

September 10, 2003

460279

Dear Colleague:

Attached for your information is a document outlining a framework for a Provincial Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative. The framework is the first phase of a comprehensive approach by Population Health and Wellness (PHW) to better understand the complex issue of chronic disease prevention in British Columbia, an issue that has been identified as a priority by the Ministries of Health Planning and Health Services.

The framework is a central component of our overall approach to the Ministries' goal of improving the health and well-being of the people of British Columbia. It addresses the largest components of the human and economic burden of illness in British Columbia; it links to other priority issues, including primary care reform, mental health, and chronic disease management; and it builds on both our strengths as a healthy province and on the lessons of our past successes in prevention, especially in tobacco control.

The challenge we now face is to build on those strengths and successes to address the other factors that contribute to the burden of chronic disease. By doing so, British Columbia can maintain, and indeed enhance, its national reputation as a healthy province.

While the evidence paper that constitutes the second phase of this process is still being completed, several key strategic issues are clear, and we would like to begin a discussion of ways to address them at the provincial health authority and community level. These issues are:

- How to address chronic disease prevention in a comprehensive and long-term manner?
 - Although short-term impacts and benefits are achievable in a number of areas, chronic disease prevention must be sustained over long periods of time.
 - The full range of factors that influence the development of chronic disease need to be addressed.
 - A wide range of different approaches for making the healthy choice the easy choice – including legislation where appropriate, may need to be employed simultaneously, geared to the context of the community and the setting.
- How should we address chronic disease prevention in a way that emphasizes the positive benefits of healthy living, and provides recognition of progress?
- How do we appropriately commit resources to preventive interventions, that have been shown to be effective?

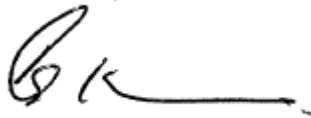
... 2

- How do we best engage a wide range of provincial and community partners in such a province-wide chronic disease prevention initiative.

Through the ongoing work of the Ministries of Health Planning and Health Services and with our partners in the BC Alliance for Chronic Disease Prevention and elsewhere, we are committed to reducing the burden of chronic disease in British Columbia, and thus contributing to the sustainability of the health system and the health of the population.

Please feel free to distribute this framework to interested people and organizations. We welcome your comments, which can be directed to Dr. Trevor Hancock, Public Health Consultant, Prevention and Wellness Planning by telephone at (250) 952-1794 or by e-mail at Trevor.Hancock@gems5.gov.bc.ca.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hazlewood
Provincial Director General
Population Health and Wellness



P. R. W. Kendall
MBBS, MSc, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer

Attachment

pc: Dr. Trevor Hancock, Public Health Consultant, Population Health and Wellness
Bert Boyd, Assistant Deputy Minister, Performance Management & Improvement