

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

TO: Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit

DESTINATAIRE : Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa

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DATE: February 13, 2017

13 février 2017

FILE NUMBER: ACS2017-OPH-BOH-0001

SUBJECT: **CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH VERBAL REPORT**

OBJET : **RAPPORT VERBAL DU PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL DE SANTÉ**

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Hello everyone, bonjour à tous,

Thank you very much for being here this evening. I am glad you were all able to join us for the first Board of Health meeting of 2017!

I have just a few items, which I would like to highlight as part of my verbal update this evening.

I would like to begin by highlighting the recent launch of Ottawa Public Health's Good Food Corner Stores initiative.

You may have read about this in the Ottawa Citizen last month or seen signs about it in your community. The initiative aims to help corner stores improve the availability of fresh produce and other good foods in neighbourhoods where residents have barriers to accessing food because there is no grocery store nearby. To date this year, OPH has supported three stores in Ottawa in becoming Good Food Corner Stores. So far, Food Frenz on Carling Avenue, Preston Food Market on Preston Street, and Lauzon Meats and Grocery on Guigues have all become Good Food Corner Stores.

OPH will also recognize stores that are already selling fresh foods as Good Food Corner Stores and support community partners, such as the University of Ottawa downtown and Deep Roots Food Hub in West Carleton, who are interested in this sort of initiative. The program aligns with the Board's Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy and I am pleased to see it come to life in Ottawa. Congratulations to OPH's Health Protection and Promotion team on this initial success. I encourage colleagues and residents to check out all the good, fresh food these stores have to offer.

At the same time, I would also like to acknowledge OPH's effort in other areas, such as the swift response to an increase in opioids in Ottawa. In the last part of 2016, Ottawa Public Health launched a campaign to create more awareness about the dangers of fentanyl in our community. In collaboration with the Ottawa Hospital, the Royal, Ottawa Paramedic Service, Ottawa Police Service, the Ottawa-Carleton Pharmacists Association and Respect Pharmacy, the public health unit raised concerns about illicit fentanyl, which has recently been found in Ottawa, both alone or mixed into other drugs. As I'm sure most of you know, the presence of illicit fentanyl significantly increases the risk of overdose.

In advance of New Year's Eve celebrations, as Chair of the Board, I shared my concerns publically and submitted my opinion to the Ottawa Citizen. I continue to encourage our community to stay safe and reduce the risk of a fatal overdose. That risk can be reduced by avoiding using drugs alone, by not mixing drugs and by carrying naloxone - a medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of an overdose as you wait for emergency medical assistance to arrive.

Since then, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Big City Mayors' Caucus has also launched a task force to tackle the epidemic of fentanyl overdose deaths in urban centres. This is promising news. I am encouraged by this movement to protect the

health of residents and am grateful to Dr. Levy for speaking to the Senate Committee last week about this important matter.

I would like to share some news with Board Members. Siobhan Kearns, Manager of Environment and Health Protection and Outbreak Management, and Senior Public Health Inspector, has announced that she will be leaving OPH next month to pursue a new challenge as the Environmental Health Director for Niagara.

Siobhan has been an exceptional contributor to public health in Ottawa – having started her career in public health over 28 years ago with the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Health Department. Her outstanding ability to work with city partners and other stakeholders has resulted in Siobhan being the face of OPH at many cross-departmental and multi-stakeholder tables.

Please join me in collectively wishing Siobhan the best as she starts this new chapter in her career and recognizing her many accomplishments during her years with OPH.

Finally, I would like to invite you all to participate in an upcoming health event in Stittsville.

With 2017 now upon us we are heading into a year of celebration, not only of 150 years of our history, but of the ever growing communities in which we live. More and more people are coming to Ottawa to live, work and play.

In my capacity as Chair of the Board of Health, I am working in conjunction with Ottawa Public Health to hold an event that will celebrate our many community partners who support a common mandate - working with and supporting our residents to live healthier, more balanced lives.

On March 4th I invite you to join me, along with Ottawa Public Health and our various partners, as we hold a health and wellbeing fair entitled “March 4th into a Healthy 2017”. This event will showcase to the residents some of the many supports and health resources available for them.

In addition to OPH, there will be booths featuring the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre, the Distress Centre of Ottawa, the Queensway-Carleton Hospital Foundation, and Heart and Stroke, just to name a few.

That concludes my update this evening. I would be happy to take any questions from members of the Board.

Thank you, merci.