

Provincial Network Meeting Minutes April 22nd, 2021

Welcome – Michelle B., PN Chair

Approval of:

- 'Draft' Agenda for April 22nd, 2021 was approved with the addition of:
 - Vaccination rollout – Terri Hewitt
 - ECC Update – Dave F.
- 'Draft' Minutes of Regular Meeting of March 25th, 2021 was approved
- 'Draft' Briefing Note of April 7th, 2021 was approved

MCCSS – Christine Kuepfer

Christine Kuepfer introduced and welcomed Sandra Russell, Director · North Region, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

Christine K. provided the following updates:

Reproduction Rate

- There will be no data updates provided today and in Rupert's absence
- Of note, is that the 'reproduction rate' is going down. Not seeing the same level of outbreaks within congregate settings as in 'other' areas around the Province. Christine K. thanked all for their work and precautions taken.
- Bryan asked about group home numbers and Christine K. said numbers she is referring to is not necessarily part of what she covered above, but more so boarding homes; OPR's, etc. Bryan asked how we formalize the success of the DS sector efforts and Christine said she will go back and see what the Provincial Dashboards look like.
- Special interest groups have come forward/non-funded government operations that are very interested in vaccine rollouts and wanting to be part of the conversations.
- Connected with Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility and they are working on a vaccine tip sheet and are interested in working with MCCSS in terms of accommodation needs.

Antigen Testing

- People are still encouraged to voluntarily participate in antigen testing. As of April 9th there were 16 providers on board with 18 in process of onboarding.
- Christine K. will clarify with the Antigen Testing Team on how often to test. She thought there was a protocol dependant on the site colour, that there is a different protocol on numbers of weekly tests.
- Terri H. share that being part of the Ontario Health Plan, there has been influence to the plan and many clients with disabilities are able to take advantage of the walk- ins, however many are unable due to maintaining mask wearing. Also able to get pop-up and mobile planning to assist. There is city planning going on where there is an entire strategy for

rollout of apartment buildings for example and having an opportunity for us to sit at some level of planning would be beneficial for our sector. There are also clinics at the hospital and these are good.

- Christine K. said she knows most of the focus was on congregate sites and how do we connect in with the PHU. There has been no provincial planning around this, however you can slice the DSO list by postal code. The issue is which of these people can do walk-ins vs. requiring more support. Terri is currently doing this via the DSO lists and said we need to think about a year from now as well and how we approach this in a different way.
- Lisa H. said it varies by PH unit and she has had a lot of success in her region and they worked with DS extensively allowing coordination. There are 2 weeks of clinics running in partnership with PH and this is being promoted extensively. Lisa's CEO, Alastair Lamb would be happy to speak to anyone if you want more on this.
- Terri shared that in Toronto they are also trying to work with PH, however trying to separate those from who have and have not been vaccinated is challenging, language barriers, etc.

Emergency Childcare Orders

- These orders are in place to allow emergency daycare to stay open for people in DS. Same thing as the prior lockdown.

UR After Hours

- In way of review findings, MCCSS will be moving to the centralized model. This will take place throughout April, May and June and will come back to this table to get a sense of what is taking place.

Bathing Protocols

- The working group will continue to exist and will bring this back to the PN May meeting.

Ministry of Labour Training & Skills Development

- Thank you to those who participated in the Ministry of Labour Training. There were 2 sessions held with a large number of participants. Generally, the feedback received was consistent around what this would mean in expanding coverage.
- There was a posting done on the regulation registry to provide easy access for feedback and this will expire soon.
- This was shared with OASIS and the bargaining agents. There is an understanding this is not a proposed change without cost implications. Christine K. thanked Dave Ferguson and OASIS on the work done around this.
- Jo-Anne said it was announced this morning that Ontario will have their own basic leave program. Could we look into how this could possibly be reimbursed? Christine K. will take this back.
- Michelle shared that she has been in conversation with Laura Summers around LTC changes pertaining to the temperature/cooling of rooms and for transparency to this group. Christine K. said there has not been any further action on this and looks like it is mostly related to the use of HVAC, cleaning, etc. There was a federal direction around cleaning protocols. MCCSS is keeping their eyes on this.
- Michelle also shared that there was a review of the LTC and QAM comparisons and it appears there was good alignment with no addition to what is currently in place.

Thank you Christine K. and MCCSS representatives. MCCCSS exited the meeting.

Updates on Take-Aways from the Committee Members

EOC – Eugene

- Current discussions stem around: Distribution plan for rapid test kits; various strains of COVID and how they spread; today shows the highest case count yet.
- Michelle- are rapid tests covered or is there a fee. Eugene said you must have someone trained to administer the kit. There are expressions of interest from agencies. There is a person trained to administer, however you, yourself does the swabbing with test results within 15 minutes.

DS Sector Vaccine Preparedness 'Ad-Hoc' Committee – Bryan/ Lorrie

- Bryan shared:
 - ✓ Vaccine meetings have been moved to Monday's at Noon and are primarily about the vaccine. This update went out yesterday. There are areas the committee are working on:
 - ✓ It seems that the province is moving away from our sector in the way the province is implementing the vaccine roll out and this is slowing down due to the number of available vaccines. Add this to the growing profile of triage strategy and full ICU's you end up with people that are frightened or if someone gets sick they may not get cared for. This may not be accurate, however a deep concern for the committee and the pressures to deal with hot spots.
 - ✓ PPE – looking for feedback and what issues people are experiencing. Continue to hear that the supply of alcohol based hand cleanser has changed and a problem for some to use. Masks are not at the appropriate level or not useable and putting people at risk.
 - ✓ IPAC came up on the issue of a coordinated provincial approach. Where this is not the vaccine committee's work, it is relevant. Recommend establishing a work group as provincially this has not happened.
 - ✓ Rapid Antigen Testing and recognizing this is an essential piece.
 - ✓ Seen some amazing successes that have crossed the entire sector and the work of Gary and Sandy Stamp.
 - ✓ Eugene shared that some communities are finding that vaccines are not available and is there something else we need to be doing from an advocacy standpoint. Is there a road trip that can be made where we don't have the health capacity, etc?
 - ✓ Ann B. shared that they were able to do 3K people in a 2 ½ week period. A lot more that could have been done, however near the end they were already being informed that there are shortages. Locally they were bombarded with questions on why only DS people were being vaccinated and not 'other' essential workers, etc. Her organization are also experiencing vaccine hesitation. Around 65% of staff have been vaccinated. The other big piece is that there is still work to do on prioritization. When it comes to the vaccination pop-ups they have to think about the 2nd shot. Not a huge out of pocket expense and encourage agencies to do this. Michelle agrees that some of the comments have been that agencies are being asked to take this on and do this as a collaborative. Michelle asked if this could be a discussion now on why and how this worked. Should there be some sort of education around this. Ann said stats are being gathered, however there are no guidelines from MCCSS on this. Looking at moving to a different model. Did about 400 tests over a 4 week period and had 2 false positives

so learning how to influence the PH units to ensure a test is done immediately. Take what you can from PH and pull it tougher as PH guides this.

- ✓ Jo-Anne shared that they are doing a collaboration on the antigen testing. This is the first week with 60% of staff registered. This is done twice a week and followed the EOI information. Community paramedics will take any positive swabs to the hospital for a more accurate reading and results are provided within the same day. Hosting their own vaccination clinics next week with a 100% coverage in congregate care and reaching out to other areas. A vaccination declaration form was sent to staff to confirm evidence of vaccination. Getting some pushback from the last 10% and spoke to the Union representative who said until there is case law with clear information, you do not want to push this too hard.
- ✓ Terri said further to Eugene's comment on shifting to hot spots and vaccine availability, that she has partnered with UHN and have run clinics for people that are unable wear a mask, etc. However due to the impact of vaccine shortage this has slowed down.
- ✓ Lisa would be interested in hearing how other agencies are handling staff not wanting and/or pushing back on getting vaccinated. Trying to move people off this barrier and continue to encourage staff around this.
- ✓ Dean spoke with staff on why the hesitancy and staff would rather not disclose information that they have received the vaccine due to concerns that they will be assigned to an outbreak location. Reached out to Pooran and the response was that penalizing non-compliance would be difficult.
- ✓ Eugene said that we are able to request information from employees on why there may be hesitancy and/or health related concerns, however what do we do with the information afterward? This was raised at the EOC and with MCCSS however no one has yet to respond and/or provide direction.
- ✓ Michelle said at some point the pressure comes to pushing government and/or MCCSS to take a position around what 'vaccination refusal' and what it will look like around PPE, antigen testing, etc. What are the next steps? Do we/PN want to look at this around what screening and PPE should/will look like? Eugene said this has taken place a number of times with Rupert, Dean, Lorrie, Bryan, etc. and they are saying that this is being monitored and we need to push this, it is definitely becoming more difficult around visitors, PPE, etc. The incidence rates for 'false positives' is extremely low. 12.5M tests have happened with 1K people that were A-symptomatic.
- ✓ Michelle – do we need to start pushing the conversation on this and have some of these questions pushed out? Has there been any statistics around the timeframe of when less PPE can be worn after the 1st dose of vaccine, etc.? Eugene said this is being looked at in other jurisdictions in the world. Ann said to keep in mind that even when fully vaccinated you can still carry the viral load. **Members agree we need to keep moving forward and have MCCSS step up in this area. What rules do we follow? Rules of the province or rules of MCCSS? We are languishing on this.**
- ✓ Members predict that the even if the ministry comes up with guidelines around PPE and vaccinations, it will likely be up to each agency on how they approach this.
- ✓ Bryan agrees that an assignment of the 'rapid antigen testing' needs to take place and share a strategy both internal and external by establishing a work group and IPAC through PN and move these items off the 'Vaccine Working Group'.
- ✓ Michelle is wondering if 2 people would be willing to take on the 'rapid antigen testing' and to start addressing the falsehoods, highlighting successes and procedures. Ann B. is willing to have someone from her organization be a part. Eugene wondered if SPPI

would be able to do this and/or if some of those well connected people would consider being a part of this. Don Walker would be hesitant to offer this from SPPI as they are starting to take on some of the post-pandemic planning. Safe Haven is championing IPAC in Toronto and active in Antigen testing. Don can reach out to Susan to see if they can tap into this.

Next Steps: Ann B. (or alternate) in consultation with, Lorrie, Jo-Anne and Lisa will flush out information and so that people start getting on board with the 'rapid-testing'.

Put on agenda for next meeting.

- ✓ Michelle asked if there is anyone that could be shifted over from IPAC? Bryan will ask. Dean agrees this is worth bringing back to the group.

PN-HR Committee – *Eugene*

HR Investment & Collaborative with MCCSS – Eugene

Met to discuss how to create a governance process and working group for this investment around modernization of core competencies, recruitment, etc. MCCSS is very keen on this initiative. We will be competing with Health for some of the same people. Talked about the government process and reminded them of the 'shared interest' table, etc. Thinking about a reference group, steering committee and to what extent is PN a part of the steering committee. An information session to seek involvement will be had and will continue to work on some of these things. Updates will be brought back to this table.

Mental Health Initiative for Workforce – Ann B./Michelle

Michelle met a few times and with MCCSS around the MH investment. The funding is spread over a year and involves a number of different tasks. This will require some oversight and someone to champion the rollout and implementation of funds.

Ann-Marie informed that the proposal was to develop a community of practice and for agencies to start their own 'mental health' committees. Looking at the capacity and the engagement piece. Approached Holly Duff to assist with leading and moving this project forward and there is a call today around this. Holly and Ann-Marie will be the supporting agency connection.

Michelle asked if this group agrees to have Holly coordinate the work including the webinars, etc. At this time, the Proposal was high level and the intent is to now delve into the formal part and in order to communicate. The goal is to align the proposal and deliverable into a timeline and once in place this will be brought back to PN and for communicating.

Labour Challenges – *Dave F. – OASIS Labour Relations*

Union Discussions – Dave

- The WSIB webinar will be hosted on May 27th and MPP John Fraser will attend. A refresher on the new framework will be presented. As this is scheduled on the next PN full day meeting, we will hold the PN meeting of May 27th with a 9:30am start time.
- Compensation Survey for Sector – Requests have been shared to complete the survey and Trevor McGregor has reported to the OASIS Board. Questions came up after the survey was shared and these were answered and addressed, specifically around the \$3 wage enhancement. Please ensure your organization completes as soon as possible. Data from MCCSS was received

and the quick analysis is 50% pays over \$25/hr and 50% pays under. Unable to drill down further into the details.

- The next union meeting is on Monday and anticipating a number of topics will come up.
- OPSEU provided a copy of their submission to the Minister's Reform process. At the OASIS meeting, Bryan K. said the material from OPSEU aligned well around the 'housing'.

Other

ConnectAbility & RealXChange Update – Ann-Marie

- Ann-Marie is working on getting the French language resources. This has been a bit time consuming as the site will be mirrored. A lot of this is complete and should hear back on status soon.
- The weekly update was shared today.
- Plan to go through resources and archive where applicable and this initiative will be done in the near future.
- ED Orientation – talked to people at RXC and they can host all the webinars for the ED Orientation and will put onto KTT.
- Michelle shared that there is a call for proposals for francophone and could we apply for these funds? This may be an opportunity to help convert any information to put onto RXC and ensure translation. Lisa asked if there is partnership with CNSC and where they can get an enhanced budget to provide coordination. Dean said there would need to be some funding augmentation and will speak to Alaina on this. Michelle and Ann-Marie will build a proposal around this for funding.

Co-Creation of Community of Practice – Jo-Ann/Chris B.

'How to best support people during the day' - the next session will be held on April 23rd with 210 people registered. The focus is on stakeholder consultations for people who use services, What this means to them and what it looks like. There will be breakout rooms with facilitated conversations. This will continue once a month and throughout the summer.

Emerging Issues/Questions – All Members

ECC – Dave F.

- Dave shared the 2021 Budget includes 11.9M funding to ESDC. This is a new benefit and is very much in line with the work that ECC has been undertaking over the past many years. This will be a key activity going forward.
- Members share their congratulations to Dave F. and his Board on this accomplishment.
- It will be up to ECC if communication will be going out on this.

From the Federal Budget tabled Apr 19th:

Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$11.9 million over three years, starting in 2021-22, to Employment and Social Development Canada to undertake consultations to reform the eligibility process for federal disability programs and benefits. This will help maximize the reach of these programs and improve the lives of Canadians living with disabilities. This work would feed directly into the design of a new disability benefit.

In preparation for legislation, the government will undertake extensive consultations with stakeholders on the design of the new benefit and engage with provinces and territories, which play a central role in providing support to many Canadians with disabilities. Employment and Social Development Canada will also establish a steering committee to oversee the development of this work, alongside the Canada Revenue Agency,

Bathing Protocols

- **This committee has met twice and had a call with Monique and Kelly from MCCSS. Dean provided an update on discussions:**
 - ✓ Explore the SIS assessment for risk and quality indicators under accreditation
 - ✓ Define supervision vs. support and review policy and process
 - ✓ These items do not tap into the 'human behaviour' aspect.
 - ✓ Feel this has stalled, and a few organizations should be pulled in to share their stories and try to get to the crux of the problem.
 - ✓ Geoff shared in a previous meeting that there is a balance of what the Ministry should be doing vs. DS and it seems we are almost stepping back. We need to watch this as a group and being at the table to get this balance is important.
 - ✓ Dean will forward the survey to Michelle.

Adjournment: 12:00pm

Next Calls/Meetings:

- **Next PN 'Briefing Call':** May 5th, 2021 @ 2:00pm
- **Next PN 'Regular Meeting':** May 27th, 2021 @ 9:30 – 11:30