

SECTION 1: WHAT'S NEW?

3rd Annual School Health Conference
June 8-10, 2007 – Vancouver
Canadian Association for School Health

For more information see last page of this newsletter or contact:
250-483-6988
info@cash-aces.ca

Physical Activity for Public Health Workshop

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) is pleased to invite you to attend its Physical Activity for Public Health, a professional development opportunity which specifically targets increasing effectiveness in building a healthy active community. This year it will be held at the Digby Pines Golf Resort and Spa, in Digby Nova Scotia, September 27-30, 2007.

Breakfast for Learning launches new website:

Check out www.breakfastforlearning.ca and click on [Eat Right! Be Bright!](#) to find out more and access the latest child nutrition resources and tools including: Keys to Success quality standards for child nutrition programs; Interactive bulletin board; Kid-Cool section with kid-tested recipes and games; Current nutrition education and resources.

The [Sexuality Education Resource Centre of Manitoba](#) has recently launched "The Little Black Book", a factual, non-judgmental healthy living resource developed by youth for youth. It is aimed at grades nine to twelve students and addresses a range of topics including job safety, tobacco use, drinking and using drugs, budgeting, suicide prevention and sexual health.

RESEARCH, REPORTS & SCHOOL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE

Study - WHO Europe: Promoting Physical Activity and Active Living in Urban Environments - The Role of Local Governments.

This publication presents the best available evidence on physical activity in the urban environment and makes suggestions for policy and practice based on that evidence.

New Study: Canadian Kids Even Less Active Than We Thought

According to recent data released by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institutes (CFLRI), the issue of child and youth physical inactivity in Canada is perhaps an even larger public health concern than previously believed. The [Canadian Physical Activity Levels Among Youth \(CANPLAY\) Study](#) found that most children and youth are far below recommended activity levels. Most concerning from these data is the recognition that 91% of Canadian children and youth are not meeting the guidelines set forth by Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth, which state that children should be accumulating 90 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity - or the equivalent of 16,500 steps.

Resources (Educational, Planning, Policy and Assessment

Healthy Buddies: Children Teaching Children to Go Move, Go Fuel and Go Feel Good! BC Children's Hospital

Healthy Buddies © empowers elementary school children to live healthier lives by providing them with knowledge about, as well as encouraging positive attitudes toward, the three components of health: physical activity, healthy eating and feeling good about yourself.

The Healthy Buddies Program has lessons plans and all needed material included. It provides an excellent opportunity to team teach and requires only 2-3 hours each week. It addresses a variety of learning outcomes and was developed by doctors and educators. Contact Info: Email: info@healthybuddies.ca
Cell phone: 604-612-5883 Phone/Fax: 1-604-740-0886

Virtually Healthy School Newsletter from the Centre for Health Promotion, Australia. This issue focuses on the important role parents play.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Sexual Health and Schools

A substantial proportion of teenagers are sexually active. An estimated 43% of adolescents aged 15 to 19 have had at least one sex partner in the previous year, and about 13% of these reported having at least two partners during that time. In addition, the rate of chlamydia among females in this age range is six times the national average. This clearly demonstrates the need for effective sexual health education programs, policies and services.¹

Despite declines in the teen pregnancy rate, close to 350,000 teens become pregnant each year and most of these pregnancies are unintended. Sexually transmitted infection rates among Canadian teens are unacceptably high and have been rising in recent years. Together, these data suggest that an increase in coordinated efforts, involving families, schools, health care providers, public health agencies, and communities, to provide sexual health education and related services is needed in order to support the health and well-being of Canadian youth.²

Well developed and implemented school-based sexual health education programs can effectively help youth reduce their risk of STI/HIV infection and unintended pregnancy and provide insights into broader aspects of sexuality, including sexual well-being and rewarding interpersonal relationships.³ The following information has been gathered primarily through web-searches and consultation with key stakeholders, to support readers' efforts in supporting and enhancing sexual health education in schools.

Effective sexual health education programs include the following elements:⁴

- mandatory, comprehensive curriculum with appropriate learning knowledge, skills, beliefs/attitudes, social support, preventive health services and behavioural outcomes organized in an well-designed scope and sequence from the early primary years to senior school graduation (10 Common Characteristics of Effective Curricula (Kirby, 2001) provides further insight in to this element)
- sexuality education program is part of a comprehensive health education program, which in turn, is part of a personal and social development program
- high quality teaching/learning materials, including print, media and technology based alternatives
- active learning and teaching methods
- effective pre-service education for teachers
- good in-service education for teachers
- parent involvement in instruction through good communications with the home and through take home learning activities
- active student involvement in adapting the program to local needs and peer leadership and education in the classroom and the school
- the instructional program is situated within a comprehensive school-community approach to promoting sexual health that includes accessible and convenient adolescent preventive health services, social support from parents and others in the community, a safe healthy physical environment in the school, convenient access to condoms by youth, etc.

Effective programs are based and structured upon theoretical models that enable educators to understand and influence sexual health behaviours. The Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education provide a

¹ Public Health Agency of Canada (2003). Q & A's About Sexual Health Education

² McKay, Alex for the Sex Education and Information Council of Canada (updated 2005). Sexual Health Education in Schools: Questions and Answers

³ Public Health Agency of Canada (2003) Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education: Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education Fact Sheet

⁴ Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (year unknown). Characteristics of Effective Sexual Health Education as presented at www.sexualityandu.ca

framework for providing effective programming based on the Information-Motivation-Behavioural Skills (IMB) model (e.g., provides information that is directly relevant to sexual health such as information on effective forms and access to birth control; addresses motivational factors that influence sexual behaviour such as discussions of social pressures and teach the specific behavioural skills that are needed such as negotiating condom use and/or sexual limit setting (Note: this document provides the framework for evaluating existing sexual health programs, policies and related services and as such does not provide specific curricula or teaching strategies for the above examples). A related document, Qs & As About... Sexual Health Education from the Public Health Agency of Canada builds on the guidelines.

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) has a comprehensive sexual health web site www.sexualityandu.ca that provides a wide array of information, tools and resources for youth, parents and teachers. Some particular items of relevance include:

Facts and Statistics: Sexual Health and Canadian Youth

Teaching Tools Section: you will find information, tools and resources to help plan, implement, improve and evaluate a broadly based sexual health education program. Just some of the resources you will find in this section include:

- Downloadable Powerpoint, slide and PDF presentations.
- Expertly designed lesson plans and webquest for teaching sexual health
- Tips for responding to students' questions
- Planning resources for designing a broadly based sexual health education program
- Strategies to manage controversial situations and to prepare for them before they arise
- Explore and evaluate your own attitudes towards teaching sexual health education.

www.HPVinfo.ca is a web site provided by SOGC that is focused specifically on HPV or Human Papillomavirus the world's most common sexually transmitted infection.

The Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECAN) has published and posted a helpful resource entitled Sexual Health Education in the Schools: Questions and Answers and Common Questions About Sexual Health Education, a useful resource for making the case for school-based sexual health education; as well as the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health in Canada: A Report Card in 2004. The Q and A document is designed to support the provision of high quality sexual health education in Canadian schools. It provides answers to some of the most common questions that parents, educators, program planners, school and health administrators, and concerned citizens may have about sexual health education. The following are excerpted from this resource:

- **Canadian parents want the schools to provide broadly based sexual health education.** A series of surveys of Canadian parents have consistently found that over 85% of parents agreed with the statement "Sexual health education should be provided in the schools" and a majority of these parents approved of schools providing young people with information on a wide variety of sexual health topics including: puberty, reproduction, healthy relationships, STI/AIDS prevention, birth control, abstinence, sexual orientation and sexual abuse/coercion.
- **Canadian young people are also highly supportive of sexual health education in the schools.** For example, a recent survey of high school youth found that 92% agreed that "Sexual health education should be provided in the schools" and they rated the following topics as either "very important" or "extremely important": puberty, reproduction, personal safety, sexual coercion & sexual assault, sexual decision-making in dating relationships, birth control methods and safer sex practices, and sexually transmitted diseases.
- **Sexual Health Education does not lead to earlier or more frequent sexual activity.** Kirby (2001) in reviewing the evaluation literature concluded that sexuality and HIV education programs: do not hasten the onset of intercourse; do not increase the frequency of intercourse; do not increase the number of sexual partners.

- **“Abstinence-only”** school-based programs that focus exclusively on sexual abstinence and that do not provide information and skills related to consistent contraceptive use and safer sex practices **are ineffective**.
- **Effective sexual health education supports informed decision-making** by providing individuals with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, personal insight, motivation and behavioural skills that **are consistent with each individual’s personal values and choices**.

Additional Research, Tools and Resources

The [Canadian Youth, Sexual Health and AIDS Study](#) (Council of Ministers of Education, 2003) was undertaken to increase understanding of the factors that contribute to the sexual health of Canadian youth and in so doing provides a snapshot of current adolescent sexual health. For example: in 2002, 23% of boys and 19% of girls in Grade 9 report having sexual intercourse at least once (compared with 40% of boys and 46% of girls in Grade 11 who reported having sexual intercourse at least once). Two-thirds of Grade 7 students and half of Grade 9 students do not know that there is no cure for HIV/AIDS. Almost half of the Grades 9 and 11 girls in the study who are sexually active and have been pregnant report having had four or more sexual partners, a fact that increases the likelihood of unintended and unhealthy consequences. Students in 2002 generally exhibit lower levels of sexual knowledge than those who participated in the 1989 Canadian Youth and Aids Study.

According to the [Canadian Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections 2006 Edition](#), (Public Health Agency of Canada), “In Canada, there are three nationally reportable STIs: chlamydia, gonorrhea and infectious syphilis. Since 1997, there has been a steady increase in the rates of all three infections. This phenomenon is not unique to Canada; other countries, including the U.S. and the U.K., have reported similar trends. Targeted enhanced surveillance and research are required to determine the factors that may be playing a role in these trends. Some of the possible factors cited may include: Some people may have developed safer-sex burnout; youth awareness of risks and knowledge of risk reduction behaviours remain less than optimal; sex is occurring at an early age, with a high rate of serially monogamous relationships; the transmission risks of STIs associated with sexual activity (vaginal, anal and oral) are not well understood by the public; “Party drugs,” such as ecstasy and crystal meth, are being increasingly linked to unsafe sexual behaviours and anonymous partnering venues, such as the Internet, are expanding and some STI tests are now more sensitive and hence increases in rates may reflect this.

[What you Need to Know About STIs Information Pamphlet](#) is a 36-page, pocket-sized, public health pamphlet on sexually transmitted infections uses colourful, animated illustrations and youth-friendly language to educate young people, teachers and parents about STIs, and teaches them how to recognize, prevent and seek treatment for all types of STIs. The Public Health Agency of Canada also has a series of updates of interest on HPV, including: [What Everyone Should Know About Human Papillomavirus \(HPV\): Questions and Answers](#); [Human Papillomavirus \(HPV\) Prevention and HPV Vaccine: Questions and Answers](#).

The [Canadian Federation for Sexual Health](#) offers information and resources for youth, parents and educators including: [Sexual and Reproductive Health Counselling Guidelines](#); [Beyond the Basics: A Sourcebook on Sexual and Reproductive Health Education](#) Designed for use in the classroom, [Beyond the Basics 2nd Edition](#) complements existing programs and curriculum guidelines set by provincial and territorial Ministries of Education and adheres to the goals and principles of comprehensive sexual health education outlined by the federal government in the “Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education”.; [Positive Thinking](#); [Youth Talk Back](#) Youth Talk Back is designed to provide students with the opportunity to learn how to become more active media consumers and to raise their awareness about the relationship between media and sexuality; [Youth Talk Back Teachers' Guide](#); and [Finding Our Way: A Sexual and Reproductive Health Sourcebook for Aboriginal Communities](#) Finding Our Way is the first comprehensive

Canadian resource on sexual and reproductive health within an Aboriginal cultural context. It includes up-to-date information, teaching resources, program models, and personal stories on sexual and reproductive health issues as defined by Aboriginal peoples.

teachingsexualhealth.ca is an innovative website developed by Alberta educators and health professionals. It has sections geared to young people, their parents and teachers.

The [Sexuality Education Resource Centre of Manitoba](#) has recently launched "The Little Black Book" - a factual, non-judgmental healthy living resource developed by youth for youth. It is aimed at grades 9 to 12 students, and addresses a range of topics including job safety, tobacco use, drinking and using drugs, budgeting, suicide prevention, and sexual health. In addition, SERC offers a series of great resources and links including www.sexetc.org (a U.S. based site by teens for teens).

[Sexuality Education Gateway](#) provides educators of students with quick and easy access to reliable resources through a catalogue that links them to more than 800 educational resources and lesson plans to improve sexual health education. [Webquests](#) provides students in grades 7+ with guided web-based assignments/ activities that introduce students to learning concepts while linking them with reliable and factual Internet sites on sexual health.

[Raising the Roof](#): (The Cape Breton Wellness Centre, University College of Cape Breton, 1999; funded by: Health Canada: the principal aim of the program was to educate youth about their sexuality and to encourage healthier choices and practices in this area. Secondly, the goal was to design a project that would adopt and demonstrate the principles of mental health promotion, and evaluate whether or not the mental health promotion approach would enhance the effectiveness of the sexuality education.

[Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre](#) established in 1989, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre is the largest information centre on HIV/AIDS in Canada. The Information Centre is a program of the [Canadian Public Health Association](#).

[Canadian Health Network](#) is a source of reliable health information to Canadians on a wide range of topics, and the Canadian Federation for Sexual Health manages the sexual health component.

[SIECUS \(Sexuality Information and Education Council of the US\) School Health Project](#). provides access to state and local policies, sexual health promotion programs, national guidelines, information on curricula, and links to additional information on the Web. This section includes information on middle school, high school, and college aged youth and pays particular attention to youth of color.

[CDC Compendium of HIV Prevention Interventions with Evidence of Effectiveness \(.pdf\)](#)

[CDC Adolescents & School Health: Publications on sexual behaviour](#)

3RD ANNUAL SCHOOL HEALTH CONFERENCE

THE SCHOOL'S ROLE IN PROMOTING POSITIVE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT & MENTAL HEALTH IN COOPERATION WITH HEALTH AUTHORITIES, YOUTH AGENCIES & POLICE SERVICES

Research on anti-social and risky behaviours is increasingly showing that delinquency, bullying, harmful substance abuse, and sexual risk-taking all stem from the disconnection between young people, schools and the community. Research shows that social problems are directly linked to dropping out of school, alienation within families, and the difficulties young people experience in identifying adults that are trustworthy guides and advocates.

School-based and school-linked programs and services are evolving to respond to these clusters of negative behaviours and include:

- Anti-bullying programs that take a social development approach
- Sexual health education programs that include youth development strategies
- Mental health programs that improve the social climate of the school
- Substance abuse prevention that builds life skills
- Crime prevention programs that include police service development of preventive and restorative justice approaches

EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS REQUIRE INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION TO BE EFFECTIVE & SUSTAINABLE

The third annual Canadian School Health conference will focus on how local agencies and professionals from a variety of sectors can work together on proven strategies.

Conference keynotes will share information about the latest developments. Conference workshops will provide hands-on, practice-based information and experience, including:

- **Together We Light the Way**, a social development program developed in Durham Ontario and evaluated in sites across Canada
- **The Gatehouse Program** that was developed and evaluated in Australia and Canada
- The research behind the **Canadian Sexual Health Education Guidelines**
- Canadian adaptations of international better practices guidelines in substance abuse prevention
- The new **RCMP Youth Officer Program**

SCHOOL HEALTH CONFERENCE

JUNE 8-10, 2007 | VANCOUVER, BC
VANCOUVER CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:

THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SCHOOL HEALTH
250.483.6988 or info@cash-aces.ca

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