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Region of Peel
Working for you

REPORT
General Committee

For Information

DATE: September 8, 2009

REPORT TITLE: **INITIAL PROVINCIAL REPORT ON PUBLIC HEALTH PERFORMANCE 2009**

FROM: Janette Smith, Commissioner of Health Services
David L. Mowat, MBChB, MPH, FRCPC, Medical Officer of Health

OBJECTIVE

To update Regional Council on the release by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care of the Initial Report on Public Health Performance 2009.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Provincial Government has released the first Report on Public Health Performance.
- Peel has experienced rapid population growth and its per capita provincial funding is well below the average.
- Residents of Peel generally exhibit health behaviours that compare favourably with other areas of Ontario.
- Peel has performance lower than the provincial average in volume driven services.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

In response to growing concerns about the capacity of Ontario's public health system, culminating in the SARS crisis, the Provincial Government launched Operation Health Protection in 2004. The Operation Health Protection action plan focused on revitalizing the public health sector, preventing future health threats, and promoting a healthy Ontario. The plan also included a commitment to produce an annual Ontario public health performance report. On August 21, the Initial Report on Public Health Performance, based on data for 2007 and 2008, was released by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

2. Findings

This report includes comparative indicators for all 36 health units in Ontario. There are three main areas of focus: 1) demographics 2) population health status and 3) governance and accountability. The report is intended to contribute to our understanding of the public health system in Ontario, at both the provincial and local levels, and to lay the groundwork for developing a performance management system. Such a system would be used to inform decisions on where improvements are required, to ensure that appropriate governance is in place and to help promote organizational excellence.

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The following are selected indicators from the report which demonstrate areas of strength for public health performance in Peel Region as well as highlight areas for improvement.

a) Health Unit Profile/ Demographics

Peel has almost double the average growth of comparable urban centres (19.7 per cent versus 10.7 per cent) and more than triple the average rate of growth in Ontario (5.8 per cent). Underscoring the challenges involved with providing service to a rapidly growing population, is the fact that 48.6 per cent of the population was not born in Canada and 3.7 per cent of residents speak neither French nor English. These figures are significantly higher than provincial averages (28.3 per cent and 2.2 per cent respectively).

b) Population Health Indicators

In general, the residents of Peel Region demonstrate health behaviours that compare favourably with the rest of Ontario. For example, our teen pregnancy rate, Chlamydia incidence as well as adult and youth smoking and drinking, are all significantly lower than provincial averages.

An area where Peel residents had sub-optimal health is the low birth weight of infants. This was first brought to light in the 2008 Comprehensive Report on Health in Peel. Peel Public Health is currently partnering with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) to undertake research to determine the causes of this.

Other indicators in which Peel demonstrates performance lower than provincial averages are on volume driven services such as contacting new mothers after delivery and recording immunization. Out of date immunization records were identified as a critical area in 2008, but, as reported to Council in September, there has been an improvement from a rate of only 43 per cent of records complete to 93 per cent completion.

c) Governance and Accountability Indicators

The annual per capita spending (gross) on public health in Peel Region is 40 per cent lower than the average per capita spending in Ontario Public Health Units ($47.58 vs. $78.27), and is the second lowest of all health units in the province.

The use of Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI) data allows for the calculation of the provincial per capita grant (for all programs combined). By this measure, Peel is the lowest-funded - $28.63 versus a median of $42.33 for the 13 reporting OMBI municipalities in 2008.

d) Key Indicators

Key indicators are summarized in Appendix I. The complete report is available upon request from Legislative Services or it can be accessed on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care web site at:
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/pubhealth/init_report/index.html This link will also be available from the Region of Peel's web site.

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3. Proposed Direction

The general pattern for provincial funding is for similar increases to be allocated to all health units, regardless of growth. Peel's sustained and vigorous growth in population therefore results in per capita funding falling ever more below the provincial average, and an inability to meet the needs of the population.

It is proposed that Council continue its advocacy for equitable funding for public health programs, and that staff apply to the Public Health Division of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to become involved in the development of the formula to guide the future funding of health units.

CONCLUSION

The first Report on Public Health Performance for Ontario has been released. Although Peel residents have generally good health, there are some issues needing attention. Provincial funding below the average is associated with difficulty in reaching all those in need of public health services.

Janette Smith
Commissioner of Health Services

David L. Mowat, MBChB, MPH, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

Approved for Submission:

D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

For further information regarding this report, please contact
Dr. Kathleen Dooling, Associate Medical Officer of Health at extension 2989 or via email at kathleen.dooling@peelregion.ca

c. Legislative Services

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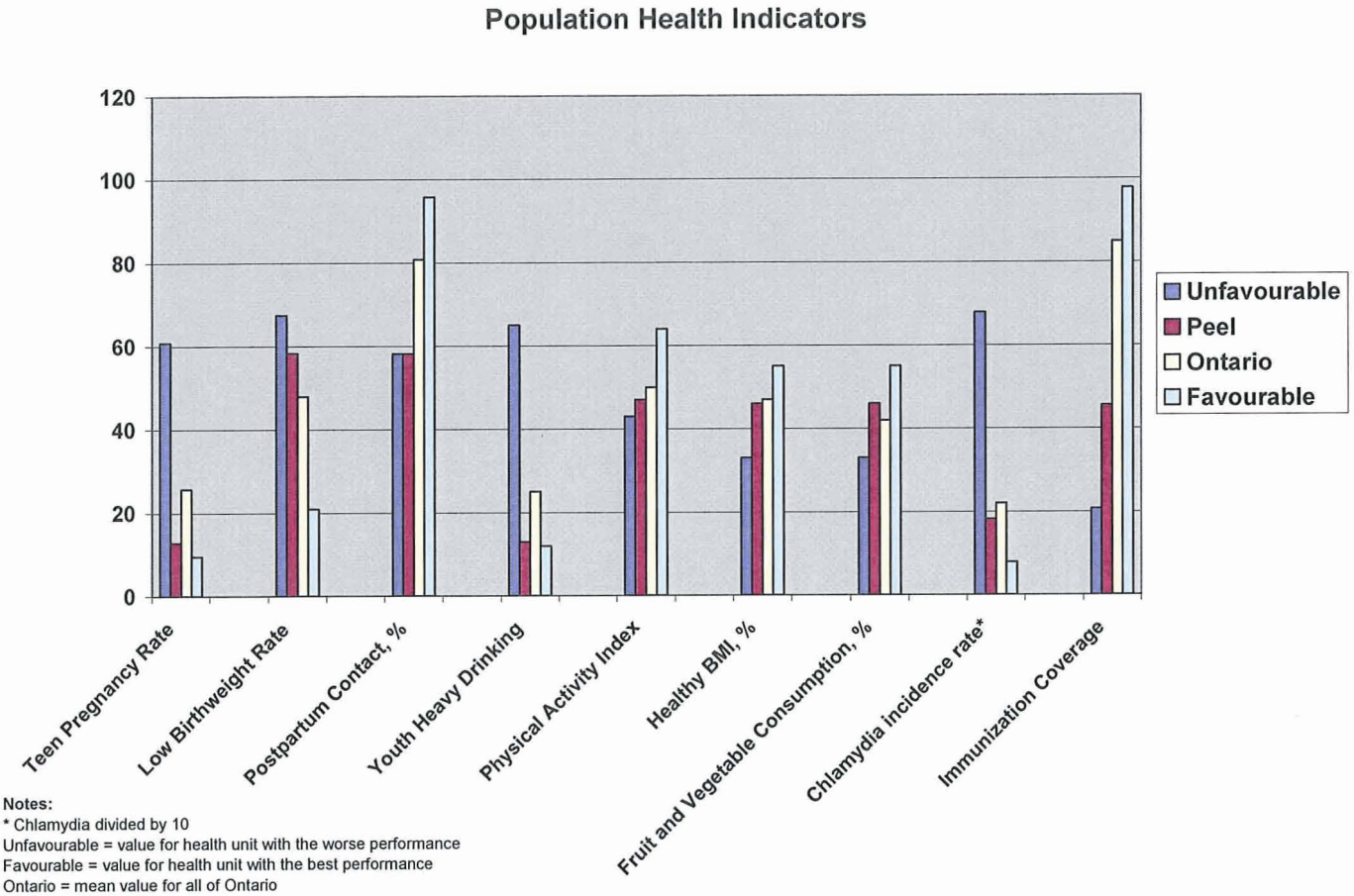
APPENDIX I



Notes:
* Chlamydia divided by 10
Unfavourable = value for health unit with the worse performance
Favourable = value for health unit with the best performance
Ontario = mean value for all of Ontario