SUBJECT: Research Funding: Immigrant Women’s Perception of their Lived Experience Accessing Breast Health and Screening through Hamilton Women’s Health Educator Program  BOH08022 (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Health direct staff to utilize available additional funding to increase staff by 0.5 FTE Public Health Nurse for a two year period in order to conduct the study: Immigrant Women’s Perception of their Lived Experience Accessing Breast Health and Screening through Hamilton Women’s Health Educator Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

PHS was successful in its grant application to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation (CBCF) to fund a qualitative research project aimed at reducing barriers to breast health information and breast cancer screening for immigrant women in the city of Hamilton.

A community-based participatory research project will be conducted over a two year period between July 2008 and June 2010. The research team will be comprised of Public Health Nurses and Trained Immigrant Women Facilitators.

The project is fully funded by the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation (CBCF) and will be conducted in collaboration with Public Health Services (PHS), Chronic Disease...
The purpose of this project is to examine immigrant women's perceptions of their experience accessing breast health information and breast cancer screening through the WHE program. This research project will contribute to findings of the current program evaluation and will potentially identify further barriers to accessing breast health information and breast cancer screening services for immigrant women within the city of Hamilton.

The WHE program utilizes a peer educator approach, with the primary goal being to facilitate increased access to breast health information and breast cancer screening for four immigrant communities in Hamilton: Arabic, Chinese, South Asian and Vietnamese. Based on a literature review, these four communities of women are “underserved” in our community when it comes to accessing breast health information and cancer screening. The four Women’s Health Educators (WHE) employed by PHS are from the same cultural background as the community they serve. They promote access by providing women’s health talks, cultural interpretation, cultural support and accompaniment to cancer screening appointments.

BACKGROUND:

Hamilton has one of the largest immigrant populations in Ontario and Canada, with immigrants representing over 25% of the total population. Several studies in Canada and the USA report that immigrant women are among those groups who have lower breast cancer screening rates and suggest that ethnicity seems to disadvantage women toward poorer survival from breast cancer. For this reason, PHS CDP-A program implemented a research project to determine the impact of a program that could improve breast cancer screening rates among our immigrant population. This program utilizes a peer educator approach. The literature supports a peer educator approach to promote breast cancer screening among immigrant women.

WHEs are trained and work under the direction of public health nurses to provide culturally tailored health education on how to stay healthy and prevent chronic diseases. The WHEs reduce barriers to health services and facilitate access to screening for breast and cervix cancers. When needed, the WHEs provide assistance to women with cancer screening by arranging appointments and accompanying women to their appointments for language and cultural support.

The WHEs have been employed by the City of Hamilton since 2005 and the initial pilot project has been evaluated formally. Based on the evaluation of our current WHE program to date, we know that immigrant women have numerous barriers and challenges to accessing cancer screening; some of which we have addressed in the WHE program.
PHS submitted a grant application to CNCF to fund a qualitative, participatory research project to examine the lived experience of immigrant women who have been assisted in accessing breast health information and breast cancer screening. PHS was successful in its grant application to the CBCF. The total amount of the grant received is $197,693 to be dispersed over a two year period.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

There is a paucity of research literature examining the lived experience of immigrant women who have been assisted in accessing breast health information and cancer screening. In order to gain a better understanding of how to continue to minimize the barriers to access of breast health information and breast cancer screening and improve our service to women in specific ethno-cultural groups, we have embarked on this research project.

The increase in 0.5 FTE PHN staff will be used to:
- explore barriers to accessing breast health information and cancer screening, barriers that persist irrespective of the WHE program;
- examine the role of the WHEs as perceived by the community; and
- analyze the interaction of the “breast screening experience” supported by WHEs and access to the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP).

Data will be collected through focus groups and semi-structured one-on-one interviews with immigrant women who have participated in the WHE Program and accessed breast screening. To maintain accuracy and rigor, research activities will include: the development and testing of focus group questions and interview guides; the taping and transcribing of interviews verbatim; the translating of information, back-translation and member checking; the documentation in a reflective journal kept by researchers; quality checks for thematic coding of themes.

Burnards’ (1991) method of thematic content analysis will be utilized to analyze, interpret and categorize data collected. NVivo 7 software will organize the data and facilitate ease of data analysis and interpretation. All team members will participate in the data analysis. This method of analysis provides a systematic approach by which research team members are able to record themes, make connections between themes and data collected within an exhaustive category system. Burnard’s (1991) method has been validated in numerous studies and the initial WHE pilot project focus groups, in which barriers to cancer screening access were initially identified.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

An alternative would be to decline to accept the funding that was requested. This is not recommended. In addition, it would be more costly to direct the funds toward hiring an external evaluator and orienting them to the project.
FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial:
There are no financial implications to PHS. $197,693 in total will be received over a two-year period from the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation to be dispersed every six months beginning July 2008.

Staffing:
Research funding would be used to increase staffing by 0.5 FTE Public Health Nurse over a two year period. This would be achieved by temporarily increasing the hours of two part time Public Health Nurses, rather than hiring an additional Public Health Nurse. In addition, 0.5 FTE Public Health Nurse from the current complement would be assigned to also work on the research project, given its alignment with Public Health Standards.

Legal:
There are no legal implications.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

N/A

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

PHS consulted with McMaster University faculty, St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s Center and the Ontario Breast Screening Program to develop this project.

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
Results of the project will be used to decrease barriers to health information and cancer screening for ethno-cultural communities outlined in the study.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No
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?
This project demonstrates our support of our corporate values of providing excellence in service to our community and innovation in program development and delivery. The achievement of this funding and the support of this project demonstrate commitment to high performance in public service.  ☑ Yes  □ No
H5. Project’s In-Kind Support. Complete the section below to describe ALL in-kind support for the proposed project. In-kind support is goods or services given to the project for “free” by the Applicants Organization, project team members (or their organizations) or others. This information shows that the community supports this project. As well, it will tell us about the true "cost" of the project. Expand / add rows as necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Confirmed In-Kind Support</th>
<th>List the organization/person giving in-kind support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 FTE PHN = 0.25PHN X 4 –co-ordination and overseeing of research project; ensuring accurate breast health information; preparation and dissemination of findings at conferences/OPHA</td>
<td>Hamilton Public Health Services (PHS):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation from McMaster faculty regarding qualitative research principles and process</td>
<td>McMaster University School of Nursing</td>
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<td>Coordination of Group Facilitators and consultation (2hr/month X 2 years)</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s Immigrant Women’s Centre</td>
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<td>OBSP health promoter/representative = $1200.00 (1 hour per month x 2 years)</td>
<td>Ontario Breast Screening Program</td>
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<td>Public Health Manager/ = $1200.00 (1 hour per month x 2 years) consultation, overseeing of finances</td>
<td>PHS</td>
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<td>Meeting Requirements:</td>
<td>PHS</td>
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<td>Meeting Room = $1200.00 (100.00 /day X 1 meeting /month x 2 years)</td>
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<td>Mileage = $2500.00 (Staff x 2 years)</td>
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<td>Office Supplies:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited Printing= $500.00 (labels, letters, document printing etc.)</td>
<td>PHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretarial costs(.5 days per month x 2 years); computer and equipment; office space</td>
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