

Niagara Region

REPORT TO: Co-Chairs and Members
Public Health and Social Services Committee

SUBJECT: Enhanced Provincial Funding for Food Safety and Safe Water

RECOMMENDATION

That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to advise the Public Health and Social Services Committee about enhanced provincial funding for the Food Safety and Safe Water programs and to outline the additional activities which will be implemented in these programs.

BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

Budget enhancements to the Food Safety and Safe Water programs are funded 100% by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC). No impact on the regional tax base will be incurred.

REPORT

On October 14, 2010, Niagara Region Public Health (NRPH) received notification from MOHLTC of 100% one-time funding of up to \$35,261 to support the delivery of the Safe Water Program in this region in 2011. Further notification was received on November 22, 2010, that 100% one-time funding of up to \$78,344 was also being made available to NRPH to augment the delivery of the Food Safety Program in 2011. In both cases, the funding was in addition to the 75% base funding for these programs which is provided by the Ministry through Program Based Grants. NRPH has been advised that this 100% enhanced funding will be ongoing and is to be used solely for the purpose of increasing NRPH's capacity to meet the requirements of the Safe Water Program Standard and the Food Safety Standard.

NRPH has identified a number of initiatives which will be implemented as a result of these enhancements:

Food Safety:

1. Additional inspections will be conducted at facilities where compliance issues have been identified, and will comprise a combination of educational and enforcement approaches.
2. Additional food handler education and certification courses will be provided, which will assist in the roll-out of the Region's by-law that requires mandatory certification of food handlers in high and medium risk facilities.
3. Food handler and certification courses in languages other than English will be provided.
4. Seasonal educational campaigns targeting food safety in the home, on picnics, camping trips, etc., will be conducted.

Safe Water:

1. Predictive modeling: NRPH has been investigating the feasibility and appropriateness of introducing predictive modeling as a means of providing real-time assessment of suitability for swimming. A pilot program will be initiated at a popular local beach in the 2012 swimming season, and it is anticipated that daily monitoring of specific environmental and meteorological data at this site will assist greatly in determining the practicality of this alternative methodology.
2. GIS mapping: NRPH is now receiving notification of all adverse results for private water samples in the Region. GIS mapping of this data will assist in identifying communities where further studies may be warranted and where educational activities can be specifically targeted.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

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