, the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit, and the Home Repairs Benefit. The 2012 Ontario provincial budget removed approximately \$133 million annually from benefits to people on social assistance. In Peterborough, this means 2013 Discretionary Benefits will be cut from \$1.95 million to \$924,000. Loss of funding to discretionary benefits will reduce the ability of social assistance clients to access Health Unit supports, such as [dental services](#) and [food security programs](#). Cuts will also undermine some of the Health Unit's broader public education and policy efforts in [injury prevention](#) (through a loss of funding for safety equipment), the [built environment](#) (through a loss of transit subsidies), and access to recreation (through a loss of recreation subsidies for up to 800 children). The overall expected impact will be a reduction in the physical and mental health of many of our community's most vulnerable residents. The board approved a motion to send a letter to various provincial ministers to stop the planned cuts and to share Ms. Post's presentation with local municipal councils and the municipal Joint Services Committee.

## **Limited Incomes: A Recipe for Hunger**

Dr. Rosana Pellizzari presented the annual Nutritious Food Basket report entitled [Limited Incomes: A Recipe for Hunger](#). This report shows how Peterborough's most vulnerable residents continue to suffer from an inability to choose to eat nutritiously based on current food costs. Each May, Health Unit Nutritionists price out local food costs required to provide a basic nutritious diet. These costs are compared to a variety of income scenarios to determine affordability. The report noted that local food prices have increased 6.5% over the past two years; however, the issue is not the cost of food, but that incomes are too low. With ten percent of local households experiencing food insecurity, Dr. Pellizzari described the situation as a public health crisis requiring the urgent attention and cooperation of all levels of government.

## **Indoor Tanning Beds**

Councillor Lesley Parnell described the extensive work taking place in many municipalities to enact bylaws banning [indoor tanning](#) for youth under 18 years. She encouraged the Board of Health to request local municipalities to develop a similar bylaw. Dr. Pellizzari noted that tanning beds are considered a Class 1 carcinogen and there is precedent in Ontario for a municipality passing a similar by law. A proposal to enact provincial legislation banning tanning beds entitled the [Skin Cancer Prevention Act](#) will receive its second reading at Queen's Park in November.

## **Changes to Smoking By-Law in Peterborough re: Waterpipes**

Councillor Parnell updated the board that City staff are amending the smoking bylaw to include reference to waterpipes to be brought forward to City Council in late October.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October 10, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Administration Building, [22 Winookeedaa Street, Curve Lake First Nation](#).

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Rosana Pellizzari  
Medical Officer of Health

Deputy Mayor Andy Sharpe  
Chair, Board of Health

*Please contact Brittany Cadence, Communications Supervisor, with any questions at [bcadence@pcchu.ca](mailto:bcadence@pcchu.ca) or (705) 743-1000, ext. 391.*

