

# *Healthy Weights: Halton Takes Action*

## Healthy Weights, Healthy Lives Community Forum

### A Report on What Was Heard

May 8, 2008

Campbellville, Ontario



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Halton Healthy Weights Initiative  
Community Action Planning Workshop

8 May 2008

REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS

**Background**

The Regional Municipality of Halton Health Department launched a Healthy Weights initiative during the winter of 2007. On June 6, 2007, about 100 government, NGO, private sector and community representatives gathered to develop a strategic approach to the Healthy Weights Initiative. On 31 October 2007, the results of the strategic planning session were presented to the Halton Health and Social Services Committee, where the initiative received endorsement to proceed.

**Approach**

The general approach to the workshop was to invite those organizations and individuals, who have been leaders in the HHWI, to a planning workshop in order to develop a prioritized action plan and to consult with the HHWI community (public organizations, institutions and private companies) on the need for establishing a steering committee or working group to guide the HHWI.

The engagement project was divided into three phases:

*Phase One - Planning and Preparation:* During this phase, the venue arrangements were made and 40 leaders in the HHWI community, who have been actively involved with the HHWI, either formally (Halton Region partners, such as the YMCA and Halton Active Living Network, etc) or informally (contributors such as Aramark Food Services or Sir Corp Restaurants) were invited to attend.

During this phase, the objectives of the engagement were identified and the agenda emerged over a series of four versions of the engagement plan (see Exhibit A). Participants were also surveyed via a web-based survey to confirm their objectives for the workshop and to document their activities since the 6 June event (see Exhibit B).

*Phase Two - Action Planning Workshop:* During this phase, about 35 members of the HHWI community attended the workshop. It was observed at the opening of the workshop that exactly the right people were in attendance, which is to say, those organizations and people who had stayed engaged with the HHWI throughout the year and made attending the workshop their priority were the right people to build the action plan. Having said that, the group was clear that the plan that was produced during the day is a starting point and that other participants are welcome to join, add to the plan and contribute their ideas and resources. See Exhibit C for a list of participants.

*Phase Three - Reporting and Follow-up:* This report, its exhibits and the series of five detailed and prioritized action plans, plus two summary reports are the outputs for the reporting phase. During the workshop, two participants from each thematic working group volunteered to coordinate review and revision of the draft reports.

### Workshop Presenters

The workshop was opened by Dr. Monir Taha, Associate Medical Officer of Health for Halton Region. Dr. Taha put forward one of the major themes for the workshop, which was to develop an action plan that would bring about the required changes in knowledge, understanding, built environment and attitudes that will allow Halton residents to “make the healthy choice the easy choice”.

Sharon Brodovshy, Senior Manager of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario’s Healthy Weights Initiative then addressed the group on the topic of partners; providing insights on how a diverse group of private and public organizations, aplus individuals can work together to bring about positive chance for a healthier community.

Monica Marquis, Health Promoter with the Halton Region Health Department (HRHD), then presented the results of the 6 June healthy weights community workshop and research and develop undertaken at HPHD since that time. Analysis of the 6 June results and comparison to programmes in other municipalities point toward five strategic imperatives for the HHWI:

- Foster a Physically Active Lifestyle
- Foster Healthy Eating Habitats
- Promote Positive Social Norms
- Adopt Research
- Coordination, Application and Follow-up

These were the themes used to organize discussions during the workshop. The analysis further reveals that, to be effective and durable over time, these initiatives need to be addressed across several levels or domains of society, including:

- Individual
- Interpersonal
- Organizational
- Community
- Public Policy

These five domains are referred to as the Social Ecological Model for Health promotion. This model and the five themes outlined above provide the discussion framework which was used to develop the prioritized action plan during the workshop, as explained below.

Chuck McIlravey, Governor of the Kiwanis Clubs of Canada was the lunchtime speaker. Because the Kiwanis are very active community volunteers, working in partnership with many other community-level service groups and clubs, Mr. McIlravey was asked to address the subject of leading volunteer organizations at the community level. Mr. McIlravey’s major points included the need to set and communicate the strategic direction, guide and motivate actively and to let people do things their own way, even if it means watching them make mistakes and having to start over.

## Methodology

As mentioned above and outlined in detail in Exhibit A, the approach to action planning was to establish five small working groups (Active Lifestyle, Healthy Eating, Social Norms, Adopt Research and Application / Coordination / Follow-up) that used worksheets and display boards to identify specific activities that need to be undertaken across the five domains within the Region.

Each of these themes was analyzed by breakout groups (thematic working groups) of 4-6 participants who selected activities that were identified during the 6 June event, known best practices used by other municipalities and initiatives that are underway within their organization and fit within the thematic planning area at one or across all of the action planning domains.

The approach used was inclusive and collaborative. After each thematic working group had developed their action plan participants from the other thematic working groups were invited to review and critique. The final draft plans are the results of this review and revisions that were undertaken at the conclusion of the workshop. The final element of the planning process was for all participants to review and prioritize the individual initiatives using the Pareto method of priority ranking. The results of the priority ranking exercise are displayed in Exhibit D.

## Observations

For the most part, the methodology was followed by participants and achieved the desired planning structure. In two of the five thematic working groups domains were combined, which means the initiatives listed there should be applied across each of the combined domains.

The overall priority ranking for each of the themes is listed below. This ranking was conducted at the individual level, but collectively represents, almost exactly, an 80/20 split of operational versus management/administrative appropriation of resources. The first three themes are operational in nature and garnered 79.79% support from the group, while the last two themes received about 20%.

THEME	WEIGHT
Foster a Physically Active Lifestyle	22.8
Foster Healthy Eating Habits	20.74
Promote Positive Social norms	36.25
Adopt Research	6.74
Coordinate - Apply - Follow-up	12.96

NOTE: does not total 100% due to rounding

Furthermore, participants have decided to focus their energies in very specific areas; out of the over one hundred potential initiatives to choose from, they identified 38 initiatives that are most relevant to their community. These could potentially be the “tipping point” for changing the existing trends.

Of the 38 different initiatives that were identified participant assigned a priority ranking to 30. When looking across those priorities that were given a ranking a further grouping is possible into broader categories for action, these include

- People use a comprehensive infrastructure for walking/bicycling to work/school: 18.25%
- Increased access to school space during non-school time: 12%
- Extensive bicycle rake system across the region: 11%
- Healthy snacks available in schools and at public events: 9.3%
- Provide greater access to nutritional information: 5.75%

It should also be noted that the results of this action planning activity was undertaken by about 35 members of a much larger community. It will be important to circulate these results to the broader community for additional review/revisions and buy-in.

### Next Steps

The action plan has been developed in draft form using the contributions of participants at the 8 May 2008 event. During the event, coordinators for each thematic working group volunteered to circulate the draft action plan amongst their group and to coordinate completion of the plan. Once reviewed by members of the individual working groups it is suggested that the full plan be circulated to the broader community (those in attendance during the 6 June event) for review, commentary and action.