SUBJECT: Public Health Research, Education and Development (PHRED) Program PH06002(d) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the current PHRED partnership agreement with McMaster University as described in Public Health Research Education and Development (PHRED) program report PH06002(d) be approved.

(b) That the Board of Health approve the single sourced purchase of research and evaluation services from McMaster University as long as it continues to meet operational needs.

(c) That the current application for funding model as described in PHRED program report PH06002(d) be replaced by a model in which evaluation projects are internally driven.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Hamilton Public Health Services (PHS) Public Health Research, Education and Development (PHRED) program has had links with McMaster University and the University of Guelph for over two decades. These links have enabled PHS to build an
evidence base for local public health practice. The PHRED program has been funded and delivered through a 50:50 provincial/municipal cost-shared program since January 2007. Funding for the PHRED program has been confirmed from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for the 2009 fiscal year only.

PHS is recommending the continuation of its current partnership agreement with McMaster University, an ongoing commitment to sole source research and evaluation services from McMaster University and a change to a project funding model in which evaluation projects are internally driven versus the past practice of projects being driven by external partners.

**BACKGROUND:**

Information Report PH06002 was provided to the Board at its February 13, 2006 meeting and outlined the changing landscape and funding approach to PHRED. The MOHLTC declined to fund the PHRED program on a 75:25% cost-shared basis but was willing to maintain 50:50 cost sharing. As a result, the funding shortfall was $310,356.

Information Report PH06002(a) was provided to the Board at its October 23, 2006 meeting and described how PHS was managing the PHRED budget in 2006 and its plans for 2007. PHS streamlined its library operations, realized savings on journal subscriptions and secured additional resources from the MOHLTC for a separate project.

Recommendation Report PH06002(b) was provided to the Board at its January 8, 2007 meeting that recommended the continuation of current PHRED partnerships with the University of Guelph and McMaster University. The partnership agreement included an application process for funding to support a defined program or research development work over a 2 year period.

In 2008 PHS reviewed the funding process and its resultant deliverables outlined in Recommendation Report PH06002(b). As a result, multiple recommendations were considered. These included:

- Continue to partner with universities to provide external expertise
- Better align projects with the priorities of the City’s strategic plan and PHS’s business plan
- Increase staff involvement in projects in order to build research capacity within PHS.

In order to do so, PHS recommends revising the project funding model to be one which is driven by PHS management and staff versus one which is externally driven by PHS partners.
The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) has advised each of the five PHRED programs, that PHRED monies will flow for 2009 only. In Hamilton the provincial subsidy is $364,609 matched with $364,609 from the municipal levy. The functions of PHRED; research, evaluation, and knowledge exchange are expected to be transferred and funded by the new Ontario Health Agency for Health Protection and Promotion in 2010.

Pending Board of Health approval of this recommendation, the PHRED monies will be allocated as follows:

- **McMaster Institute of Environmental Health (MIEH)** - the agreement with MIEH will be maintained to include the base funding of $75,000 and to include an additional $6250 for a summer student. The summer student will address PHS Strategic Goal A, to identify best practices in public health to improve air quality. (Total $81,625)

- **Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS)** which provides health status data specific to Hamilton. This information is used to guide public health programming in Hamilton. ($55,000)

- **Public Health Core Competencies** - Additional work will be undertaken to further the development of core competencies of the PHS work force. This will include undertaking a pan-Canadian environmental scan of public health organizations, and developing core competency capacity building pilot projects. ($37,000)

- **Internally Driven Evaluation Projects** – A variety of research, evaluation and knowledge exchange projects will be undertaken to further the City’s healthy community strategic focus area and PHS strategic directions: ($500,960)
  - Goal A: “Implement public health initiatives to improve local air quality”
  - Goal C: “Maximize impact on community health in chronic disease prevention”
  - Goal D: “gather, analyze and disseminate information on health and it’s determinants”
  - Goal E: “be recognized as public health experts in the community”
  - Goal F: “recruit, develop and retain a competent flexible workforce”

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

In 2008, the revised Ontario Public Health Standards recognized research and knowledge exchange as a foundational standard of public health. The Board of Health is required to ensure the development of innovative, cost effective, evidence based programs and services. The Board of Health is also required to disseminate knowledge gained from program development and evaluation. The proposed outline of initiatives to be undertaken by the Hamilton PHRED program will continue to ensure the provision of evidence based Hamilton public health programs and the continued capacity development of public health practitioners to deliver these programs.
The Board of Health could decide not to approve the proposed schedule of PHRED projects for 2009. However, this is not recommended if the Board of Health wishes to meet their accountabilities to both the Board and citizens of Hamilton related to the provision of evidence based public health programming.

None identified. Pending Council approval of the recommendations, the proposed slate of PHRED initiatives will be undertaken.

N/A

PHRED partners and the MOHLTC have been consulted regarding the proposed projects to be undertaken by the Hamilton PHRED program.

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

- Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
  Public services and programs are delivered in an equitable manner, coordinated, efficient, effective and easily accessible to all citizens.

- Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
  Best Practices in public health to improve air quality will be investigated.

- Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines? ☐ Yes ☑ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☑ Yes ☐ No

Strategies to develop, and retain a competent flexible workforce will be undertaken.