

# CODE

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Notes of May 27, 2015

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**

Attendees (CODE and COMOH): Valerie Jaeger, John Crocco, Joseph Picard, Phyllis Eikre, Hazel Lynn, Larry Hope, Janet DeMille, Sandy Spyropolous (for Donna Quan) Lynn Noseworthy, Penny Sutcliffe

Regrets: Ian Gemmill

Attendees (Support to the Committee): Sandra Bickford, Christopher Kotz, Ministry of Education; Laura Pisko, Amy Gardner, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; Ken Bain, CODE;

Guests: Chris Markham and Sara Mison, OPHEA, Dr. Kathy Short, Mental Health ASSIST, Lisa Lumley and Crawford Dedman, Ministry of Education

1. Co-chairs John Crocco and Valerie Jaeger welcomed everyone to the meeting. Committee members introduced themselves as did attendees in support of the committee and the guests for item #2 (Chris Markham and Sara Mison, OPHEA)
2. Chris and Sara provided an update overview of the context, status and progress on implementation of the Healthy Schools Certification Program. (See attached handout for details on the presentation). Committee members were supportive of the initiative and were pleased with the gradual implementation. Members were also pleased with the training and capacity building support and grants that are or will be available. CODE members cautioned that because the "education landscape" may be different in Fall 2015 there may be a need for OPHEA to adjust its expectations with respect to uptake across the province.
3. Kathy Short and Lisa Lumley provided an update with respect to Phase Two of Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy along with a summary of the current work of School Mental Health (ASSIST). Phase Two is guided by key outcomes and supported by five strategic pillars along with recognizing the need for integrated system planning and system accountability. The MOHLTC created a Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council that has established five key deliverables along with five working groups. The presenters stressed the need for the alignment and integration of efforts and resources to ensure that all students develop enhanced mental and physical health, a positive sense of self and belonging and the skills to make positive choices. The presentation concluded with an overview of the SMH ASSIST Strategy 2014-2017 including differentiated resources and professional learning offerings, promotion and prevention programming, innovation pilots and engaging specific populations (early years, Indigenous, LGBTQ, youth and family). Committee members were very supportive of the work to date and stressed the need for coherence both locally and provincially as well as affirming the importance of sharing data. There was a concern/observation that the strategy is invariably connected to Special Education Departments in school boards and needs somehow to be repositioned as Tier One (good for all

students) or Tier Two (necessary for some) along the continuum of support at school.

4. Crawford Dedman provided a Ministry of Education update with respect to PPM 81 confirming that there are 34 service areas with plans to implement Integrated Rehabilitation Services by June 2016. Crawford acknowledged that the existing PPM does not reflect the current reality. Whatever is decided, there must be an alignment with PPM 149 and must be permissive and not prescriptive in nature. The revised PPM also must include the role of local CCAC's. Concerns exist with the timelines for proposals and the implementation date. The committee can expect an update in October from MOHLTC.
5. Laura Pisko and Amy Gardner provided a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care update with respect to the Healthy Kids Strategy. There are proposed amendments to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act that will address e-cigarettes. There is a lack of consensus whether e-cigarettes are a gateway to smoking or serve as a smoking cessation strategy. The Healthy Choices Act was recently proclaimed which included school cafeteria menu labelling. The act was strongly supported by public health units and school boards. Labelling will be enforced through Public Health and there is recognition of the need for regulations to accompany the Bill. Consultation will occur as the regulations are being drafted.
6. Valerie spoke to the need to review the existing CODE/COMOH Terms of reference given that the committee is now entering its second year. COMOH will likely open up committee membership to the Medical Officers of Health as there is a great deal of interest in participating. John, Valerie and Ken to rework the current terms and present in October.
7. Lunch
8. Valerie spoke to a University of Ottawa Research proposal: "Exploring Partnerships across the Health and Educations Sectors in Ontario". The University of Ottawa Ethics Committees reviewed the proposal. The CODE/COMOH committee endorsed the proposal and chose to send a letter of support from the co-chairs encouraging Medical Officers of Health to engage staff in the research survey. Valerie and Ken to draft the letter.
9. Valerie spoke to the challenging implementation of the Immunization of School Pupils Act with larger numbers of students being suspended this year. She expressed a "huge thank you" to the Directors of Education, Superintendents and School Principals, who are key to the success of the implementation. There is a lack of tracking of immunization records and disjointed communication between and among physicians, public health nurses and schools. Ministry of Education staff will take away the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care request for access to student OEN's.
10. On behalf of the Medical Officers of Health, Valerie commented that PPM 149 appears to be being applied inconsistently across the province whereby some boards simply request an annual offence declaration from local public health nurses while other boards require them to undergo a more formal vulnerable sector screening (which costs time and money). Ken to check with Don Drone, Executive Director of OESC (Ontario Education Services Corporation) about the current status of police reference checks. OESC used to co-ordinate the criminal background checks for school boards across the province.
11. Chris Kotz, Ministry of Education provided an update on Ryan's Law and its work in exploring an overarching holistic policy that addresses the most common medical conditions that our students present. Anaphylaxis, epilepsy, asthma and diabetes were identified as four of the most common. There is a need to develop common understandings to support the prevention and management of these conditions. OESC sent out a policy template to support requirements under Ryan's Law. There was agreement on the need for the holistic policy as long as the policy shifts the responsibility to monitor and take action to students wherever possible or advisable. There was an added suggestion that the appropriate branch of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care connect with the branch responsible for EMS.

12. Lynn asked that “concussions” be placed on the next agenda and she provided Ken with handout attachments for the next meeting. Lynn to contact Parachute to see if they can present in October.
13. Next Meeting: October 28, 2015 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm in Toronto.