
Meeting of the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) and Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health (COMOH)

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN PUBLIC HEALTH UNITS AND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARDS

Minutes of the Meeting - April 13, 2018 - Chair: John Crocco

Committee Members in Attendance: Dr. Rosana Salvaterra (Co-Chair), John Crocco (Co-Chair), Dr. Ian Gemmill, Phyllis Eikre, Dr. Miriam Klassen, Dr. Eileen De Villa Dr. Andrea Feller (by teleconference), Joseph Picard (by teleconference)

Committee Support in Attendance: Heather Peters, Sharon Weller, Debbie Thompson, Nomi Caplan-Guzzwell, Gianoula Korinis, Paulina Salamo, Najma Kahiye, Suzanne Gordon (EDU); Ryan Dyck, Dianne Alexander, (MOHLTC); Ken Bain (CODE)

Guests: Dr. Doug Sider, John Atkinson, Susan Flynn, Tara Harris and Dr. Michelle Murti

Regrets: Karen Edgar, Marc Gauthier, Larry Hope

1. The committee approved the minutes of January, 2018.
2. Update on Committee Regroup – John Crocco
 - a. Terms of Reference – The committee reviewed and approved a motion to approve the revised Terms of Reference
 - b. Communications with Member Organizations – John Crocco addressed the way CODE members share the work of the committee. Typically, the CODE affiliates receive the information separately in their respective meetings and then the larger group of CODE members receives information in the large group setting. Directors typically share the information with superintendents. John sends out the meeting materials right after the meeting. Rosana explained that she shared the highlights but did not share the meeting minutes as they had not been approved. There was agreement that members of COMOH would begin to receive the draft minutes.
 - c. Future Meeting Dates – There was agreement on the need for three meetings following a Fall, Winter and Spring format. All meetings are subject to Ministry funding.
ACTION - CODE-COMOH Coordinator, Ken Bain, will send out a poll to finalize the dates for 2018-2019.
3. School Exclusion Guidelines – Dr. Doug Sider from Public Health Ontario (PHO) attended to seek input for a potential resource and reference document to inform a consistent approach for the school exclusion of persons with communicable diseases. Dr. Sider referenced the Education Act Section 265 (1) (k) (l) and (m). Dr. Sider was seeking clarity on how Section 265 (m) works in practice. CODE members affirmed that boards use that section judiciously. There was a discussion about the roles of the teacher and principal along with a discussion of the basis upon which a principal would exclude. EDU staff spoke to the fact that they are exploring the possibility of development of additional guidance to school boards about the use of

exclusions. COMOH members identified that, on occasion, students have been excluded incorrectly (pediculosis and bed bugs) There was a discussion of the health equity impacts of school exclusion given that many students who are excluded come from lower income, racialized communities. Dr. Sider hopes to include a summary of key public health ethical principles for consideration in whatever approach is ultimately adopted.

PPM 161 Implementation – Ministry of Education staff provided an update on the PPM to support children with prevalent medical conditions (anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and/or epilepsy) in schools. The committee was advised of the resources that are available to support the implementation of the PPM. An interministerial working group has been convened with cross ministerial representation to assist in this work. The need for proper first aid training and supplies was raised. Discussion focused on the challenge that boards face with securing stock epi-pens due to their cost and limited availability. A CODE member identified Halton Catholic as a board with excellent resources available on its website.

4. Legalization of Recreational Cannabis – staff from the Ministry of Education shared an update on the supports to schools regarding the legalization of recreational cannabis. As outlined in the memo to the Directors of Education on March 26, 2018, the Ministry is taking a phased approach and will be releasing pre-legalization and post-legalization resources to support the education sector. The Ministry of Education's focus will be on prevention and harm reduction with the goal of preventing and/or delaying cannabis use among youth in Ontario. The committee heard about the province's work with the federal government and about Health Canada's public awareness and education campaign. The Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) will be launching a marketing campaign about the rules (i.e. minimum age, places of use, etc.) during the week of April 16th – April 20th. MAG will also update the Ontario.ca/cannabis webpage.

There was a discussion about youth engagement and how to change behaviours among youth (similar to the work done with smoking). EDU is looking at youth initiated and peer-led interventions and is working with its partners in the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MYCS) and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC). Finally, in the coming weeks, EDU will be providing more information about the board-by-board allocations for training staff and building capacity. Specific training plans will be determined by boards, based on their local needs.

5. Modernized Public Health Standards – Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care staff presented an update on the protocols and guideline that will support the September 2018 implementation of the new School Health Standard. This includes the new [Child Visual Health and Vision Screening Protocol, 2018](#), updated [Oral Health Protocol](#) and [Immunization for Children in Schools and Licensed Child Care Settings Protocol](#), and new School Health Guideline that was developed with input from EDU as well as other stakeholders. The School Health Guideline focuses specifically on outlining what boards of health must consider when implementing two broader requirements within the School Health Standard: to implement a program of public health interventions, using a comprehensive health promotion approach, to improve the health of school-age children and youth, and, to offer support to school boards and schools to assist with the implementation of health-related curricula and health needs in schools. The Guideline will be available online soon at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/protocolsguidelines.aspx#guidelines

6. Concussion Update – Dr. Salvaterra presented a briefing note regarding an update on Rowan's Law (Bill 193). Dr. Salvaterra provided the historical context in which Rowan's Law evolved and was approved. The briefing note provided a public health perspective citing that the bill includes a full suite of recommended actions from public awareness to the responsibility for the Minister to report on the progress and impact of the actions. A highlight of the actions is the adoption of an athlete code of conduct which will hopefully

assist in changing the culture around concussions and result in increasing athlete safety. Rowan's Law should reassure parents/caregivers that children are being monitored and pro-actively protected as well as sending a strong message that strong codes of conduct will apply and that certain behaviour will not be tolerated. Dr. Salvaterra affirmed that physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities and that organized play and activity is necessary for optimal health.

Ministry of Education staff shared that EDU worked with staff from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport on a consultation paper to inform regulation development that is available on Ontario's [Regulatory Registry](#) for public input until early May, 2018. EDU staff stressed that the intent is NOT to shut down play at schools but that the play needs to be safe. Regulations are being drafted over the next few months and will include reference to the code of conduct and removal from and return to play. Some areas of legislation will require further regulations, after which EDU will work to ensure PPM 158 is updated as necessary to align with the new requirements. Targeted timelines would see changes to PPM 158 for implementation by school boards potentially in September 2019.

7. School Climate Survey Templates and Provincial Index – The provincial Index of Well-Being will use data from existing provincial-level surveys to provide a high-level overview of how students are doing based on the six elements of student well-being identified through the ministry's 2016-17 public engagement process. The ministry is also working with partners to update the ministry's school climate survey templates to support school board-level collection of information related to student well-being. The updated templates will continue to be optional for use at the local level. School boards will not be required to report results or data to the ministry. Updated school climate survey templates are targeted for release in the 2019-20 school year.

8. Overview of Collaborative Work in Cancer Prevention – Canadian Cancer Society staff outlined the work of the Canadian Cancer Society through cancer prevention information and support. Canadian Cancer Society explained how Canadian Cancer Society works in collaboration with local public health agencies and school boards. The committee received a presentation on the multicomponent Sun Sense Program which is based on the need for a skin cancer prevention program including policy implications and parent, student awareness and education resources. The committee heard about the tools, materials and resources available at www.cancer.ca/sunsense. The committee heard of the need to create shade areas on school grounds. Trees are the ideal way to create shade but it takes many years to see the benefit of tree planting. Shade structures are also available but their cost would be prohibitive for some communities. The committee also received information about the Walking School Bus and the Canadian Cancer Society supports for schools wishing to implement the Walking School Bus. CODE-COMOH affirmed its prior support for the Active School Travel program.

9. Vaccine Safety in Ontario –This presentation from Public Health Ontario (PHO) was intended to share information with school board partners to help address parental concerns, reduce vaccine hesitancy and increase vaccine consent. The presenters stressed the importance of vaccine safety and vaccine hesitancy. CODE members learned of the vaccine safety program in Canada and the role of public health in vaccine safety. The presenters also addressed the vaccine safety surveillance program in Ontario and the role that PHO plays in ensuring vaccine safety. The presentation concluded with a review of the data from the 2016 PHO Annual Report on Vaccine Safety and the important role of schools in Ontario's immunization program to support vaccine delivery, education/awareness, hesitancy and safety. The following website was referenced as a good source of accurate information <https://www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines>.

10. Update on Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Implementation – Dr. Ian Gemmill reported on his survey of local public health agencies to ascertain the degree to which the MOU has been implemented across Ontario.

Number of local public health agencies responding: 18 (50% of local public health agencies)

Number that have an MOU with all school boards: 9 (50% of respondents)

Number that have an MOU with some school boards*: 4 (22% of respondents)

Number that do not have an MOU with any school board: 5 (28% of respondents)

*Note that for these respondents, the school boards with which there is no MOU are generally those for which there are only one or two schools of that board in the health unit area; that is, it is the larger or contiguous boards with which there is an MOU.

Next Steps

The meeting schedule for 2018-2019 is being drafted. Committee members recognize that future meetings are subject to Ministry funding. They asked that the next agenda include:

- Student Engagement re: legalization of recreational cannabis
- Concussion Update from Parachute Canada
- Student/School Nutrition
- PPM 150 Update
- Updates from EDU and MOHLTC
- Agenda items as they emerge