



The County of
Wellington

Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy December 2009 Newsletter



COMMUNITY EVENT

On November 4, 2009, the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy, in partnership with the Waterloo Wellington Addictions and Mental Health Network, hosted a speaking event with author, researcher and professor Emeritus Bruce Alexander. Mr. Alexander spoke to a crowd of approximately 60 people, discussing the thought-provoking connection between an individual's social dislocation, and their experience of addictions.

THE DRUG STRATEGY AND THE WWLHIN

The Waterloo-Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) has included the implementation of the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy in their Integrated Health Services Plan for 2010-2013. The priority that the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy is connected to is "Improving Access to and Coordination of Mental Health and Addiction Services," which includes improving access and coordination of services, as well as the reduction of youth substance use.

A copy of the Integrated Health Services Plan can be found at:

http://www.waterloowellingtonlhin.on.ca/uploadedFiles/Home_Page/Integrated_Health_Service_Plan/LHIN_IHSPdocENGW_120209.pdf

TREATMENT/OUTREACH WORKING GROUP

Outreach Coordination, Accessibility and Expansion of Services

The November Treatment Working Group meeting marked the official amalgamation of the Treatment and Outreach Working Groups. At this meeting, the Outreach members began presenting their recommendations for enhanced coordination and accessibility of outreach services in our community. These recommendations were the synthesized results of a scan of outreach service provision in Guelph and Wellington County, which was completed in the spring of 2009. The presentation will continue at the December meeting.

An Outreach Steering Committee Panel meeting will take place early in the New Year, at which time the recommendations will be presented to both

outreach-providing and outreach-collaborating Steering Committee member agencies, for the purpose of implementation decision-making.

HOUSING WORKING GROUP

Transitional Housing Service Provision Planning

The in-reach service provision model for the Drug Strategy's transitional housing program requires the development of multiple partnerships. The Housing Working Group has developed a report outlining this service model, including the requested services and time commitments that will be asked of each partnering agency. This model will be presented to a Transitional Housing Steering Committee Panel in January 2010, for the purpose of implementation decision-making.

MEDICAL WORKING GROUP

Physician Mail Out

Within its strategy to reduce opiate misuse, the Medical Working Group has developed a research-based package to be distributed to all physicians in Guelph and Wellington County. Currently, 3 mock distribution packages have been compiled, and are in the process of being vetted by physician groups. Feedback thus far has been extremely positive.

The package contains:

Opiate Misuse Research Materials

- A concise research article discussing the issues incorporated with prescribing pain medications to those with addictions issues. This article also includes recommended approaches when working with this population;
- The Health Canada Guide for Health Professionals, which clearly articulates issues of abuse and diversion of controlled substances. This guide also includes several recommendations for medical practice;
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) Methadone Saves Lives http://www.camh.net/Care_Treatment/Program_Descriptions/opiate/opiate_professionals.html
- The Northern School of Medicine (NOSM) Health Care presentation for physicians, discussing prevention and treatment of opioid dependence. <http://normedstream.lakeheadu.ca/1/watch/595.aspx>

Brief Intervention Skills

- The CAGE+2+Y Brief Interventions screening tool and overview;

Community Resources (Pamphlets from local service providers)

Resources detailing the local services to support those struggling with addictions, including information on the following services:

- The CAMH Addiction Clinical Consultation Service for professionals seeking advice to help a client with an alcohol or drug problem;
- Connex Ontario help lines and services. An order form is also included should you wish to request further materials for your practice;
- Stay Sharp Needle Exchange services;
- O.A.T.C. Methadone Maintenance program;
- Community Alcohol and Drug Services;
- Stonehenge Therapeutic Community;
- Grand River Withdrawal Management Services;
- Portage Youth Residential Treatment Services;
- Blue Addictions Services wallet cards, detailing addiction support services.

Physicians will be invited to contact Raechelle to order further pamphlets and/or resources. Raechelle will subsequently coordinate these orders with the service providers.

Distribution will take place in December 2009 and January 2010.

Physician and Pharmacist Coalition

Our newest Committee member, pharmacist Don McDermott, brought the above-mentioned package to a meeting of physicians and pharmacists, held in Brantford (over 60 in attendance). The purpose of this meeting was for physicians and pharmacists to commence a dialogue about the misuse of prescription medication on a local level. Don has recommended that as a next step, the Medical Working Group organize a similar meeting of medical practitioners in Guelph/Wellington, to hear from their experiences of opiate misuse in the community and to begin looking at developing local responses to the issue.

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

Strengthening Families for the Future

As was indicated at the November Drug Strategy Meeting, a prevention-based Steering Committee meeting took place in late October, which focused on the expansion of the Strengthening Families for the Future (SFF) program in our community.

Copies of the program materials are being reviewed by Ontario Works, Homewood Health Centre, the Community Resource Centre in Fergus, Guelph

Community Health Centre, Trellis Mental Health and Developmental Services and Public Health, with decision-makers assessing whether the program is relevant to their respective mandates.

Raechelle is currently following up with these agencies. Those interested in implementing SFF will be invited to a meeting to discuss next steps in January 2010.

Prevention Inventory

Raechelle is currently working on a Prevention Inventory; a review of existing substance use prevention initiatives in Guelph and Wellington County, with a completion goal of January 2010. Considerable work has taken place on a municipal, provincial and national level to evaluate the actual effectiveness of the various prevention programs that are currently being administered in our communities. This research will be utilized in the inventory in both assessing the current program effectiveness and in considering what future directions the community may wish to take in terms of expanding prevention efforts.

Neighbourhood Watch Partnership

In late November, the Guelph Police Services invited the Drug Strategy to partner in a prevention initiative that is being undertaken by the local Neighbourhood Watch Coalition. Having received funding from the Chiefs of Police Grant and the Police Service Board, Neighbourhood Watch is wishing to host a youth-prevention event in the community. The organizer has been invited to the December meeting of the Prevention Working Group, in the hopes of expanding their partnerships to include the Catholic and Public school boards.

HARM REDUCTION WORKING GROUP

Addiction Services Wallet Card

The Harm Reduction Working Group has developed a Blue Addictions Services wallet card, which outlines services and supports available to those struggling with addiction issues in Guelph and Wellington County. Many of the partner agencies who are listed on the card have contributed financially to production costs, allowing for 12 000 cards to be printed. These cards will be available for distribution in early January 2010.

Harm Reduction Forum

A date of March 18, 2010 has been set for a Harm Reduction Forum in Guelph Wellington. This forum will include harm reduction training for community members and service providers, and will also provide an overview of the existing harm reduction services in our community.

Overdose Prevention

The Harm Reduction Group has been discussing incidents of overdose deaths in our community. According to both anecdotal and research-based information, 911 services are often not accessed in an overdose situation, as those present fear the potential criminal charges that may result. The Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council has engaged in research and a community assessment overdose issues in their community, and have been invited to share their learnings with the Harm Reduction Working Group at our December meeting. It is hoped that this will forge the beginnings of future collaborative work on this issue.

Funding for Harm Reduction Supplies

There is a current deficit in the annual budget to support the distribution of safe needles in our community. This program is funded by the Ministry of Health, with dollars flowing through Public Health to the AIDS Committee of Guelph, who is the service provider. This deficit, which is evidence of expanding community need, is not specific to our area; reportedly many other communities are experiencing similar funding crises. Public Health is working on considerable advocacy to respond to this problem, both on a local and provincial level.

Please do not hesitate to contact Raechelle at 519.821.6638 ext 350 with any questions you may have.

Wishing you all a very happy holiday season.