SUBJECT: Funding of Dietitian by Best Start Network for the Hamilton Prenatal Nutrition Project Public Health Unit BOH09001 (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Health approve the addition of 0.5 FTE complement for a Public Health Dietitian position the costs of which will be covered by the Hamilton Best Start Network for the delivery of the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Hamilton receives funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada to provide weekly Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) groups. These programs have been managed by the Hamilton Prenatal Nutrition Project (HPNP), a partnership amongst three agencies: St. Joseph’s Healthcare, North Hamilton Community Health Centre (NHCHC) and Public Health Services (PHS). The weekly groups are co-facilitated by a Public Health Nurse (PHN) and a Public Health Dietitian (PHD) for high risk prenatal clients and mothers with infants up to 6 months of age at nine local sites, four of which are Ontario Early Years Centres. In July 2008, St. Joseph’s Healthcare announced the discontinuation of their 5 weekly groups leaving a program gap in east Hamilton. In order to continue delivering this program to high risk women in east Hamilton it was necessary for Public Health Services (PHS) to explore opportunities for community partner support. As a result an agreement was reached with the Hamilton Best Start Network to fund a 0.5 FTE dietitian position making it possible for PHS to assume two of the east Hamilton groups.
BACKGROUND:

The City of Hamilton receives funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada to provide weekly Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) groups. These programs have been managed by the Hamilton Prenatal Nutrition Project (HPNP), a partnership amongst three agencies: St. Joseph’s Healthcare, North Hamilton Community Health Centre (NHCHC) and Public Health Services (PHS). The weekly groups are co-facilitated by a Public Health Nurse (PHN) and a Public Health Dietitian (PHD) for high risk prenatal clients and mothers with infants up to 6 months of age at nine local sites, four of which are Ontario Early Years Centres. In 2007 there were 6,269 participant visits by prenatal and postnatal mothers with infants. The goal of the program is to reduce the incidence of unhealthy birth weights, improve the health of both infants and mothers and encourage breastfeeding. The Public Health Agency of Canada announced in fall of 2008 the goals of this program are being realized with a $273.00 long term health care cost savings per participant in terms of improved birth weights and increased breastfeeding initiation rates.

The Hamilton Prenatal Nutrition Project provides comprehensive services including nutrition, health and lifestyle counselling, breastfeeding support, education, and referrals to other community supports. The funding provides participants with weekly food vouchers, bus tickets, prenatal vitamins, vitamin D for breastfed infants and covers the cost of parent facilitators and child care staff. Staffing by PHNs and PHDs is provided in kind by the local partners. With the discontinuation by St. Joseph’s Healthcare, PHS decided to assume their two most frequently accessed weekly groups and was able to reallocate PHN but not PHD staffing as PHD resources are limited in Family Health Division. PHS approached the Hamilton Best Start Network for financial funding of a 0.5 FTE Public Health Dietitian. The Hamilton Best Start Network has agreed to this request. The agreement with the Hamilton Best Start Network will become effective April 1, 2009.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Programs are delivered throughout Canada to high risk women such as those living in poverty, teen and single mothers, parents with low education/literacy and newcomers to Canada. A healthy knowledgeable mother has the capacity to provide her infant opportunity for optimum growth and development affecting behaviour and health throughout the child’s life. The St. Joseph’s Healthcare groups served an average 60 women per week. The discontinuation of their programs would have great impact on vulnerable families in east Hamilton who value the $10.00 weekly food vouchers, prenatal vitamins and support they receive at these groups. By assuming the two most frequently accessed of the discontinued groups the impact on client numbers would be less severe. The Hamilton Best Start Network collaborates with community partners to meet its vision of making Hamilton the best place to raise a child; therefore it was the most logical organization for PHS to explore potential collaboration.
ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

PHS and their partner NHCHC could continue to provide the six remaining weekly CPNP groups in present central and west Hamilton sites but without resources to expand to east Hamilton. Further opportunities with other potential partners would have to be explored.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Adoption of this recommendation will result in a 0.5 FTE staff complement increase. However the costs for the 0.5 FTE Public Health Dietitian will be funded by the Hamilton Best Start Network.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

This service agreement will be implemented in accordance to City of Hamilton Finance and Administration policies.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

The City of Hamilton Community Services Department, Finance and Administration and the Hamilton Best Start Network were consulted in the preparation of this Board of Health Report.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

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

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Poverty is reduced.
Improved outcomes for high risk families should improve these families' individual economic situation, reduce the need for health and social services and improve contributions to community well-being.

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
Life-long learning is supported.