To: Mayor and Members  
   Board of Health

From: Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHS,  
   FRCP  
   Medical Officer of Health  
   Public Health Services

   Telephone: (905) 546-2424 x3501  
   Facsimile: (905) 546-4075  
   E-mail: erichard@hamilton.ca

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Re: Weekend Prenatal Classes PH06019(b)/HUR06008(b) - (City Wide)

**Council Direction:**

This report is submitted as a follow-up to the confidential report Arbitration Award for the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) Public Health Unit (PH06019/HUR06008) presented to the Board of Health May 29, 2006. At that time, it was acknowledged that there would be significant implications of this award for the City (increased staffing costs, potential non-compliance with mandatory programs, negative impact on clients, relationships with community partners, etc.). The decision was made to stop weekend prenatal classes in order to remain fiscally responsible.

A motion will be presented at the May 27, 2009 Council meeting to request that Council reconsider its previous decision and reinstate weekend prenatal classes.

**Information:**

The ratification of the ONA Public Health collective agreement (January 1 2008 – December 31, 2010) changed the remuneration for nurses on the weekend which significantly decreases the fiscal burden of offering weekend prenatal classes and can be managed within the Reproductive Health budget.

Public Health Nurses are paid a shift premium of $10/hour on Saturdays and $15/hour on Sunday. Public Health Nurses are paid for set up time before and after classes in addition to the actual hours of teaching. Weekend Prenatal Series, which are held on 3 Saturdays, require less pay for set up than 8 separate evening classes. Based on the reduced set up time paid on weekends, the shift premium does not increase the cost of the Weekend Prenatal Series compared to the Evening Prenatal Series. The Weekend Prenatal Series can be managed within the current Reproductive Health budget.
Clients have consistently requested Weekend Prenatal Classes as work schedules and other personal reasons were barriers to attending Evening Prenatal Classes. Community partners have continued to advocate for resumption of some form of weekend prenatal classes for their clients.

According to a report by Best Start: Ontario’s Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre, 2007, group prenatal education is a component of the care and support necessary through pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period. Public health nurses in the prenatal program ensure that clients are connected with community supports and medical care to ensure the healthiest baby possible.

The Ontario Public Health Standards require PHS to ensure that expectant parents have the information and skills to adopt health-promoting practices, such as preparation for breastfeeding and parenting. Weekend prenatal classes provide an accessible alternative for couples who are unable to attend evening prenatal classes, due to conflicts with work scheduling or other reasons.

Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Public Health Services