To: Mayor and Members  
Board of Health

From: Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health  
Public Health Services  
Telephone: (905) 546-2424 x3501  
Facsimile: (905) 546-4075  
E-mail: erichard@hamilton.ca

Date: August 28, 2006

Re: Community Health Status Reporting PH06036 (City Wide)

Council Direction:

N/A

Information:

Under the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, every local health department must prepare an annual report on the health status of the community it serves. During the amalgamation of Public Health and Community Services, the Social and Health Issues Report (SHIR) met this mandate. The last SHIR was dated 2005 and released in the second half of last year.

As the Board of Health is aware, the Mandatory Programs are under review, and a report is expected in the Spring of 2007. Until that review is complete, Public Health Services (PHS) is proposing a three-part approach to Health Status reporting over the coming 15-18 months.

Part 1 will be a report later this year, tentatively entitled Population Health: Hamilton. This report will describe, for a general audience, the growing body of research on determinants of health, particularly education and poverty and include some data from Hamilton illustrating local challenges and local opportunities for effective action to protect and promote health.
September 14, 2006

As much of health status reporting relies on census data, PHS feels that the mid-2007 phased release of 2006 census results merits waiting to develop a more data-dense report. Much of the available data is based on 2001 data which is increasingly out of date. In addition, through other efforts, such as the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System, PHS gathers information relevant to community health status reporting and to our partners. In an increasingly wired world, waiting months to publish information on paper seems a poor use of resources.

Thus, Part 2 of the PHS plan focuses on developing web-based release of data on the health of Hamilton. With rolling updates as RRFSS results and other sources become available, this will be more timely and more widely accessible. Our goal is that the first iteration of this process will be available to the public and our partners in early 2007.

Part 3 is intended to be a joint effort with Community Services to produce a 'State of the Child' report in late 2007. This will draw on PHS, CS and community partners to provide a detailed portrait of children in our community and the challenges and opportunities in protecting and promoting child health and development.

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