

# London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership

## Health and Well Being Sub-council

Wednesday, March 2, 2010 (1–3 p.m.)

**Present:** Debbie Turnbull, Tendayi Gwaradzimba, Sherin Hussien, Nidaa Khalil, Mercy Nleya-Ncube, Nimmi Thind, Jayne Scarterfield, Helen Sleaford, Margaret Zaczek, Jennifer Williamson, Dr. Beth Mitchell, Patti Dupon, Linda Davies, Alicia Samuel, Jennifer Jones, Tasha Williams and Huda Hussein

**Regrets:** Corinne Walsh, Fatoumata Barry, Zahra Jabbari, Janet McAllister

### **Summary:**

#### **Welcome & Introductions**

New members were introduced and welcomed. The contact list was reviewed. Minutes reviewed and approved.

#### **Template for Additional Research and Information: Review of research collected**

One major task from our last meeting was to review the research available on matter pertaining to the health and well being of immigrants. And to conduct a brief environmental scan( looks a patterns, emerging trends, things that may impact our priorities or strategies, and to avoid duplication). Debbie thanked members who submitted information on recent research and asked them to highlight the findings of each research material. (For detailed information on recent research in the field of health and well being, please see the attached Template). Copies of a research document on Black African were distributed.

The focus of this sub-council is on the local issues; there may be good research out there but we need to remain focused on the London and Middlesex population.

Research is available on mental health issues of immigrant youth, adult and seniors. Some recommendations to address some of the issues regarding the broad theme of mental health are outlined in the template. Some local study is also available on the barriers facing newcomers and some successful recommendations. Integration to the main stream has a host of barriers including but not limited to language, cultural difference, awareness and openness by the host community to welcome newcomers. Bullying was another issue faced by new immigrants and it was suggested that more

work needs to be done in terms of connecting with the anti-bullying groups that works in London. Aging problem was another issue. Many immigrants bring along with them their parents and this group faces many challenges of isolation.

Recreation is a health determinant and the group requested Jayne Scarterfield to follow with Parks and Recreation, City of London. Jayne informed that the connection has been made and Paul Hollander will look into our request of having a representative on this group. Group was also informed that the strategic planning for Parks and Recreation along with neighborhood activities is posted on the city website.

A member shared with the group about the development and recent implementation of Family Health Teams. One is opening at the Sherwood Mall. More information will be brought about this initiative by Nimmi to our next meeting.

Information on the upcoming project in the City of London, the Settlement Workers in School, was shared. Detailed information will be sent to Huda by Jennifer Williamson to be shared with the group

#### **Review of Gaps and Priority Setting Template**

Members were requested to divide into four groups and review the gaps template to prioritize the gaps taking into consideration realistic and doable measures.

The groups reported back with three broad themes:

1. Mental Health
2. Lack of support to diverse/multicultural service providers
3. Support for families in a holistic manner for all age groups and genders

#### **Mental Health:**

There was agreement by all the groups that the mental health of the immigrant is priority number one for the sub-council. There is problem in accessing services pertaining to mental health due to language and cultural barriers. There is stigma attached to mental health among diverse communities and this makes accessibility to mental health service more difficult. What can be done to minimize these barriers or overcome them? Prevention is a key strategy: prevention is better than cure.

**Action Strategy: Establish drop-in recreational centers for families in neighborhoods. Such centers may be run by trained volunteers from London and is open for all age groups including international students. Increase opportunities for social recreation for families as the impact will be great on immigrants' health.**

#### **Lack of support to diverse/multicultural service providers**

Training for multicultural services is not in place. With the growing population of immigrants in London and Middlesex, more diverse and multicultural services are required. Supports for organizations and volunteers working with diverse communities in mental health, primary care health are unavailable or at minimum.

Action Strategy: connect with Community Research Alliance (CURA) at the University of Western Ontario who are doing researches that will benefit this group.  
Recommend funding to train services and create community champions who can do the work once the funding is gone.

### **Support for families in a holistic manner for all age groups and genders**

Families need support in a holistic manner. Immigrants come to Canada for many reasons the basic one being to start a new life. The process of immigration may lead to trauma, depression and isolation. How can people identify mental health? Who needs to be aware?

Action strategy: Services and clients working with community leaders to develop awareness , educational materials and implementation. Ensuring System coordinators are in place to help navigate the system and assist in accessing services.  
Develop and implement cultural sensitivity training and Make use of available trainings offered in the city of London for frontline workers.

**Next meeting: Tuesday, March 24 (1-3) Location Kinsmen Recreation Centre**