

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Ottawa Board of Health
Conseil de santé d'Ottawa**

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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2014-OPH-HPDP-0007

**SUBJECT: Back to Basics, Report on Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL)
Strategy**

**OBJET: Revenir à l'essentiel, rapport sur la Stratégie saine alimentation et
vie active (SAVA)**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 2012, the Board of Health approved a three year Ottawa Public Health (OPH) Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) Strategy. The Strategy aimed to make the healthier choice the easy choice by creating supportive environments, implementing healthy policy and encouraging behavior change through education and skill building to meet the strategy's three objectives: 1) decrease consumption of energy dense, nutrient poor foods and beverages; 2) increase physical activity through walking and active transportation; and 3) engage the whole community to change social and physical environments.

Over the past three years, numerous highlights and achievements have resulted from partnerships and momentum continues to grow with increasing interest to accomplish concrete work in the community. Highlights from these partnerships have resulted in:

- New HEAL Guidelines improved nutrition and physical activity for over 600 children in municipal child care centres with expansion plans underway with approximately 100 additional child care centres;
- Enhanced promotion of active transportation in more than 230 elementary schools;
- Expanded support in neighbourhoods with limited access to fresh and affordable fruits and vegetables;
- Energy drinks being removed from municipal recreation centres;
- Engaged over 150 participants at the HEAL Forum;
- Health related considerations for healthy eating and physical activity in City of Ottawa Master Plans;
- Provincial recognition of Ottawa for its work to become more Cycling and Pedestrian Friendly;
- 1,400 residents engaged in walking events to celebrate the Gottawalk coalition;
- Improved outreach to residents with over 40,000 interactions promoting food skills;
- Recognition of over 40 local HEAL Champions; and
- Improved hospitality standards and the quality of foods and beverages served at OPH events.

Successes from the HEAL Strategy will, over time, improve access to healthy food, influence the built environment and improve social and physical environments.

However, recent data reveals that levels of overweight and obesity continue to be high

in Ottawa, reinforcing the need to sustain healthy eating and active living as a public health priority, which serves as an indication of the need to continue this work.

In the coming years, to build on the success of the HEAL Strategy, OPH will continue to:

- Expand the HEAL Guidelines to other organizations that provide or serve food;
- Explore opportunities to influence the built environment with an aim to increase access to healthy food and active transportation; and
- Support local activities that increase access to healthy food.

RÉSUMÉ

En mai 2012, le Conseil de santé approuvait la stratégie de trois ans Saine alimentation et vie active (SAVA) de Santé publique Ottawa (SPO). Cette stratégie visait à faire des choix sains les choix faciles en créant des milieux favorables, en établissant des politiques de promotion de la santé et en favorisant le changement des comportements par l'éducation et le renforcement des compétences afin d'atteindre les trois objectifs suivants : 1) diminuer la consommation d'aliments et de boissons riches en calories et à faible valeur nutritive; 2) favoriser l'activité physique par la marche et les déplacements actifs; 3) mobiliser l'ensemble de la communauté pour modifier les environnements social et physique.

Ces trois dernières années, des partenariats ont donné lieu à de nombreuses réalisations, et les progrès se poursuivent alors que la communauté souhaite voir des résultats concrets. Voici les principales réalisations de ces partenariats :

- Amélioration de la nutrition et accroissement de l'activité physique chez plus de 600 enfants fréquentant des garderies municipales grâce à de nouvelles lignes directrices pour une saine alimentation et une vie active, et adoption de plans visant l'élargissement de la stratégie à une centaine d'autres garderies;
- Accroissement de la promotion du transport actif dans plus de 230 écoles élémentaires;
- Accroissement du soutien dans les quartiers ayant un accès limité à des fruits et légumes frais abordables;
- Retrait des boissons énergisantes des centres récréatifs municipaux;
- Participation de plus de 150 personnes au forum SAVA;
- Intégration de facteurs de promotion d'une saine alimentation et de l'activité physique dans les plans directeurs de la Ville d'Ottawa;
- Reconnaissance par le gouvernement provincial des efforts déployés par Ottawa afin de rendre la ville plus conviviale pour les piétons et les cyclistes;

- Participation de 1 400 résidents à des marches pour promouvoir la coalition Au pas Ottawa;
- Amélioration des opérations de rayonnement auprès des résidents grâce à plus de 40 000 interactions de promotion des compétences alimentaires;
- Reconnaissance de plus de 40 champions SAVA locaux;
- Amélioration des normes d'accueil et de la qualité des aliments et des boissons servis lors des événements organisés par SPO.

Avec le temps, les réussites obtenues grâce à la stratégie SAVA accroîtront l'accès à des aliments sains, auront une incidence sur le milieu bâti et amélioreront les environnements social et physique. Toutefois, des données récentes révèlent que les taux d'embonpoint et d'obésité demeurent élevés à Ottawa, ce qui ne fait que confirmer la nécessité de continuer de faire de la promotion d'une saine alimentation et de la vie active une priorité en matière de santé publique.

Au cours des prochaines années, SPO va miser sur les réussites de la stratégie SAVA et :

- Appliquer les Lignes directrices pour une saine alimentation et une vie active à d'autres organismes qui fournissent ou servent des aliments;
- Continuer d'examiner les occasions d'exercer une influence sur le milieu bâti afin d'accroître le transport actif et l'accès à des aliments sains;
- Continuer de soutenir les activités locales qui améliorent l'accès à des aliments sains.

BACKGROUND

In May 2012, the Board approved the three year Ottawa Public Health (OPH) Healthy Eating Active Living Strategy (HEAL) ([ACS2012-OPH-HPDP-003](#)) designed to address overweight and obesity concerns in Ottawa. When this strategy was tabled before the Board, data from a companion epidemiological report revealed that a large portion of Ottawa youth exhibited poor eating and activity behaviours. Results indicated that only 60 percent of students in Ottawa (grades 7 to 12) reported eating breakfast regularly before attending school. Most students consumed at least one sugar-sweetened beverage a week, with approximately one in ten drinking one or more sugar-sweetened beverages per day. One in five (22 percent) students (grades 7 to 12) reported meeting physical activity recommendations of 60 minutes per day, which is required to attain the health benefits of regular physical activity and only 20 percent used active modes to get to school.

Unhealthy eating and activity practices were also found among the majority of adults living in Ottawa. More than half of adults were not meeting the recommended vegetable and fruit intake levels. The majority, three out of four adults ate meals and snacks outside of the home at least weekly, an average of 2.8 times per week. Eating outside the home at restaurants, fast food or ready-to-eat food is often associated with the consumption of more energy dense foods and a higher intake of fat, sugar and salt. In addition, similar to youth, most adults were struggling to meet physical activity recommendations, only half met Canadian guidelines of 150 minutes per week.

OPH's work to increase the adoption of healthy eating and active living behaviours in Ottawa aligned with four of [OPH's Strategic Priorities 2011-2014](#). The Strategy aimed to make the healthier choice the easy choice by creating supportive environments, implementing healthy policy and encouraging behaviour change through education and skill building. Through collaboration with community partners and communication of the Eat Well, Be Active and Feel Good messaging, OPH implemented the Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) Strategy to meet the following three objectives:

- 1) Decrease consumption of energy dense nutrient poor foods and beverages;
- 2) Increase physical activity through walking and active transportation; and
- 3) Engage the whole community to change social and physical environments.

Over the past three years, updates reporting progress on these objectives have been provided to the Board through several reports and presentations ([Healthy Eating Active Living Strategy](#), [Baby-Friendly Initiative: Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding](#), [Access to Healthy Foods and Hunger Prevention](#), [New Street Food Vending Program](#), [Update on Baby-Friendly Initiative Designation](#), [Health and the Built Environment](#), [Advancing the Healthy Kids Strategy](#), [Healthy Eating Active Living Strategy Update: School-Based Active Transportation](#), [Partnership with the Champlain Cardiovascular Prevention Network](#), [Partnership with Poverty and Hunger Working Group – Working Towards Improved Access to Healthy Food For All](#), [Healthy Eating Active Living Strategy Update: Creating Healthy Food Environments](#)).

In addition, the provincial government has also increased its attention to addressing overweight and obesity and in 2012, set a goal to reduce childhood obesity by 20 percent in five years. Over the past few years, the Ontario Government has released several key guidance documents that align with OPH's HEAL Strategy ([Seven More Years: The impact of smoking, alcohol, diet, physical activity and stress on Health and Life Expectancy in Ontario](#), [Make No Little Plans](#), [No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy](#), [Addressing Childhood Obesity](#)). Improving healthy eating and physical activity and reducing overweight and obesity has also received attention at various knowledge exchange events such as: The Ontario Public Health Convention, The Nutrition

Resource Centre and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa). As well, several new inter-ministerial projects, such as the Healthy Kids Community Challenge, have also raised profile. OPH has been a regular contributor to these initiatives; for example, Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health serves as co-chair on the Healthy Active Living (HAL) table, an initiative of the Public Health Sector Collective Areas of Focus that brings together health units with representatives from the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Education, Children and Youth Services and Tourism, Culture and Sport, academics and researchers to develop a road map of priority actions for the public health sector over the next three to five years.

As mentioned, the HEAL Strategy aligns well with recommendations and best practises profiled at other levels of government. Successes locally are attributable to the engagement of a broad range of municipal departments, community and social service agencies, private and public sector organizations, health and education partners as well as individual champions. Over the past three years, highlights from these partnerships have resulted in:

- New HEAL Guidelines improved nutrition and physical activity for over 600 children in municipal child care centres with expansion plans underway with approximately 100 additional child care centres;
- Enhanced promotion of active transportation in more than 230 elementary schools;
- Expanded support in neighbourhoods with limited access to fresh and affordable fruits and vegetables;
 - Good Food Markets increased from 8 in 2012 to more than 75 in 2014.
 - The new Market Mobile is currently being piloted in 4 communities.
 - Good Food Boxes are now available at 6 City facilities.
- Energy drinks being removed from municipal recreation centres;
- Engaged over 150 participants at the HEAL Forum through a popular "Recipes for Success" format;
- Health related considerations for healthy eating and physical activity in City of Ottawa Master Plans;
- Provincial recognition of Ottawa for its work to become more Cycling and Pedestrian Friendly;
- 1,400 residents engaged in walking events to celebrate the Gottawalk coalition;
- Improved outreach to residents with over 40,000 interactions promoting food skills;
- Recognition of over 40 local HEAL champions; and

- Improved hospitality standards and the quality of foods and beverages served at OPH events.

In addition to these, the HEAL Strategy has seen many other achievements in the past three years (Document 1) and momentum continues to grow with increasing interest in partnering with OPH to accomplish concrete work in the community.

DISCUSSION

Community Mobilization

The importance of healthy eating and active living has been demonstrated by the mobilization of many individuals and organizations in Ottawa. Successes from the HEAL Strategy and a whole-of-community engagement will, over time, improve access to healthy food, influence the built environment and improve social and physical environments.

Health Concerns Persist

Recent epidemiological data is similar to two years ago, demonstrating that more time and continued efforts are needed to effect behavioural change and improve health outcomes. Many Ottawa residents continue to be at risk for health issues associated with unhealthy eating and physical inactivity.

Levels of overweight and obesity continue to be high in Ottawa. It is reported that 47 percent of adults and 23 percent of youth are overweight or obese. Fifty-six percent of Ottawa's residents aged 12 and up consume less than five vegetables and fruits daily. Eating processed and fast food has also been linked to an increased risk for overweight and obesity yet 53 percent of adults report eating at a restaurant, fast food or picked up ready-to-eat food from a grocery store two or more times per week. In addition, many youth are drinking sugar sweetened beverages and 41 percent are not eating breakfast every day. While regular physical activity has many health benefits, only 25 percent of youth are meeting recommended physical activity levels, and only 30 percent of adults are active during leisure time. Data also revealed that only 19 percent of youth walk or cycle to school and only 10 percent of Ottawa residents walk or cycle to work.

In addition to eating well and being active, poor body image is also linked with poor self-esteem, decreased mental health and unhealthy weight control practices. In 2013, 67 percent of youth in Ottawa were less likely to view their weight as "about right" compared to 75 percent four years earlier. Also, the percentage of students trying to lose weight has significantly increased from previous years to 29 percent in 2013.

Healthy Behaviour Approach

These recent statistics reinforce the need to sustain healthy eating and active living as a public health priority. They also serve as a reminder of the need to integrate healthy behaviours, such as eating well and being active, with healthy self-esteem and positive self-image. OPH continues to advocate for all organizations to adopt a healthy behaviours approach into their programming. In a society that is heavily influenced by marketing and unrealistic role models, ensuring that programming and policies promoting Eating Well and Being Active include Feeling Good messages will continue to be a priority for OPH.

Changing Food Environments

While OPH will continue working collaboratively with partners to ensure that the Eat Well, Be Active, Feel Good messages are consistently used across all venues, best practise evidence also reinforces the need to look at improving social and physical environments. This will require system level change to make the healthy choice the easy choice. OPH will continue to seek opportunities such as healthy policy work at the municipal, provincial and organizational levels as well as through collaborating with partners. In order to see system change results, community mobilization must be sustained along with efforts to improve social and physical environments.

NEXT STEPS

OPH will continue to promote healthy living to build on the success of the HEAL Strategy and leverage the momentum that has been generated in Ottawa. As such, OPH has identified the following areas for focused attention over the coming years:

Continue to expand the HEAL Guidelines to other organizations that provide or serve food such as social service providers, food banks, housing providers and recreation centres. Learnings from the HEAL Guidelines in childcare facilities have provided a transferable approach to help organizations improve their food environments. OPH will seek to collaborate with interested organizations to find practical ways to optimize the nutritional quality of food being offered to their clients. For example, streamlining procurement processes, cooking from scratch, reducing foods high in sugar, salt and fat can be implemented without major resource requirements. This approach will work best if tailored for each organization and could include: a policy about what foods are served to clients, how to improve nutrition of donations, and how to adopt low cost recipes by cooking from scratch. Engaging all levels of staff and clients will ensure that healthy routines are set, healthy behaviours

are modelled and healthy eating and active living becomes a part of the organizational environment. Using expertise, tools, and resources gained from the child care experience, OPH is optimistic that related guidelines could be modified and adopted by other organizations.

Continue to explore opportunities to influence the built environment related to access to healthy food and physical activity (active transportation): OPH will continue to work with partners on planning, policy and programming to make it easier for residents to eat well and be active. For example, continued collaboration on the City's Master Plans will further solidify Ottawa's status as a Cycling Friendly and Pedestrian Friendly City. OPH will continue to work with municipal partners and school boards to support children in walking and wheeling to school, activities that can develop into lifelong healthy habits. Ottawa's new sporting venues and the City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Sports Strategy are other current opportunities to engage more residents in organized and unorganized physical activity.

Continue to support local activities that increase access to healthy food: With growing interest from the community, OPH will continue to work to reduce hunger and increase healthy food accessibility in Ottawa. OPH is actively working with partners, including the Poverty and Hunger Working Group to bring healthy food into communities that have limited access. Community support for the Market Mobile and the Good Food Markets suggests this is an area to leverage the momentum and explore ways to sustain these activities. As well, these neighbourhood initiatives provide opportunities for complementary education on food skills. OPH will be expanding the present complement of Community Food Advisors and other trained volunteers who can model and share tips on planning, shopping, preparing and enjoying fresh and healthy food with residents in Ottawa.

Overall, efforts by the Board of Health have effectively engaged a whole of community approach to work collaboratively to reduce overweight and obesity and to improve the health and wellbeing of Ottawa residents.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications to this information report.

CONSULTATION

The purpose of this report is administrative in nature therefore no public consultation is required.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to receiving the information in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this information report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility implications to receiving this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

BOARD OF HEALTH PRIORITIES

This report supports the Board of Health Strategic Priority B: *Addressing Emerging Community Health Needs*.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This report supports the Term of Council Priority: Healthy and Caring Communities.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

[Document 1](#): HEAL Major Activities

DISPOSITION

This report is for information.