SUBJECT: Public Health School Asthma Project Budget BOH09022
(City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the 2009/2010 budget for the Public Health School Asthma Project, which is 100% funded by the Province of Ontario, be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Public Health School Asthma Project is 100% provincially funded with a goal to create asthma friendly and supportive school environments that enable children with asthma to be successful managers of their asthma. The project is now expanding into the child care sector. Base funding for 2009 has been confirmed at $97,335 which includes a 3% increase from the 2008 funding. Additional 2009 one-time funding of $1,835, for attendance at a conference, is pending approval by the Ministry.
BACKGROUND:

Asthma is the most common chronic disease in children. As many as one in five children in Ontario have asthma. It is a significant cause of hospitalization in children, and work absenteeism for parents. Asthma accounts for more missed school days than any other childhood illness.

In 2002, the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care announced its Asthma Plan of Action to address these issues. One pilot project initiated was the Public Health School Asthma Pilot Project (PHSAPP) which was developed in response to a coroner’s inquest into the death of an adolescent due to asthma. Grants were provided to five Public Health Units and a research team to develop, implement and evaluate an elementary school-based asthma program and to develop school guidelines for creating supportive environments for children with asthma. Each Health Unit assigned a coordinator to work with local and provincial partners to implement the pilot project. The evaluation revealed significant improvements at the level of the school and of the individual. PHSAP has been implemented in 52 elementary schools across Hamilton since 2003. Asthma resources are also available locally to all teachers and school administrators in Hamilton through the PHS teacher website at www.hamilton.ca/teacher and the Healthy Kids Newsletter.

Although the pilot project ended in 2005, the Ministry continues to fund the four participating health units (Hamilton, Halton, Durham, Sudbury). Peel Public Health withdrew from the project following the pilot phase in 2005. In Hamilton, collaboration continues with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB), school administrators, teachers, primary care sites (North Hamilton Community Health Centre), other asthma centres, and with staff from within Public Health Services (Physical Activity promotion, Tobacco Use prevention, Family Health, Environmental Health) as well as other City Departments (Culture and Recreation and Ontario Works). On a provincial level, the Hamilton coordinator collaborates with the research team (University of Toronto and the Hospital for Sick Children), the other three participating health units, the Ontario Physical Health Education Association (Ophea), the Ontario Lung Association, and representatives from the Ministries of Health & Long Term Care, Health Promotion and Education.

In addition to supporting Hamilton schools, broad implementation strategies have included the development of two websites www.asthmainschools.com and www.asthmainschoolsblueprint.com, brochures, resource kits, a DVD and support package for school staff, displays and posters. These strategies will continue as they reach a larger audience and can be developed and maintained at minimal cost. The Hamilton PHSAP Coordinator has taken on the responsibility of coordinating the websites and conducts regular reviews and updating in collaboration with the webmaster.

PHSAP is exploring the transferability of the school-based asthma resources and staff education strategies to childcare settings. A needs assessment of childcare centres conducted in 2007-08 identified that most child care workers care for a child with asthma; however, gaps in asthma knowledge and preparedness exist. Currently an on-line survey
is being conducted to learn how childcare providers prefer to be educated about health issues like asthma. Resources will be adapted and/or developed based on the outcome of this survey.

In Hamilton, PHSAP has partnered with Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) and Ontario Early Years Centres to provide asthma education to staff and disseminate asthma resources to parents. As well, regular articles on asthma are included in the Childcare Connection Newsletter, published quarterly by the City.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

The Public Health School Asthma Project continues to successfully address its objectives, which include the following:

- Maintain and enhance resources for supporting the implementation and uptake of PHSAP in support of the provincial PHSAP strategic plan.
- Maintain and enhance activities related to PHSAP in elementary schools.
- Maintain and enhance activities related to asthma awareness and education in childcare settings.
- Perform administrative responsibilities associated with provision of PHSAP on an ongoing basis.
- Develop and maintain collaborative partnerships and linkages with stakeholders at the local, provincial and national level, including the Asthma Plan of Action (APA).
- Maintain and enhance knowledge and skills to support implementation and improvement of the program.
- Develop and implement strategies for knowledge transfer at the regional, provincial and national level.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

The Board of Health could decide not to approve the Public Health School Asthma Project 2009 budget. In doing so, Hamilton Public Health Services would not receive 100% funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Without this funding PHS would not have the resources to implement the project in the City of Hamilton, and would need to reduce staffing by 1.0 FTE Public Health Nurse.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

**Financial**

The project is funded 100% by the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care, and funds 1.0 FTE Public Health Nurse. The funding period is April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010.
### Budget

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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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### Staffing

There are no staffing implications.

### Legal

There are no legal implications.

### Policies Affecting Proposal:

Although PHSAP relates to Chronic Disease Prevention (CDP) and asthma is included in the CDP Framework, it is not specifically identified in the Ontario Public Health Standards. The National Lung Health Framework, Canada’s first national action plan on lung health, will begin addressing respiratory diseases such as asthma. An Ontario Lung Health Strategy is currently being developed with potential representation from the Public Health School Asthma Project.

### Relevant Consultation:

Public Health Services has consulted with the Finance and Administration Division regarding the preparation of the 2009 Public Health School Asthma Project budget. PHS has also consulted with the Asthma Program Coordinator at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care regarding this year’s budget and work plan.

### 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

The Public Health School Asthma Project contributes to asthma-friendly, supportive environments for children and youth living with asthma. It also provides adults in those environments with the information they need to be caring, involved citizens who are informed about how to support those living with asthma.

**Environmental Well-Being is enhanced.** □ Yes ☑ No
Economic Well-Being is enhanced.  ☑ Yes  ☐ No

The Public Health School Asthma Project supports children and youth to manage their asthma and participate fully in their daily activities (including school and recreation) ultimately promoting healthy and productive lives.

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

100% Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care funding through the Public Health School Asthma Project provides the City of Hamilton with the opportunity to recruit and maintain highly qualified and high performing public health professionals and contract employees.