

Heart Health Action Windsor Essex

Terms of Reference

Historical Context

The provincial funding for the Heart Health Program is provided to local health units and their community partners by the Ontario Ministry of Health, Health Promotion Branch. The Ontario Heart Health Program evolved from a national Heart Health initiative whose mandate includes reducing the prevalence of premature death from the nation's number one killer - Heart Disease.

A key component of the Ontario Heart Health Program was the establishment of five Heart Health program pilot sites throughout the province. These 5 sites designed, adapted, implemented and monitored Heart Health initiatives over a six year period. Lessons learned from these 5 sites will serve as the starting point from which over thirty Heart Health Programs across the province will evolve.

A province-wide call for proposals to develop local Heart Health Programs served as the impetus for bringing approximately 40 community partners together on September 30, 1997, to discuss the merits of forming a strategic alliance to apply for Heart Health Program funding and if successful, to implement and monitor the program. The Heart Health Program focuses on the three modifiable risk factors - tobacco use and exposure, unhealthy eating and physical inactivity - known to have the greatest potential to reduce the premature death and illness caused by Heart Disease. The relationship between these same risk factors and the prevention of several other chronic diseases (e.g. lung cancer, colon cancer, breast cancer, type 11 diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, etc.) is important in that it serves to broaden the scope of potential community partners who may have an interest in improving the risk factor profile of our local community.

Although many of the partners who came together to support the Heart Health Program have not previously worked together on common initiatives, several others have. Community groups, organizations, business, labor, local government, not-for-profit agencies and individual citizens in Windsor-Essex County have a solid track record of working together for the betterment of the community. The "Heart Health Coalition" is just another example of this community's collective commitment to the overall health, quality of life and well being of its citizens.

Activities and Services

Although a number of initiatives to reduce tobacco use and exposure, increase physical activity levels and promote healthy eating have been undertaken or are underway in Windsor-Essex County, many of these activities are offered by individual organizations or in limited partnerships. Few are planned in a comprehensive, community wide manner by a broad cross-section of partners. Heart Health Action Windsor Essex hopes to improve this situation by building on existing initiatives and expanding their scope and reach. Many new activities that have proven to be effective will be chosen, introduced, delivered and monitored by Heart Health Action Windsor Essex over the next 5 years.

Critical Issues

Heart Health Action Windsor Essex has identified 10 critical issues that need to be addressed or considered as we plan for the future.

1. The incidence of premature death and illness from Heart Disease is higher in Windsor-Essex County than in the rest of the province.
2. The prevalence of tobacco use, unhealthy eating and physical inactivity is higher in Windsor-Essex County than in the rest of the province.
3. There needs to be a mechanism in place for monitoring changes in the prevalence of premature death and illness from Heart Disease in Windsor-Essex County.
4. There needs to be a mechanism in place for monitoring changes in the prevalence of tobacco use and exposure, healthy eating, and physical activity levels in Windsor-Essex County.
5. Activities must focus on prevention of Heart Disease through risk factor modification rather than treatment of disease.
6. The importance of prevention is magnified in the face of continuous health care cut-backs.
7. Current and reliable information, programs and interventions must be offered in an efficient and effective manner.
8. Reasons for fragmentation in delivery of preventative health programs and services should be determined and solutions examined in order to help sustain the Heart Health partnerships.
9. The Heart Health Program guidelines and the approved Windsor-Essex County Heart Health proposal will guide all program activities.
10. The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit is accountable to the Ontario Ministry of Health for ensuring Heart Health Program funds are administered in accordance with the Heart Health Program Guidelines and the approved Heart Health Proposal.

Values

The values of Heart Health Action Windsor Essex provide a context which should guide all decisions and actions of the collective. The values should also provide direction in addressing the critical issues identified.

1. All programs should be selected and planned in order to achieve maximum impact.
2. Program evaluation is a necessary component of all initiatives. In addition to Ministry of Health reporting requirements, program evaluation allows for the continuation of effective interventions and the discontinuation of interventions that are shown to be less effective.
3. In general, membership in Heart Health Action Windsor Essex should be inclusive rather than exclusive.
4. All communication (print, spoken or otherwise) related to the internal and external business of Heart Health Action Windsor Essex should be clear and consistent.
5. Honesty and openness should be the standard for all Heart Health Action Windsor Essex interactions or activities.
6. In order to ensure Heart Health Action Windsor Essex achieves and keeps a high level of integrity, the planning, implementation and monitoring of activities should be of high quality.
7. Activities of Heart Health Action Windsor Essex should be acceptable to its members as well as the community for which its activities are intended.
8. The opinions, perspectives and contributions of all Heart Health Action Windsor Essex members should be valued and respected.
9. The collective acknowledges and values the many factors that threaten or enhance the health of our community; however, Heart Health Action Windsor Essex resources will focus on reducing the prevalence of the three risk factors (tobacco use and exposure, physical inactivity and unhealthy eating) which have the greatest potential to reduce premature death and disability of Windsor-Essex County residents.
10. New initiatives should be considered and existing programs should be planned and implemented in a flexible and adaptable manner.

Vision Statement

Heart Health Action Windsor Essex envisions a community where everyone regardless of age, gender, culture, race or level of ability reaches their optimum health potential. A community where children laugh and learn, adults play and work and older adults are valued and useful members of society. A community whose social and environmental infra-structure promotes, encourages and supports healthy active lifestyles. A community that values the importance of healthy eating and regular physical activity and protects its citizens from unwanted exposure to tobacco smoke. A community where premature death and disability from chronic disease is well below the provincial average and the quality and quantity of life is among the highest in the province. Heart Health Action Windsor Essex envision a community where healthy, active lifestyles are the norm.

Mission Statement

Heart Health Action Windsor Essex's mission is to generate excitement about healthy lifestyles and optimum health for all Windsor-Essex County residents. This will be accomplished by working with the community as a partner to encourage and support healthy eating, regular physical activity and reduced tobacco use and exposure.

Terms of Reference

Name

The name *Heart Health Action Windsor Essex* was chosen unanimously at the April 28, 1998 monthly meeting, taking into account the following criteria:

- Does the word Heart in the title provide the perception that the group is exclusive?
- Does leaving the word Heart out of the title dilute the message?
- Fragmentation of groups into individual illness or disease specific foci has been a problem. Given the common issues addressed by many of these groups (i.e. tobacco use prevention, healthy eating promotion and physical activity promotion) the name needs to foster inclusiveness and progress toward common goals
- The name needs to reflect a call to action
- The name needs to reflect the county-wide nature of the collective
- The name needs to reflect prevention vs treatment
- The name needs to be marketable

Purpose

The purpose of Heart Health Action Windsor Essex is to increase the number of disease and disability free years of Windsor-Essex County residents through the use of a comprehensive health promotion approach using a variety of strategies and settings to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use and exposure, unhealthy eating and physical inactivity for the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

Responsibilities

1. To undertake activities in Windsor-Essex County to meet objectives established by the Provincial Heart Health Initiative.
2. To build capacity within the community to achieve the above objectives and to ensure sustainability.
3. To adhere to the legal guidelines for monitoring, evaluating and reporting as required in the Provincial Heart Health Agreement.
4. To implement the approved work plans and develop and implement subsequent work plans as required by the Ministry of Health.

Committee Structure

There will be at least three levels of committees within the overall structure of Heart Health Action Windsor Essex. The various committees will have distinct, but interrelated functions.

General Heart Health Committee

The General Heart Health Committee will be open to all those groups and individuals who meet the general membership criteria and sign and return the General Membership Agreement.

The primary function of this committee is to provide overall direction to Heart Health Action Windsor Essex.

The chairperson of the Executive Committee will also chair the General Heart Health Committee meetings.

This committee will meet bimonthly as a minimum.

Executive Committee

This committee will be comprised of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, Health Unit Representative, Heart Health Coordinator and the Chairperson from each of the Operational committees.

The primary function of the Executive Committee will be to provide strategic direction and support to ensure that the Heart Health Project is planned, implemented and monitored in a responsible manner that is consistent with the requirements of the Provincial Heart Health Agreement.

The committee will meet monthly as a minimum

Operational Committees

The following Operational Committees will be established early in the evolution of Heart Health Action Windsor Essex. Workplace, Elementary School, Secondary School, Communications and Promotion, Finance, Health Sector, Community and Sponsorship.

These committees will be comprised of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and other members as required.

These committees will be primarily responsible for ensuring that activities relevant to their specific area are planned, implemented and monitored according to parameters outlined in the approved Heart Health Proposal. The committee will also assist in identifying and planning for future Heart Health activities in their specific area.

The committees will meet monthly as a minimum.

Committee Meetings in General

Conflict of Interest Guidelines will apply at all committee meetings (guidelines to be acquired).

On issues where a formal vote is required, there will be a limit of one vote per organization. There will be no voting by proxy.

The Decision Making Process outlined in the approved Heart Health Proposal will serve as the decision making guidelines for all committees.

In general, meetings will be two hours or less in duration.

Refreshments can be provided at all committee meetings. If refreshments are provided, they should reflect the principles of healthy eating as outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Healthy Eating Guidelines for Meetings (see attached).

No quorum is required at meetings other than those of the Executive Committee.

Meetings should be formal enough to allow for the logical conduction of business, but not so formal as to stifle progress or enjoyment of meetings (more specific guidelines will be developed and adopted).

Meetings should be appropriately staggered, where possible, in order to facilitate effective timing and communication.

Reporting Relationship

Heart Health Action Windsor Essex is accountable to the Ontario Ministry of Health through the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.

The Operational Committees report to the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee reports to Heart Health Action Windsor Essex.

Membership

Membership is open to all those individuals or groups who have an interest in promoting heart health through reducing the prevalence of tobacco exposure, unhealthy eating and physical inactivity.

Prospective members must concur with the vision, values, mission goals and terms of reference of Heart Health Action Windsor Essex in writing in order to become a member. The written agreement must be signed by both the prospective member/organization representative and the Heart Health Action Windsor Essex chairperson or his/her delegate.

The executive committee is responsible for approving all memberships.

The membership roster will be updated on an annual basis.

Members will be provided with the Heart Health Action Windsor Essex Terms of Reference package upon receipt of their signed agreement.

Once accepted, members will be surveyed to determine their areas of interest, areas of expertise and desired level of participation.

Financial Mechanism

May 8, 1998

HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES

Healthy eating means more than dispensing good advice. We must also use public policy to create an environment that supports healthy eating. We must make healthy choices the easy choices. The Public Health Branch has developed HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES to demonstrate its commitment to the importance of a healthier diet.

Public Health Branch

The Public Health Branch believes that nutritious and safe food and beverage choices should be provided at our business functions.

The Public health Branch is committed to five interrelated and fundamental principles:

- ✓ Healthy eating. Healthy eating incorporates the concepts outlined in *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. It also includes the belief that all foods can be part of a healthy diet.
- ✓ Safe food handling practices. High standards of food preparation and service ensures access to safe food.
- ✓ Being environmentally friendly. Environmentally friendly means minimizing waste from food, food packaging and disposable dishes and recycling.
- ✓ Promoting Ontario products. By choosing Ontario products we support Ontario's food and agriculture industries.
- ✓ Being fiscally accountable. Fiscal accountability means the best responsible price to support healthy eating.

Practical Suggestions for Applying the Principles Outlined in the HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES

Make the best choices available when choosing foods and beverages for Public Health Branch sponsored business functions.

Caterer

- Choose a reputable caterer.
- Talk to the caterer about your wishes. Be specific.
- Let the caterer know you prefer Ontario products.
- Ask the caterer if you can make last minute adjustments in the quantities ordered if people cancel at the last minute.
- ask the caterer if they have a policy for donating unused food to emergency food assistance programs.

Beverages

- Have lots of fresh water.
- Have pure fruit juice (apple/apple cider and grape are two examples of Ontario juices) as well as the usual coffee and tea.
- Offer 2%, 1% or skim milk for drinking and provide milk instead of cream for coffee and tea.

Breakfast

- Be selective. Order foods such as fresh fruit; whole grain breads/toast (butter on the side) or a variety of lower-fat muffins; hot or cold whole grain cereal; poached, soft-boiled or hard-boiled eggs; or lower-fat cheeses or yogurt.

Sandwiches

- Ask for sandwiches on an assortment of

whole grain breads and rolls.

- Have a variety of lower-fat sandwich fillings such as tuna, salmon, lean roast beef, turkey, chicken, ham, pastrami or lower-fat cheese. Include vegetarian fillings.
- Ask for sandwiches made with little or no mayonnaise, butter or margarine. Order mayonnaise, butter or margarine on the side.

Main dishes

- Look for meatless dishes such as pasta with a tomato sauce or vegetarian lasagna.
- Choose meat, fish, poultry and vegetable dishes that are broiled, roasted or steamed instead of fried.
- Try to limit the size of main course items.

Salads/crudities

- Ask for dips made with plain yogurt or light sour cream.
- Choose lower-fat salad dressings or have salad dressing served on the side.

Desserts

- Offer fresh fruit or a fruit salad. Emphasize Ontario seasonal fruits.
- Choose lower-fat yogurt
- Have whole grain cookies.

Snacks

- Ask for a variety of lower-fat muffins.

- Order a basket of Ontario apples.

Minimize waste and recycle

- Use china, glass and flatware rather than disposable products, if available.
- If you use disposable products, be sure they can be recycled.
- Ask for milk and beverages in pitchers rather than individual cartons or bottles. If juice is provided in glass bottles, be sure they are recycled.

- Ask for condiments in bulk rather than single servings.
- Choose moderate portion sizes and order just enough food for the number of people attending.

Timing

- Serve food within 30 minutes after it arrives.

April, 1996