
MNCHP NETWORK BULLETIN MARCH 28 / 08

In this week's issue:

I. NEWS & VIEWS

- Ontario Government helps low-income families
- Painkillers, other drugs found in southern Ontario drinking water
- Work on childhood diseases wins award: Sick Kids
- Advocacy group says Ontario court decision to incarcerate First Nation leaders has detrimental impact on children
- Latest product recalls
- Health Canada expands on information about arsenic in pear juice
- Nova Scotia bans smoking in cars with children as of April 1
- Government of Canada supports northern Saskatchewan international children's festival
- Prime Minister announces additional funding for free MedicAlert bracelets for children
- Seizure risk prompts change in U.S. vaccination guidelines
- Link between prescribed heartburn medications during pregnancy and childhood breathing disorders

II. RECENT REPORTS AND RESEARCH STUDIES

- Newcomer mothers have an increased risk of postpartum depression symptoms
- Moms-to-be who quit smoking boost chances for 'easygoing' child
- Asthma in children linked to cleaning products and air freshener use during pregnancy
- Very premature children at higher risk for increased disability
- New way to screen infants for fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)

III. CURRENT INITIATIVES

- Public Health Agency of Canada: Healthy pregnancy campaign
- Online consultation: Revised national nutritional pregnancy guidelines for health professionals
- First annual LGBTQ health matters week
- National poison prevention week
- U.S. initiative: Unnatural causes...Is inequality making us sick? Connect up!

IV. UPCOMING EVENTS

- Discussion on LGBTQ step-parenting
- (Dis)engaged : A report on the challenges and barriers in sexual and reproductive health faced by women who have sex with women
- Three shots heard round the world: HPV vaccines and the politics of women's health
- Vulnerable children in Canada: Research and policy options
- Daddy, Papa & Me: Queer-positive gathering for fathers and their children (ages 0-6)
- Countdown to a poverty reduction plan...
- Community development institute
- Gatherings for LGBTQ single moms
- 30th annual Guelph sexuality conference: Enhancing sexual health in a rapidly changing world

V. RESOURCES

- Health-evidence.ca: Resource for promoting evidence-informed decision making
- Community Lens Bulletin – Children at home: Children under 6
- New book addresses school violence and its prevention

- Meal-planning tool to improve the eating habits of autistic children

----- I. NEWS & VIEWS -----

ONTARIO

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT HELPS LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

The Government of Ontario (2008, March 17) announced that they support low-income families: (1) They will invest \$135 million over 3 years in dental care plan for low-income families that includes prevention and treatment services provided by public health units, community health centres, dentists, and dental hygienists; (2) Investment in the Student Nutrition Program, a program that provides health snacks and meals for children across Ontario, will be doubled with a 3-year \$32-million investment; (3) Funding will be provided to assist with repairs to affordable housing units; and (4) Ontario municipalities will be able to get up to \$500 million in low-cost loans from the Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority to repair affordable housing.

<http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/news/Product.asp?ProductID=2033>

PAINKILLERS, OTHER DRUGS FOUND IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO DRINKING WATER

A new study, published in the March issue of the Water Quality Research Journal of Canada, reports finding traces of painkillers and other drugs (e.g., ibuprofen, cholesterol-lowering drugs and the common household antibacterial agent triclosan) in drinking water from 15 southern Ontario cities. The municipalities are not identified but all are said to be within easy reach of Environment Canada's National Water Research Institute in Burlington. Most compounds were reduced to trace or non-detectable levels after passing through water treatment plants, but the researchers say the fact any chemicals were found is a sign of potential exposure to many more (thestar.com, 2008, March 24). The study author, Mark Servos, noted that the best scientific judgement right now is that they represent a minimal risk and that "there is a need to complete a more comprehensive assessment of these compounds in source waters and of the factors influencing their treatment and removal from finished drinking water" (cbc.ca, 2008, March 24).

<http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2008/03/24/water-study.html?ref=rss>

WORK ON CHILDHOOD DISEASES WINS AWARD: SICK KIDS

The Ontario Government (2008, March 20) applauded the world-leading research into the prevention of childhood diseases that is being expanded at The Hospital for Sick Children. The Centre of Applied Genomics at Sick Kids received the prestigious Wellcome Trust, a grant of \$870,000. This grant will be used to expand work on a world-leading source of genomics information called "the Database of Genomic Variants", also known as "the Toronto Database". This data may influence how diseases that affect both children and adults are understood, diagnosed, and treated.

<http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2008/03/20/c5990.html?lmatch=&lang=e.html>

ADVOCACY GROUP SAYS ONTARIO COURT DECISION TO INCARCERATE FIRST NATION LEADERS HAS DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON CHILDREN

Mamow Sha-way-gi-kay-win: The North-South Partnership for Children is a developing partnership that represents the coming together of First Nation chiefs, elders, youth, and community members living in remote communities in north-western Ontario and caring individuals and voluntary organizations based in southern Ontario. In recognition of the desperate needs of children, youth, and families in remote First Nation communities, the collective goal of the group is to learn from one another and to support the dreams and efforts of remote northern First Nation communities for their children. This organization held a press conference to voice their concern about the recent court decision to incarcerate six members of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig (KI). These 6 individuals, 5 democratically elected First Nation

community leaders and 1 community member, were sentenced to 6 months in jail on contempt charges for their peaceful opposition to a court injunction that would allow mining exploration on their traditional lands. Judy Finlay, former Ontario child advocate and co-chair of the partnership, noted that "Chief Donny Morris...is in jail for a cause that is crucial to the well-being of his community. The children, youth, mothers, fathers, and grandparents are struggling with these actions of the province". This press release (2008, March 26) reports that the climate of fear and hopelessness created by the imprisonment is unbearable for the First Nation community and the children who are already enduring unacceptable rates of depression, suicide, and family and cultural separation. Mamow Sha-way-gi-kay-win: The North-South Partnership for Children calls for steps to prioritize the protection and well-being of the children of KI.
<http://newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/March2008/26/c7154.html>

CANADA

LATEST PRODUCT RECALLS

Note: Products that are recalled for containing lead are in excess of the allowable level per the Canadian Hazardous Products Act.

- Wire bound journals, activity books, and calendars: Paint on the metal spiral bindings contains lead
 - Baby Einstein sleeper: 2 buttons closest to the neck can come off the garment, posing a choking hazard
 - MEGA brands Magtastik and Matnetix Jr. pre-school magnetic toys: Small magnets inside the toy pieces can detach. If swallowing or aspirating more than one magnet, the magnets can attract each other and cause intestinal perforations or blockages, which can be fatal.
 - MagnaMan magnetic action figures: Small magnets inside the figures can detach. If swallowing or aspirating more than one magnet, the magnets can attract each other and cause intestinal perforations or blockages, which can be fatal.
 - Ellaroo Ring sling baby carriers: The aluminium rings on the sling carriers can bend or break. This can cause the fabric to slip through the rings and infants to fall out of the carrier.
- http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/pr-rp/pr-rp_e.php

HEALTH CANADA EXPANDS ON INFORMATION ABOUT ARSENIC IN PEAR JUICE

Health Canada (2008, March 14) released a notice to reassure parents about the recent recall of 2 brands of pear juice products as a result of higher than normal levels of arsenic, noting that the recall was conducted as a precaution to prevent long-term exposure (i.e., many years or decades) to arsenic. Short term exposure (i.e., several weeks or months) to the levels of arsenic in this type of juice are not high enough to represent a risk to children or adults. Health Canada advises the public to not consume the pear juice to minimize exposure but that there is no need for actions if they have already consumed the juice because the levels of arsenic found in these products are not high enough to pose a health risk when consumed as part of a normal diet over the short term.
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/2008/2008_43_e.html

NOVA SCOTIA BANS SMOKING IN CARS WITH CHILDREN AS OF APRIL 1

Nova Scotia will become the first province in Canada making it illegal to smoke in motor vehicles with persons under the age of 19 inside. The amendment was passed by the legislature on March 20, 2008 and will come into effect on April 1, 2008.
<http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2008/03/21/smoking-ban.html?ref=rss>

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SUPPORTS NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

Maurice Vellacott, Member of Parliament (Saskatoon-Wanuskewin), announced (Government of Canada, 2008, March 13) that the Northern Saskatchewan International Children's Festival will receive up to \$62,500 in federal funding. "For the past two decades, the Northern Saskatchewan International

Children's Festival has energized the community by providing a diverse program of cultural and educational activities that are designed for children, but can be enjoyed by the entire family."

<http://news.gc.ca/web/view/en/index.jsp?articleid=385209>

PRIME MINISTER ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR FREE MEDICALERT BRACELETS FOR CHILDREN

The Government of Canada (2008, March 19) announced that they will be providing an additional \$3 million to the Canadian MedicAlert Foundation's "No Child Without" campaign to ensure that elementary school children across the country are protected from unforeseen medical emergencies.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/view/en/index.jsp?articleid=386559>

INTERNATIONAL

SEIZURE RISK PROMPTS CHANGE IN U.S. VACCINATION GUIDELINES

As a result of an increased risk (but still very small risk) of seizures in children who get a combined vaccine against measles, mumps, rubella, and chicken pox compared to those getting 2 separate shots for the same diseases, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has withdrawn one of its preferential recommendations. The agency noted that "it was no longer expressing a preference that children get the so-called MMRV combined vaccine rather than 2 shots -- the MMR vaccine against measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles) and a separate one against varicella (chicken pox)" (Yahoo News, 2008, March 13).

<http://www.medpagetoday.com/InfectiousDisease/Vaccines/tb/8755>

LINK BETWEEN PRESCRIBED HEARTBURN MEDICATION DURING PREGNANCY AND CHILDHOOD BREATHING DISORDERS

This article (Laino, 2008, March 18) summarizes the findings of a study presented at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology that examined the relationship between prescribed heartburn drugs (e.g., Axid, Pepcid, Tagamet, Zantac, Prilosec, Prevacid, Aciphex, Protonix, and Nexium) during pregnancy and childhood asthma. Data on approximately 30,000 children was reviewed and the findings indicate that children whose mothers took prescription heartburn medication during pregnancy were 51% more likely to suffer from wheezing breathing difficulties, and other symptoms of asthma. Researcher Dr. Elizabeth Yen noted that "women who have taken the drugs during pregnancy shouldn't panic... At the same time, pregnant women should limit their use of the medications". Although severe heartburn is experienced by more than half of all pregnant women, Zen (2008) suggests that women should always check with their doctors before taking any medications. This study did not include over-the-counter antacids such as Tums, Rolaids, and Maalox.

http://www.webmd.com/baby/news/20080318/moms-heartburn-meds-carry-asthma-risk?src=RSS_PUBLIC

----- II. RECENT REPORTS AND RESEARCH RESULTS -----

CANADA

NEWCOMER MOTHERS HAVE AN INCREASED RISK OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS

This study (Stewart, Gagnon, Saucier, Wahoush, & Dougherty, 2008) aimed to determine if postpartum depression symptoms are more common in newcomer women than in Canadian-born women. Four groups of women completed questionnaires for depression, social support, interpersonal violence, and demographic information, including 65 refugees, 94 non-refugee immigrants, 109 asylum seekers, and 73 Canadian-born women. The findings indicate that immigrants, refugees, and women seeking asylum in Canada are 4 to 5 times more likely to suffer from postpartum depression symptoms than women born in

Canada (Rynor, 2008). Study author, Dr. Donna Stewart, noted that the high incidence of postpartum is largely due to the lack of social support for newly arrived women. She explains that practitioners need to be aware that there is a greater risk of postpartum depression and need to know some of the services they can be referred to (Rynor, 2008).

<http://publications.cpa-apc.org/media.php?mid=581&xwm=true>

INTERNATIONAL

ASTHMA IN CHILDREN LINKED TO CLEANING PRODUCTS AND AIR FRESHENER USE DURING PREGNANCY

This study (Henderson, Sherriff, Farrow, & Ayres, 2008) assessed the effects of maternal use of domestic chemicals (e.g., bleach, air freshener) during pregnancy on wheezing and lung function in children up to 8.5 years of age. The research involved 14,541 pregnant women who were due to give birth in the Bristol area between April 1991 and December 1992. As reviewed in Medical News Today (2008, March 13), expectant mothers completed a questionnaire on various health and lifestyle aspects, which included questions on their use of 15 chemical-based household products and how often they used them. At 6, 18, 30, 42, and 81 months after birth, the parents were sent questionnaires on the child's pattern of wheezing. At 7.5 years of age the children had skin prick tests to look at their susceptibility to six common allergens (e.g., house dust mites, cat fur) and the children were classed as having an allergy if they had a skin reaction to cat, pollen, or dust mites. At 8.5 years of age, the children had a lung function test to examine any degree of restrictive lung function that would indicate asthma. The findings, in agreement with previous studies, suggest a link between chemical use in the home and persistent wheeze in childhood. There were limitations to the study because there are many triggers and causes of asthma so more research is needed to understand better the complex relationship between exposure to chemicals and asthma risk (Medical News Today, 2008, March 13).

Abstract: <http://erj.ersjournals.com/cgi/content/abstract/31/3/547>

VERY PREMATURE CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK FOR INCREASED DISABILITY

The researchers (Larroque et al., 2008) examined the health of 1,817 five-year-old French children who had been born between 22 and 32 weeks of pregnancy. This group was compared to a control group of 396 children who had been born at 39-40 weeks of gestation. All children were assessed for cognitive skills, hearing or visual problems, and for walking with or without an aid. The findings indicate that in children who are born very preterm, cognitive and neuromotor impairments at 5 years of age increased with decreasing gestational age. Many of these children need a high level of specialised care. The authors conclude that "these results raise questions about health and provision of rehabilitation services, and the cost of these services to families and society. Further work is needed to identify the best and most effective early developmental interventions to improve the functional prognosis of motor disabilities. As they grow older, children with cognitive deficits will have difficulties at school and will need help or special education." (Medical News Today, 2008, March 19).

Abstract: <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140673608603803/abstract>

NEW WAY TO SCREEN INFANTS FOR FETAL ALCOHOL (FAS) SYNDROME

The researchers of this study (Peterson et al., 2008) examined a group of 216 infants whose mothers drank various amounts of alcohol during pregnancy to determine the relationship between fatty acid ethyl esters (FAEE) (produced when alcohol is broken down in the digestive system) in infants first stool and neurodevelopment. The levels of FAEE were measured in the first bowel movement of the newborns and the babies were then given developmental tests at the ages of 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years. Infants with higher levels of FAEE in their first bowel movement were found to be at risk for developmental disorders (ScienceDaily, 2008, March 7). According to study author Dr. Peterson (2008), "Increasing levels of FAEE were significantly associated with poorer mental and psychomotor development during the first 2 years of life...early intervention for such at risk children could minimize disabilities and improve developmental outcomes". The authors conclude that measuring the levels of FAEE in an infant's first

bowel movement could be a useful method for identifying children at risk for FAS, which may make early intervention possible.

<http://download.journals.elsevierhealth.com/pdfs/journals/0022-3476/PIIS0022347607010657.pdf>

----- III. CURRENT INITIATIVES -----

PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA: HEALTHY PREGNANCY CAMPAIGN

The Public Health Agency of Canada (2008, March 3) launched the 2nd phase of an 8-week national Healthy Pregnancy Campaign to raise awareness of the health considerations for a healthy pregnancy. The Healthy Canadians website offers information and documents related to the campaign including "The Sensible Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy".

Campaign information and posters: http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/hp-gs/cm_e.html

Download The Sensible Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy: www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/hp-gs/guide_e.html

ONLINE CONSULTATION: REVISED NATIONAL NUTRITIONAL PREGNANCY GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Health Canada's office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion (2008, March 26) announced that the draft recommendations on iron and folate supplementation during pregnancy will be posted on their Web site for comment in the coming weeks. The online consultation will begin in early April and will be open for a period of 30 days. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion at: healthy_eating@hc-sc.gc.ca

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/branch-dirgen/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/index_e.html

FIRST ANNUAL LGBTQ HEALTH MATTERS WEEK

This new initiative, coordinated by Sherbourne Health Centre, is based on the annual community health fair, Queer Health Matters, which was held in partnership with the Rainbow Health Network from 2004-2007. The First Annual LGBTQ Health Matters Week (April 7-13, 2008), with the theme "Make the Connection", is designed to promote the health and well-being of LGBTQ people in Toronto through a variety of events to be held across the city. The goal is to inform LGBTQ communities of the local health care resources available to them, while at the same time educating and engaging LGBTQ people around important health issues. The LGBTQ Health Matters website provides information about the initiative, how to get involved, a calendar of events, and LGBTQ resources.

http://www.ohpe.ca/ebulletin/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9370&Itemid=62

NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK

Minister of Health Tony Clement recognizes National Poison Prevention Week to raise awareness of the dangers of poisons, and to educate consumers and caregivers on how to prevent poisonings. He reminds Canadians of the educational initiatives offered by Health Canada about the dangers associated with exposure to chemical products such as the "Stay Safe" program. The Stay Safe program teaches children to recognize the hazard symbols found on household chemical products in a fun and interactive way. The program has guides for educators and caregivers of preschoolers and school aged children as well as an interactive online activity module (Health Canada, 2008).

News release: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/minist/messages/2008_03_17_e.html

Stay Safe program: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/house-domes/chem-chim/hazard-danger_e.html

U.S. INITIATIVE: UNNATURAL CAUSES...IS INEQUALITY MAKING US SICK? CONNECT UP!

This website provides (1) video clips of a 7-part documentary series exploring racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health and (2) the "Connect Up!" initiative: An online database set up to enable users to search for other organizations by issue and geographic area. This initiative is designed to link

UNNATURAL CAUSES web site visitors with organizations working to address the root causes of health inequities. To include your organization in Connect Up! fill out the web form.
<http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/>

----- IV. UPCOMING EVENTS -----

This section lists events that have not been included in earlier editions of the MNCHP bulletin or listserv postings. For the details of these events and a complete list of events noted in previous MNCHP bulletins and postings, including contact information, links to organizations, and descriptions, see
<http://www.beststart.org/events/otherevents.php>

ONTARIO

DISCUSSION ON LGBTQ STEP-PARENTING

April 9, 2008: Toronto, ON
 Hosted by: LGBTQ Parenting Network
<http://www.lgbtqhealthmatters.com/>

(DIS)ENGAGED: A REPORT ON THE CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS IN SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH FACED BY WOMEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH WOMEN

April 10, 2008: Toronto, ON
 Hosted by: Planned Parenthood Toronto in partnership with Sherbourne Health Centre
<http://www.lgbtqhealthmatters.com/>

THREE SHOTS HEARD ROUND THE WORLD: HPV VACCINES AND THE POLITICS OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

April 11, 2008: Ottawa, ON
 Hosted by: the Institute of Women's Studies of the University of Ottawa
<http://www.beststart.org/events/otherevents.php>

VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN CANADA: RESEARCH AND POLICY OPTIONS

April 11, 2008: Toronto, ON
 Hosted by: Institute for Research on Public Policy
<http://www.irpp.org/indexe.htm>

DADDY, PAPA & ME: QUEER-POSITIVE GATHERING FOR FATHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN (AGES 0-6)

April 12, 2008: Toronto, ON
 Hosted by: The 519's Family Resource Centre
<http://www.lgbtqhealthmatters.com/>

COUNTDOWN TO A POVERTY REDUCTION PLAN...

April 14, 2008: Toronto, ON
 Hosted by: 25 in 5: Network for Poverty Reduction
http://www.theconstellation.ca/img_upload/fecdd5d1ce8f61a123daaa6ef6eaa28a/April_14_flyer_1.pdf

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

April 24-26, 2008: Toronto, ON
 Hosted by: Toronto Community Development Institute
<http://www.torontocdi.ca/>

GATHERINGS FOR LGBTQ SINGLE MOMS

May 10 and June 8, 2008: Toronto, ON
 Hosted by: YMCA Family Development Centre

<http://www.lgbtqhealthmatters.com/>

30TH ANNUAL GUELPH SEXUALITY CONFERENCE: ENHANCING SEXUAL HEALTH IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

June 9-11, 2008: Guelph, ON

Hosted by: Office of Open Learning, University of Guelph

<http://www.open.uoguelph.ca/sexconf/index.html>

----- V. RESOURCES -----

HEALTH-EVIDENCE.CA: RESOURCE FOR PROMOTING EVIDENCE-INFORMED DECISION MAKING

This website is a free, searchable, online registry of published research evidence, in the form of systematic reviews, evaluating public health, health promotion, and population health interventions. This registry houses over 1,100 reviews and is updated quarterly. All reviews on health-evidence.ca have been assessed for methodological quality to help users quickly find the best research evidence available to support their decisions. Users can search for articles by focus of review (e.g., child health, reproductive health, physical activity), review type (e.g., systematic), intervention location (e.g., day care centre, community health centre), population characteristics (e.g., age group, First Nations and Inuit, gender), and intervention strategies (e.g., advocacy, education/awareness and skill development/training, screening). There are new and improved features on health-evidence.ca including: refined searches, more search results, more review information available on first glance (e.g., quality rating), sortable results, saved searches, increased transparency, and a pop-up glossary.

<http://www.health-evidence.ca/>

COMMUNITY LENS BULLETIN - CHILDREN AT HOME: CHILDREN UNDER 6

Community Development Halton's new publication series "Community Lens" aims to disseminate and interpret important community data. Community Lens will focus on results from the 2006 Census as this information becomes available. This issue of Community Lens focuses on children at home under the age of 6. Upcoming issues will include children and youth, seniors, families, and immigrants. Issues are available on the Community Development Halton website.

<http://www.cdhalton.ca/lens/index.htm>

NEW BOOK ADDRESSES SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND ITS PREVENTION

This book (Stormont, Lewis, Beckner, & Johnson, 2007) discusses the importance of proactive prevention of behavioural problems at an early age. One of the authors, Dr. Melissa Stormont, notes that "the urgency to develop appropriate patterns of social behaviour among young children simply cannot be emphasized enough. Educators need to have an understanding of this urgency and the tools for responding" (Medical News Today, 2008, March 19).

www.sagepub.com/booksProdDesc.nav?currTree=Subjects&level1=C00&level2=CA0&prodId=Book229720

MEAL-PLANNING TOOL TO IMPROVE THE EATING HABITS OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN

A Nova Scotia woman, Jean Nicol, who has a degree in nutrition and has spent 25 years working with autistic children, created a meal-planning tool called "The Eating Game (Get Awesome Meals Everyday)". This book addresses the eating challenges of individuals with autism. The visual support structures enable children, adolescents, and adults to actively participate in daily food planning making mealtime predictable and enjoyable with the bonus of developing healthy eating habits based on Canada's Food Guide. For information contact: Jean Nicol at jnicol@ns.sympatico.ca

News article: <http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2008/03/11/eating-game.html?ref=rss>