

Healthy Food Systems & Policy Strategy Team 2017 Annual Report (May to December)

Background

In May 2017, the newly formed Healthy Food Strategy Team (HFST) was struck through the consolidation of the Nutrition Promotion Healthy Built Environments Working Group and Population & Public Health members of the Food Security Working Group, with representatives from the regional Healthy Public Policy Collaborative Group. The committee includes Public Health Dietitians, Medical Officers of Health, the Population Health Equities Initiative Leader, the Healthy Public Policy Specialist and the Public Health Nutrition Coordinator. The purpose of this group is to discuss strategic actions related to food systems and food policy, identify specific food-related policy action, and strategically plan proactive and responsive engagement with the Winnipeg Food Council.

Actions

- Amanda Nash, RD from Heart and Stroke Manitoba was invited to speak to the committee regarding their advocacy and policy work at the municipal and provincial level (in Thompson) regarding reducing intake of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) and marketing of same to children.
- Literature review conducted and a letter of consideration written in response to the Childhood Obesity Foundation's advocacy for a levy on sugary drinks to improve childhood weights/health. The HFST raised concern over the impact of the levy on disadvantaged populations groups. Letter of consideration was shared with stakeholders including Childhood Obesity Foundation, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society, Diabetes Canada and Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada.
- Addressed issues related to urban agriculture specifically related to the safety of soil. MOH provided factsheets to HFST to address soil safety and guidelines regarding container gardening that can be shared with public health teams, agencies and individuals.
- In response to media coverage on Manitoba Housing not allowing gardening or garden boxes on the front of the property, HFST investigated whether there was stakeholder engagement to bring support for gardening to Manitoba Housing.
- Environmental scan in process by dietetic intern regarding community gardens in health region. NETs mapping tool used to determine current community gardens within the health region with information validated by public health dietitians.
- The Nutritious Food Basket supported by committee members. Provincial food costing to support policy action completed fall 2017 with data entry underway.
- Winnipeg Food Council with WRHA representation (Lavonne Harms) met for the first time October 5, 2017.
- Masters of Public Health candidate, in partnership with WRHA and Food Matters Manitoba, conducted a literature review, environmental scan and provided written recommendations for "Improving the Food Skills and Food Literacy of Manitoba's Children and Youth: A Population Health Approach" to support advocacy and policy action in the health region. This paper will be made available on the Food Matters Manitoba website with potential future posting on WRHA extranet. This report also led to the Cooking with Class pilot project. Pilot project evaluation report to come.