

For Information

DATE: April 19, 2013

REPORT TITLE: **PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL SERVICE SETTINGS
INSPECTION RESULTS**

FROM: Janette Smith, Commissioner of Health Services
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OBJECTIVE

To provide an update on the proposed program for the disclosure of personal service settings inspection results.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Personal service settings are businesses where services such as tattooing, body piercing, manicures, pedicures, facials, hairdressing, barbering, and hair removal by electrolysis, waxing or laser are provided.
- Personal service settings can pose a potential risk to the public through the spread of infections and blood-borne diseases if services are delivered using improper infection control practices.
- Peel Public Health inspects personal service settings as per the terms of the Ontario Public Health Standards.
- Peel Public Health proposes development of a program to allow for public disclosure of personal service settings inspection results. A Regional by-law enacted under the *Municipal Act* is required to establish this program.
- The proposed disclosure program includes on-site signage at business entrances and electronic access to inspection results to the public, empowering them to make informed decisions on where to access personal services.
- Public consultation data indicates very strong support for an inspection disclosure program. Other public health units in Ontario are also developing similar programs.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care under the Ontario Public Health Standards mandates that boards of health inspect personal service settings on an annual basis and any time a complaint is received. This includes inspections of tattoo studios, body piercing shops, aesthetics salons, and businesses offering manicure/pedicure, waxing, laser hair removal, facials, electrolysis, micro-pigmentation, barbering and hairdressing services. These facilities are inspected to ensure compliance with the Infection Prevention and Control Best Practices for Personal Services Settings published by the Ministry of Health

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and Long-Term Care. A list of known Peel premises that provide tattooing, body piercing or permanent make-up services is currently posted at www.peelregion.ca/health/pss/list.htm, although details of inspection results are not provided.

There are approximately 1,200 personal service settings in the region. Unannounced inspections are conducted either annually or bi-annually with frequency determined by a risk assessment of each establishment (i.e. high or medium/low risk). In addition, the Region received approximately 40 complaints from residents about the sanitation and operation of personal service settings in 2012; many of the complainants had developed skin and nail infections after receiving services from businesses operating in the Region.

Peel Public Health is planning to expand its current activities to include public disclosure of the inspection results of personal service businesses. This will allow the public to make informed decisions about where to access their aesthetic services. The disclosure program will also give operators additional incentive to improve and maintain infection control practices.

2. Findings

a) Proposed Disclosure Program

Under the proposed disclosure program, operators of personal service settings will be required to post signs at the entrance to their business. These signs will include a basic summary of the last public health inspection report. Detailed inspection information would be available on-line.

Under the *Municipal Act* a Regional by-law is needed to establish such a disclosure program as it outlines the requirements for the business operators to post signs of inspection results and to ensure that they follow a minimum standard of practice for infection control.

As was done with similar disclosure programs (e.g. FoodCheck Peel), we are developing a phased-in approach to give business owners time to adjust to the program requirements and to develop community awareness about the program.

Phase 1 – Begin posting signs with inspection results at business entrances

Phase 2 – Make detailed inspection results available to the public on-line

b) Improved Enforcement of Current Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines

The proposed by-law will assist public health inspectors with the enforcement of infection control practices required at personal service settings. Currently, enforcement is limited to the issuance of health hazard orders under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA)*. These orders require a business owner to take immediate action to eliminate a health hazard. These orders do not address continuous minor infractions for which there are currently no penalties for repeated non-compliance. Public health inspectors are therefore limited by the current enforcement tools. Business owners have little incentive to maintain infection control standards between regular inspections.

Peel Public Health is intending to incorporate the Infection Prevention and Control Best Practices for Personal Services Settings guidelines published by the Ministry of Health

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and Long-Term Care in a Regional By-law and reference them, thus making the guidelines enforceable.

c) Public Consultation

A public consultation strategy was developed, consisting of a telephone survey and small group focus testing sessions with community members to gather information about the public's desire for an inspection disclosure program.

i) Public Survey

An independent survey was conducted with 500 telephone interviews with Peel residents in all three municipalities.

The objectives of the survey were to learn about residents' understanding of the current personal service settings inspection program, and residents' level of interest in a program that would disclose inspection results, similar to FoodCheck Peel.

The survey results indicated the following:

- 76 per cent of people surveyed **strongly supported** an inspection disclosure system for personal service settings;
- 75 per cent of people surveyed **strongly supported** a law that would allow Peel Public Health to fine/ticket businesses for operating in a way that could spread infection to clients;
- 76 per cent believed that Peel **already** gave fines/tickets to operators;
- 93 per cent of people surveyed indicated that knowing the inspection results would be an **important factor in their decision making** when choosing a personal service business.

ii) Focus Testing

Four small group focus testing sessions were held from June to October 2012. The objective of the sessions was to learn about residents' preferences for a personal service settings disclosure program and inspection result signage and on-line tools.

The focus testing results indicated the following:

- Most preferred to access inspection results on-line via Google maps or through social media and mobile apps;
- About half of participants preferred a three sign disclosure system (green, yellow, or red signs), similar to those used for the FoodCheck Peel program. Participants preferred a simple sign design;
- Participants would feel more confident in their decision to use a personal service setting if a green sign was present. They indicated that a yellow sign would prompt them to exercise a higher degree of caution. If they were long-time patrons of a certain business, and saw a yellow sign posted, most would leave and look for another business to receive service. The exception would be hairdressing which they perceive as low risk for infection.

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Inspections of personal service settings and costs related to a communication strategy are currently accounted for in the Peel Public Health budget which is cost-shared with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Existing computer tablets which manage the inspection results for the FoodCheck Peel program would be used for the proposed personal service settings disclosure program, thus minimizing technology infrastructure costs. No changes in service costs are anticipated.

CONCLUSION

Peel Public Health is in the process of developing a public disclosure program for personal service settings inspection results. Under the *Municipal Act*, implementation of such a program will require a Regional by-law. Once the program and the accompanying by-law are developed, Peel Public Health will bring a report to Council in the fall of 2013 for its consideration and approval.



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