

WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH
RESOLUTION RECOMMENDATION
December 21, 2017
Re: Data Gathering and Analysis

Background:

Population health assessment and assessing existing programs and services within the area of jurisdiction of the board of health to build on community assets and minimize duplication are important requirements under the new Ontario Public Health Standards. In previous years, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit has purchased data modules from the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance (RRFS) project through York University, to gain access to local information, collected through telephone survey. Due to rising costs, upwards of \$70,000 per year for data alone excluding analysis, our use of RRFS was discontinued leaving a gap in our ability to access local health and well-being data.

IPSOS, an international marketing research firm, is used widely by many public health units in Ontario and in the past by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. Recently, the visited the WECHU to discuss their current projects in neighboring health units of the Erie St. Clair LHIN. Due to the recent inclusion of mental health in the new Ontario Public Health Standards, one of the key projects of interest was a survey being conducted on mental health. If completed locally, this survey will serve as a baseline to collect data and to “profile” the community of Windsor-Essex on mental health including levels of awareness, attitudes, knowledge of mental health supports, etc. Specifically, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit seeks to gain an understanding of:

- Mental well-being of community members;
- Attitudes about mental health/mental illness, including comfort level with concepts of mental health and mental illness;
- Mental health literacy: skills, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs to take care of their own mental health; and,
- Awareness of and access to supports and service: online and in the community, and primary care providers.

The results of these findings can then be compared to the those from the neighboring regions of Lambton County and Chatham-Kent conducted in July 2017.

In addition to mental health, another key priority for data gathering that IPSOS is able to support the WECHU with is a needs assessment on sexual health services in Windsor-Essex. As part of the Ontario Public Health Standards, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) is to provide screening of sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBIs) for individuals with related risk factors. Additionally, WECHU is expected to conduct assessments of the sexual health needs of the Windsor-Essex County (WEC) community, and consider the provision of sexual health clinical services to meet those needs. Currently, WECHU operates a Sexual Health Clinic, which provides a range of sexual health services, including pregnancy tests, STBBI and contraception education, and health assessment.

Individual health practitioners (e.g., physicians, nurse practitioners) are expected to be able to provide sexual health clinical services as part of their scope of practice. However, their comfort, knowledge, and capacity to do so may not align with this expectation. The purpose of a needs assessment conducted by IPSOS is to determine the accessibility, comfort, and knowledge of such clinicians in WEC with regards to providing sexual health care. This will inform the role WECHU has in ensuring public accessibility to quality sexual health care and supporting community clinicians to provide such care for their patients. The following questions define the scope of the needs assessment:

- How accessible are the clinicians' services to the public?
- How comfortable were clinicians with discussing sexual health topics with their patients?
- How knowledgeable are clinicians of sexual health issues?
- What are the perceived gaps in services and resources required by clinicians?

Contracting the services of IPSOS for data gathering and analysis in these two specific areas will allow the WECHU to make effective, evidence based decision on the future of programs and the introduction of new programs to our health unit. These services will be delivered in roughly a 5 week time period and will best meet the needs of the WECHU given our current resource pressures and capacity limitations.

Issue:

The WECHU did not embark upon a competitive method of purchasing as required by section 8 of the Board By-laws. As per section 8 of the Board By-laws, such procurement are considered non-competitive and require approval by the Board.

Recommendation:

That the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health approve the non-competitive procurement of services from IPSOS, in the amount of \$33,000 plus HST, relating to the Mental Health Community Survey and \$14,500 plus HST for the Sexual Health Survey for the 2017 fiscal year.