



Calendar Highlights

see inside for details

September 21 – 23, 2008

Data Users Conference 2008: Linking the Health Information Chain

Hosted by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and Statistics Canada.
Ottawa, Ontario

October 2 – 4, 2008

Childhood and Adolescent Obesity 2008
How We Live, How We Learn, and How We Work: Implications for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity

Hosted by the University of British Columbia's Interprofessional Continuing Education Department.
Vancouver, BC

Contact the JCSH:
Tel. (250) 356-6057
www.jcsh-cces.ca

Message from the Executive Director

As this issue of the newsletter goes to print, we are also working to finalize our second Consortium annual report. With its tabling in September, we will have another, renewed opportunity to demonstrate the value of comprehensive school health, and to raise our profile with ministers of health and education nationwide.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your contributions to the work we are doing. Whether you're a health or education practitioner, a government decision-maker, researcher, parent or simply an interested citizen, your engagement with this subject matter is key to our progress.

I'm proud of what we've accomplished since 2005. However, because our work is so pioneering, we continue to face a host of challenges. The Consortium's horizontal, multi-jurisdictional structure is without precedent – in Canada or elsewhere. So there is no established path for us to follow. We're guided by research evidence and we know what we want to accomplish but we are, to some extent, feeling our way through the process of making it happen.

We continue to seek opportunities for new strategic alliances to further strengthen ties between the health and education sectors. For example, we have begun to work more closely with the Canadian Association of Principals to facilitate the sharing of school health success stories at the grassroots

level, right across the country. We are also developing a partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Commission to examine the role schools can play in promoting child and youth mental health, and we will continue to support global initiatives such as the development of international guidelines for health promoting schools.

To help make the concept of comprehensive school health more concrete, we are also developing tools and resources to explicitly support successful horizontal health-education initiatives. We will publish a new Summary of Evidence and Best Practices on Physical Activity this summer, followed in the fall by a Summary of Evidence and Best Practices in the area of substance use. Unlike previous summaries, these two will focus specifically on the comprehensive school health approach, as distinct from comprehensive school curricula.

These are all important and significant steps, and again I want to extend my thanks to all the individuals and organizations contributing to our progress. It is still early days but we are gaining momentum, and I look forward to working with you to build on our successes in advancing the comprehensive school health agenda.

–Claire Avison

British Columbia

An Ounce of Prevention Revisited: A review of health promotion and selected outcomes for children and youth in BC schools

The Provincial Health Officer has recently released his 2006 Annual Report, *An Ounce of Prevention Revisited: A review of health promotion and selected outcomes for children and youth in BC schools*, available online at www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/pdf/phoannual2006.pdf.

This report updates and expands the scope of the 2003 *An Ounce of Prevention* report by exploring some of the key issues in child and youth health, and the changes that have emerged within the school setting, as well as in the health of young people in BC. Key issues include availability of additional survey data; overwhelming recognition that obesity and physical inactivity and their related effects are major health concerns for children and youth; childhood mental health as an area requiring more attention; and consideration of assets or protective factors as essential to the proper analysis of, and response to, risky health behaviours.

School Food Sales and Policies Provincial Report II

The School Food Sales and Policies Provincial Report II (2008) measures progress on the elimination of unhealthy foods and beverages in BC public schools since 2005, and assesses the impact of the Guidelines for Food and Beverages (2005) on reaching this goal. The report also assesses the economic impact of school food and beverage sales, identifies opportunities for action and highlights examples of progress in schools and districts province-wide. The report can be found at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/sales_policy_feb08.pdf.

Tobacco-free Schools

The Healthy Schools Network has released a Special Edition April 2008 Newsletter on

tobacco-free schools, available online at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/hsnetwork/newsletter_apr08.pdf. The newsletter contains strategies for implementing a tobacco-free school grounds policy, research data on tobacco use among youth and tobacco cessation resources.

Nunavut

Nunavut's Nutrition Framework

An electronic version of Nunavut's new nutrition framework called *Nutrition in Nunavut: A Framework for Action* is now available. One of the public health goals cited in the framework is to improve the nutritional status of school-aged children. The Department of Health plans on building partnerships with the schools and the Department of Education to improve school food programs and nutrition education in schools. Another goal is to develop standards and guidelines for foods that may be served in territorial programs and activities and this would include our school-based breakfast and snack programs. We will be looking to other jurisdictions for guidance and inspiration! For more information contact Lana Pestaluky, Regional Nutritionist at lpestaluky@gov.nu.ca (867) 982-7612.

Saskatchewan

The Mosaic Extreme School Makeover Challenge "WALK TO BREAKFAST"

In 2007, schools all across Saskatchewan took up the challenge to improve nutrition and health in their school. The Saskatchewan Nutrition Advisory Council for Kids (SNACK), along with partners Saskatchewan in motion and the Mosaic Company asked students and staff to create and implement action plans that encouraged healthy changes and choices for their schools. Students and staff were expected to commit to upholding these changes for the upcoming school year. The 52 extreme makeover entrants proposed a variety of strategies. The grand prize winner was an inner city school whose entry centred on developing a



community garden. The garden offered opportunities for curriculum delivery and physical activity. It also taught students the importance of healthy food choices, involving community throughout. Many of the entries focused on getting rid of junk food, serving nutritious foods and building more physical activity into the day. The winners were announced at the first ever Walk to Breakfast held in September. Schools across the province had a wide variety of successful walking events which helped create awareness in their community of the importance of good nutrition and physical activity.

For more information contact:
Kelly Berlinic, SK Breakfast for Learning Coordinator (306-383-2691) breakfastforlearning@sasktel.net or Corinna Dahl-Ritco, Saskatchewan in motion (306-780-9364) Corinna@saskinmotion.ca

Nutrition Action Plan and Guidelines

In November 2007, Premier Brad Wall instructed the Minister of Education to “work with school boards towards the goal of ensuring that children and youth engage in 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily, while increasing healthy food options in schools.” As part of a renewed focus on prevention and a comprehensive school health approach, the Ministry has committed to continue to work closely with education partners to improve healthy food choices in schools.

The Ministry of Education in partnership with Health and Social Services is developing a Nutrition Action Plan and Guidelines for Saskatchewan Schools. This action plan is a work in progress, due to be released in the upcoming school year.

Federal Government

Healthy Settings for Young People in Canada

The Public Health Agency of Canada released the *Healthy Settings for Young People in Canada* report, which examines smoking, alcohol and drug use, physical activity/body image, eating patterns, emotional health and injuries in children

and youth aged 11 to 15. Some key findings indicate positive changes in the health behaviours and attitudes of young people since the last report in 2004. For example, smoking rates have declined among both boys and girls, and reports of marijuana use and alcohol consumption have also decreased. However, challenges remain, including high rates of overweight and obesity, sedentary behaviour and physical injury.

“In order to effectively promote and support the health of school-age children and youth, building a solid evidence base is essential,” said Dr. David Butler-Jones, Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer. *“This study will help us to measure the health progress of Canada’s young people and to better promote their health and well-being, by providing evidence to assist us in planning and recommending effective health policy and programming initiatives targeted at middle childhood and adolescence.”*

The full text of the *Healthy Settings for Young People in Canada* report and a summary booklet of the key findings are available online at www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/yjc/index-eng.php



Research Briefs

Impact of Neighbourhood Income on Childhood Obesity

Children living in Canada's poorest neighbourhoods gained more weight over an eight-year period than those living in more middle-income areas, according to Statistics Canada in a report published recently in the journal *Bio Medical Central Public Health*. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), the study found that neighbourhood environment may be an important determinant of a child's weight at an early age. For more information, including the full study, go to www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/080218/d080218a.htm



Alternative Education Models

The McCreary Centre Society has released a new report examining programs that serve at-risk youth in British Columbia entitled *Making the Grade: A Review of Alternative Education Programs in BC*. Some of the key findings include youth reporting high levels of school connectedness and positive relationships with teachers and support staff. In addition to housing and special education programs, youth identified more job training as the most needed service in their community. Download the report at www.mcs.bc.ca.

Resources/Related News

Public Policy and Child and Youth Health

The Canadian Pediatric Society has released *Are We Doing Enough? A status report on Canadian public policy and child and youth health*. The report looks at four different components of child health: disease prevention, health promotion, injury prevention and best interests of children and youth. The report identifies mental illness as the next possible epidemic affecting children – 14% of children and youth under 20 experience mental health conditions that impact their daily lives.

New Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide

The National Office of the Canadian Mental Health Association has just launched the *Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide* resource in collaboration with a range of national partners including the Canadian Association for School Health and Curriculum Services Canada. By combining collaborative learning strategies and interactive, multimedia tools to engage students in active learning, the Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide aims to increase students' understanding of both mental health and mental illness and improve attitudes about mental illness. The guide is available at www.cmha.ca/highschoolcurriculum/.

Upcoming Events

September 21 – 23, 2008

Data Users Conference 2008: Linking the Health Information Chain

Hosted by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and Statistics Canada, this event will bring together analysts, researchers, health planners and policy- and decision-makers. This year's conference focuses on the linkages between the use of data for analysis in health services research and the use of data for planning and decision making. The program will be comprised of two tracks, each reflecting a different set of data use activities: **Track 1 – Innovation in Data Analysis** and **Track 2 –Applying Data in Planning and Decision-making**. For more information visit www.cihiconferences.ca/datausers2008

Vancouver, BC

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Hosted by the University of British Columbia's Interprofessional Continuing Education Department, this conference brings together an interdisciplinary group

of professionals who work in the field of childhood and adolescent obesity or are confronted with this growing problem. The sessions have been proposed based on a framework of living (home/ community environment), learning (school environment) and working (work environment), and how these settings are associated with childhood obesity. This conference will include a focus on cultural considerations for working with Aboriginal communities and individuals. For more information visit www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/Obesity_Conference.htm

