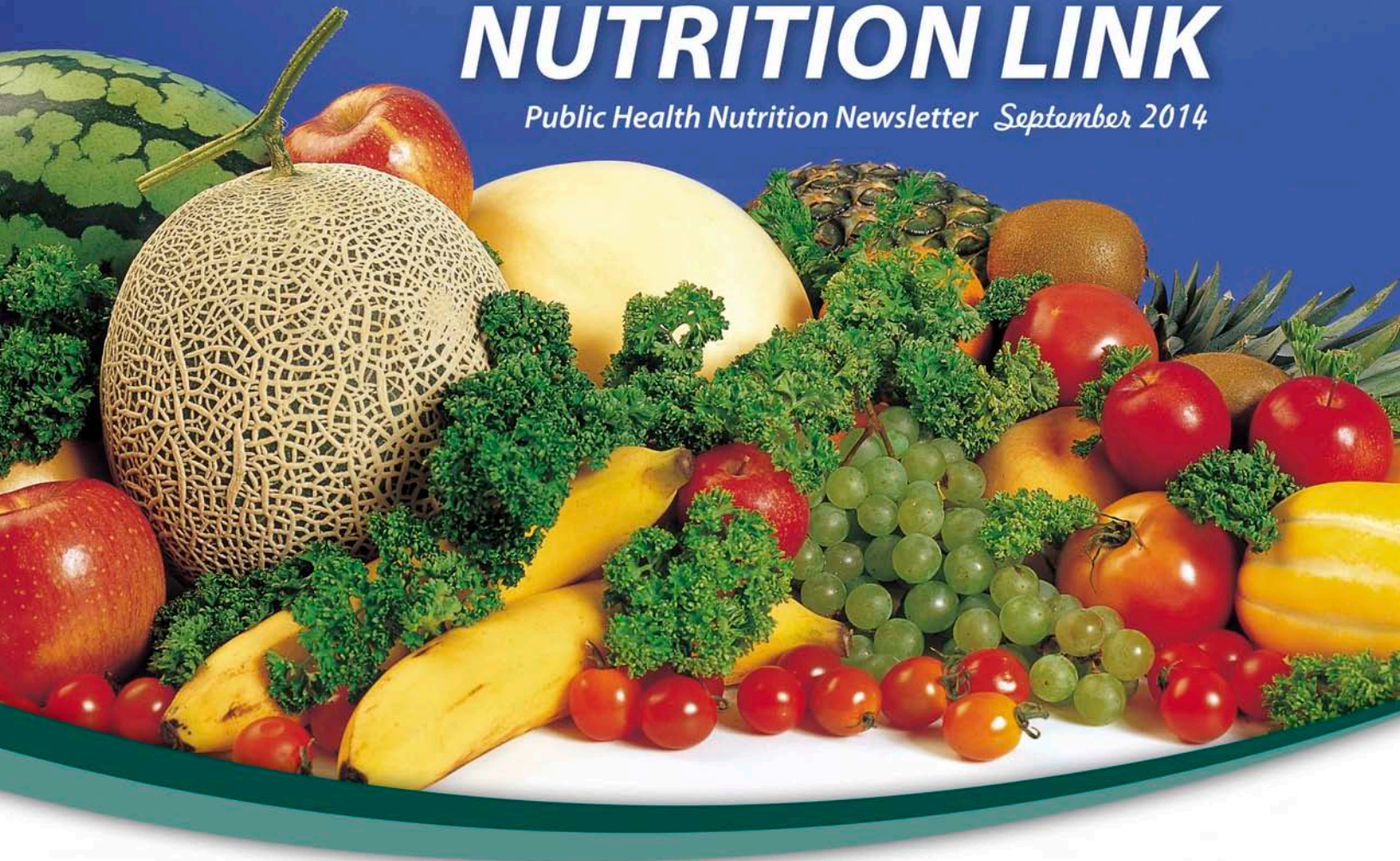


# NUTRITION LINK

Public Health Nutrition Newsletter September 2014



The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, along with Vitalité Health Network and Horizon Health Network, would like to welcome you to our second edition of *Nutrition Link*. This newsletter is our opportunity to provide you with updates on the exciting nutrition initiatives, activities and successes occurring across the public health system. Throughout the province, Public Health and our partners are working hard to support the *New Brunswick Public Health Nutrition Framework for Action*, and we want as many people as possible to know about it – so feel free to share this with your own networks and partners!

We welcome your comments and feedback on this publication as it continues to evolve. If you have feedback you would like to share, or if you would like to get involved in creating these newsletters, please email [teri.emrich@gnb.ca](mailto:teri.emrich@gnb.ca).

## ***Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health Update***

Since our last *Nutrition Link* update, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) has been busy implementing a range of activities using the strategic directions identified in the framework. From the launch of the framework onward, we have been populating our external OCMOH Sharepoint site with information, research, evidence, and best practices in the areas of food security, healthy environments, prenatal and early childhood nutrition, breastfeeding, and school-aged children and youth. Our goal is to provide framework working group members, public health dietitians, managers, and directors from Horizon, Vitalité, and OCMOH with the information they need to take action on each of the framework's priority areas for action. For example, we used the Sharepoint site to share Health Canada's new recommendations for health professionals on infant nutrition (April

2014). By sharing and using information, research, and evidence in this way, we are applying the framework strategy of knowledge management and communication.

Since March of this year, we at OCMOH have been happy to be engaged in collaboration with Horizon and Vitalité, implementing the strategy of surveillance, monitoring and evaluation to develop a framework evaluation plan. Our hope is once the plan is in action, the evaluation results it yields will provide evidence for future population health initiatives in the province. OCMOH is also using the evaluation planning process to implement yet another of the framework's strategies: capacity building. The evaluation planning is being informed by the principles of developmental evaluation. To build individual and organizational evaluation capacity within the public health system, we offered a [webinar on developmental evaluation](#) in February 2014 to the framework evaluation working group, which is made up of representatives from OCMOH, Horizon, and Vitalité. In March 2014, we offered a two-day workshop led by a developmental evaluation consultant to kick-off the evaluation planning process. The workshop gave working group members the opportunity to further explore, and begin to apply, developmental evaluation concepts. It is our hope that individual and organizational capacities built through participation in the working group will, in turn, support the future evaluation of framework related policies, programs, and initiatives.

### ***Healthy Food Environments in Health-care Facilities***

We all intuitively know that it is easier to make healthy food choices when healthy, affordable, and appealing options are readily available to us. Despite this, many of the places where we work, play, learn, and heal are not providing us with food and beverage options that support the healthy living messages we hear from health professionals and government guidance.

Here in New Brunswick, health-care facilities are a major employer, and serve countless patients and visitors every day. This means that many New Brunswickers are exposed to the food environments that these facilities provide. As a result, health organizations have a significant opportunity to lead by example by creating healthy food environments for its staff, patients, and visitors that support the healthy living messages they promote.

OCMOH has tried to draw attention to this opportunity by issuing a position statement advocating for healthy food environments in health-care facilities.

***The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health strongly supports the development of healthy food environments in all health-care settings, in order to encourage and facilitate healthy nutrition choices for all New Brunswickers.***

In addition to elaborating background information and rationale in support of this position, the full position statement outlines a number of key steps that New Brunswick health-care facilities can take to develop a healthy food environment.

We were able to reach a range of stakeholders with the position statement, disseminating it to the regional health authorities – including the Chief Executive Officers of both Horizon and Vitalité, – the NB Medical Society, the Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities, NB Dietitians in Action, the NB Association of Dietitians, the regional chapter of the Canadian Public Health Association, the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Coalition, the Nurses Association of NB, and Doctors for You.

Check out the complete position statement on Health Eating Environments in Health-care Facilities on the Government of New Brunswick [website](#).

## ***Horizon Health Network Update***

Over the past year Public Health dietitians throughout Horizon have been continuing to communicate the priorities and strategic directions of the framework to Public Health staff and community partners.

One task that the Horizon Public Health dietitians have completed this year is the development of Horizon-level workplans. Five workplans were completed; one for each of the priority areas of the framework, which will help guide the three areas (Fredericton & Upper River Valley, Saint John and Miramichi) in developing their own workplans.

In order to facilitate collaboration throughout Horizon during this year's Nutrition Month campaign, a working group was formed with representation from all three areas. Some of the initiatives that took place included a resource/activity package for schools, promotion at Harbour Station, Nutrition Month posters on Saint John city buses, displays at bookstores, libraries, schools and recreation facilities, Nutrition Month articles in local newspapers and radio spots on some local stations.

Two working groups have recently been formed with the goal of positively impacting food environments. The first working group will include members of OCMOH, Vitalité and Horizon and will focus on creating a culture of healthy food in health-care facilities. A second working group has recently been approved to focus on healthier options within recreational facilities. This could include the promotion of a greater variety of healthy, local foods and beverages as well as support for breastfeeding.

## ***Something to Celebrate***

Breastfeeding is a highly effective way to protect health. In addition to decreasing the risk of many childhood illnesses, breastfeeding plays an important role in preventing obesity, diabetes and asthma, all of which are prevalent in our province. While New Brunswick's breastfeeding initiation rate is increasing, rates of infants still breastfed at six

months fall short of the national average.

By creating environments that support breastfeeding families, communities can help to reduce barriers to continued breastfeeding and therefore positively impact duration rates.

The Provincial Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) Committee developed a Municipality Breastfeeding Kit in hopes of creating partnerships and to formalize support towards breastfeeding in local municipalities. On September 3, 2013 Giselle Powell, a Public Health dietitian, presented the Municipality Breastfeeding Kit to the Town Council of Quispamsis. Within a two week period, the Quispamsis Breastfeeding Policy was developed and accepted. Activities undertaken included an icon (breastfeeding encouraged) added to the town's website, posting signage in recreation facilities and municipally owned buildings. As well, town staff were informed about the policy via messaging on their pay stubs.

In Fredericton, Public Health is partnering with the Greener Village Food Centre to support breastfeeding in their facility. Activities include signage to encourage breastfeeding, creating a comfortable place to breastfeed and upcoming information sessions for staff and volunteers. Fredericton is also partnering with the local First Nations communities to offer breastfeeding support and share resources.

Another community that is supporting BFI in the Upper River Valley is Plaster Rock. Their health centre is encouraging breastfeeding to patients, providing a comfortable space and also have signs/posters displayed. All nursing staff at the centre will be completing the basic 20 hour online course this year.

It is hoped that these initiatives will spark a positive social change and prompt other communities to become Breastfeeding Friendly as the outcome can have global benefits to health, food security, economics and the environment.

Another Horizon success is Mango's new "Friends of Mango" initiative; launched on January 17, 2014, to promote healthy eating and physical activity with Miramichi area organizations and workplaces. The initiative encourages workplaces to make a healthy eating or physical activity commitment to help create environments supportive of healthy lifestyles. The workplace is often where people spend the largest part of their day and therefore it can have a significant impact on an employee's health. The Mango program wants to support workplaces in creating healthy, active environments for their staff. The Miramichi Police Force was the first organization to become a "Friend of Mango". Their commitment was to adopt a healthy meetings and events policy. Their policy includes a focus on healthy food and beverage options, physical activity, tobacco-free settings, and the use of "greener" options.

### ***Vitalité Health Network Update***

Since the last issue of *Nutrition Link*, the Vitalité Health Network has continued to work on implementing the framework and aims to build capacity within Public Health to promote nutrition amongst the population.

Each zone in the Vitalité Health Network incorporates the *Public Health Nutrition Framework for Action 2012-2016* in their individual work plans. It is an excellent document that guides the RHA's work and allows for the standardization of practices.

Strong links are being established with partners in the community and continue to flourish. Community partners are becoming more and more aware of the population health approach and are starting to engage in this way of doing things.

By incorporating developmental evaluation into Vitalité's initiatives, we are able to adjust and change the process from the beginning to the end to achieve sustainability and success.

The work accomplished in each zone of the Vitalité Health Network shows the commitment displayed by Public Health dietitians in collaboration with community partners since the beginning of this new journey.

The initiative below demonstrates how the population health approach is being used to guide the RHA's work.

This particular success story occurred in Zone 6 (Acadian Peninsula).

### ***Health Info Newsflashes for the schools in the District scolaire francophone Nord-Est and the Anglophone North School District***

*This initiative, which began in September 2010 in Shippagan, gradually expanded to include all the schools in the District scolaire francophone Nord-Est by October 2013. The idea originated from Jacqueline Gallien-LeBouthillier, Public Health dietitian, and Marc LeBouthillier, Principal of the école L'Envolée in Shippagan.*

Jacqueline Gallien-LeBouthillier has been interested in promoting healthy eating and physical activity in schools for some time. During a discussion with the principal of the elementary school in her area, the idea of the health info newsflashes was born. The idea became a reality during the 2010-2011 school year when the school began receiving a health info newsflash every week. The messages covered various topics related to healthy eating and physical activity.

During the 2012-2013 school year, the initiative spread to all the schools on the Acadian Peninsula. Involvement by the nurses of the Healthy Learners Program on the Acadian Peninsula expanded the

topics to psychological health, resiliency, and smoke-free living. All the schools on the Acadian Peninsula received a health info newsflash every week, which exposed more and more students to a variety of topics on the four pillars of wellness.

The health info newsflashes gained in popularity and their reputation grew beyond the Acadian Peninsula. Starting in the 2013-2014 school year, they began to be distributed to the entire District scolaire francophone Nord-Est, including the schools in the Bathurst and Campbellton areas. The writing team is now made up of five dietitians and five nurses with the Healthy Learners Program in Zones 5 and 6 of the Vitalité Health Network.

The newsflashes consist of six to 10 slides in PowerPoint presentation format. Although they are primarily designed for interactive televisions, the schools are free to use them in different ways. They can be distributed via interactive blackboards, newsletters, school websites, radio spots, bulletin boards, P.A. systems, notes/e-mails to parents, etc.

Starting in January 2014, with the support of the Anglophone North School District, the newsflashes were translated into English for the Anglophone schools. The Anglophone North School District includes the schools in the Campbellton, Bathurst, and Miramichi areas.

Today, the team has at their disposal an extensive bank of health info newsflashes. The writing committee regularly receives positive feedback and ideas for new newsflashes from parents, teachers, principals, and students. The Communications Department of the Vitalité Health Network also contributes by revising and translating the newsflashes.

For further information about the health info newsflashes, contact Jacqueline Gallien-LeBouthillier, Public Health nurse in Shippagan.



### ***Featured Partner***

#### **Healthy Eating Physical Activity Coalition (HEPAC) Update**

More than 50 events were held in communities across New Brunswick on Sunday, June 1st, to celebrate the second annual *in motion* Parks and Trails Day. The event — led by a coalition of health and wellness groups and chaired by the Healthy Eating Physical Activity Coalition (HEPAC) — celebrated New Brunswick's outdoor spaces and brought more than 2,000 people in 40 communities together for walking, cycling, hiking, paddling and other outdoor events.

We continue to share unique and inspirational programs in healthy eating and physical activity from across the province through feature articles and webinars. We talked to teachers and dietitians about Policy 711 to learn how schools have adapted to — or struggled with — the policy's requirements. Earlier this year we showcased dynamic, peer-led programs for seniors in Hampton, Saint John and Woodstock that have forged strong friendships and fostered a sense of community for participants. And for the summer, we've highlighted the "Parks Natural Leaders" program that has brought a new generation of nature ambassadors to New Brunswick's provincial parks. Recent webinars have discussed the *Public Health Nutrition Framework for Action*, the Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card and N.B.'s community food mentors. All webinars are recorded and posted to [hepac.ca](http://hepac.ca)

## ***Evaluation Working Group Update***

In March of this year, the existing evaluation working group grew from a small group of six to a group of over 20, with representatives from each health network zone and branch of OCMOH. The newly expanded working group launched with a two-day evaluation workshop on March 24th-25th. Over the course of the workshop, we considered potential users of the evaluation results, drafted a set of preliminary evaluation questions, and explored the potential of a learning network to support the evaluation work. By the end of the workshop, we had subdivided into four task groups. The groups were tasked with:

1. identifying health indicators for monitoring related to the framework's priority areas;
2. identifying approaches for evaluating the use of the strategic directions identified in the framework;
3. exploring the formation of a learning network to share successes and learnings resulting from activities related to the framework; and,
4. developing a plan for the 2016 framework review.

Since the workshop, the task groups have been keeping in touch with regular meetings. Each task group has set goals for their work and made work plans to achieve them. The learning network task group is currently planning a set of case studies to share initiatives, and learnings, emerging from the framework. Watch for a call for submissions in the fall of 2014.

The work of the evaluation working group is being informed by the concepts and methods of developmental evaluation. Developmental evaluation provides feedback, general learnings, and supports current directions or affirms the need for a change in direction using new measures and monitoring mechanisms as goals emerge over time. This approach to evaluation is better suited than more traditional formative and summative evaluation approaches for situations high in complexity where the way forward is unclear (e.g. the framework).

Our ultimate aim is to develop an evaluation and monitoring plan the Public Health system can use to evaluate and monitor the *Public Health Nutrition Framework for Action*. The working group aims to deliver this plan by March 2015.