



Community Safety and Well-Being Integration Table Meeting

Thursday, August 19, 2021

10:00 A.M.

Meeting to be held electronically.

Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Community Safety and Well-Being Integration Table Orientation
3. Roundtable Discussion – Introduction of Action Tables
 - i. Education and Skills Development
Action Table: Elgin Workforce Development Network
Chair: Deb Mountenay
 - ii. Housing Security
Action Table: Housing and Homelessness Action Table
Chair: Danielle Neilson
 - iii. Mental Health and Well-Being
Action Table: Elgin Mental Health and Addiction Network
Chair: Dan Logie
 - iv. Public Safety
Action Table: Public Safety Action Table
Chair: Chief Chris Herridge
 - v. Substance Use and Addiction
Action Table: Elgin Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy Steering Committee
Chair: Heather Stillitano
4. Rural Response to COVID-19 – Leith Deacon, PhD, University of Guelph
5. Adjournment



CSWB

AYLMER-ELGIN-ST. THOMAS

Integration Table Orientation

Welcome to the Aylmer-Elgin-St. Thomas CSWB Integration Table

**TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER, MORE INCLUSIVE PLACES WHERE
ALL RESIDENTS THRIVE.**

Members

The Mayor of the City of St. Thomas

The City Manager for the City of St. Thomas

The Warden of the County of Elgin

The Chief Administrative Officer of the County of Elgin

The Local Member of Provincial Parliament

The Chair of Each Action Table

- **Elgin Workforce Development Network**
- **Housing and Homelessness Action Table**
- **Elgin Mental Health and Addiction Network**
- **Public Safety Action Table**
- **Elgin Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy Steering Committee**

Objectives of the Integration Table

TO BRING COMMUNITY PARTNERS TOGETHER

We will discuss the activities of each action table and look for opportunities to work together to address community needs.

TO IDENTIFY THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

We will use local data to identify needs in our communities and make evidence-informed decisions.

TO MAKE IMPACTFUL CHANGE

We will advocate for funding from all levels of government to ensure that identified community needs can be met and that together we can create a vibrant, equitable, inclusive, safe and healthy community.

Meetings

FORMAT

Meetings can be informal, roundtable discussions where members provide updates on their activities, identify unmet needs in the community, and collaborate on community initiatives. Minutes will be taken and published for the public record.

CHAIR

As representatives of the residents in Elgin and St. Thomas, it is recommended that the Mayor and Warden co-chair the meetings.

FREQUENCY

It is recommended that the Integration Table meets 2-4 times per year.

Reaching Consensus

FORMAT

CHAIR

MEETING FREQUENCY

Roundtable Discussion

Education and Skills Development

Action Table: Elgin Workforce Development Network

Chair: Deb Mountenay

Housing Security

Action Table: Housing and Homelessness Action Table

Chair: Danielle Neilson

Mental Health and Well-Being

Action Table: Elgin Mental Health and Addiction Network

Chair: Dan Logie

Public Safety

Action Table: Public Safety Action Table

Chair: Chief Chris Herridge

Substance Use and Addiction

Action Table: Elgin Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy
Steering Committee

Chair: Heather Stillitano



REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

FROM: Julie Gonyou, Chief Administrative Officer
DATE: August 4, 2021
SUBJECT: Rural Response to COVID-19 – Partnership Opportunity

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT the report from the Chief Administrative Officer, titled “Rural Response to COVID-19 – Partnership Opportunity” dated August 4, 2021, be received and filed; and

THAT Council support partnering with Leith Deacon to collect data about our community’s Rural Response to COVID-19 and consent to funding costs associated with the direct mail-out in an amount not to exceed \$10,000; and

THAT staff be directed to explore potential partnership and opportunities to share costs for the Rural Response to COVID-19 research project with the City of St. Thomas and Southwestern Public Health; and furthermore,

THAT staff be directed to provide a follow up report to Council with actual costs, project timeline, and engagement details at a future meeting.

INTRODUCTION:

Southwestern Public Health connected County staff with an Assistant Professor from the University of Guelph who is studying the experiences of residents in rural and small communities from Ontario and across Canada related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Leith Deacon, PhD, started this project at the beginning of the pandemic.

Objectives to the Research Project:

1. Identify vulnerable populations from rural and small communities affected by COVID-19;
 2. Determine priority programs to support vulnerable populations during and post-COVID-19;
 3. Explore opportunities for the non-profit/charitable sector during and post-COVID-19;
-

4. Identify emergent mental health and economic concerns generated by COVID-19;
5. Provide locally-relevant, reliable, and valid data that can be used to advocate for funding and enhance policy development.

BACKGROUND:

The following video provides an excellent overview of the research project:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWbJmJUqsnU&list=PLmiSo1p7NiEoBsvztDIFMzyxKUFqFLan&index=5>.

As well, a one-page overview is attached to this report (Perth Huron project). An additional one-page overview of only the Perth Huron project mental health related responses is also included.

Leith Deacon is targeting six (6) Counties for his research. Middlesex, Oxford, Huron and Perth have either consented to, or have already undertaken, this work.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There may be an opportunity to partner with Elgin-St. Thomas Social Services (City of St. Thomas) and Southwestern Public Health and share costs associated with this research project.

Costs associated with this research, if borne by the County alone, include costs associated with survey mail-out (estimated to be approximately \$7,000 - \$9,000).

It is recommended that COVID-19 funding or municipal modernization funding be utilized to support this research project.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:



Serving Elgin	Growing Elgin	Investing in Elgin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensuring alignment of current programs and services with community need. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exploring different ways of addressing community need. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engaging with our community and other stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Planning for and facilitating commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural growth. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fostering a healthy environment. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhancing quality of place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensuring we have the necessary tools, resources, and infrastructure to deliver programs and services now and in the future. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivering mandated programs and services efficiently and effectively.

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS:

To be determined. Information will be shared with Council and Local Municipal Partners once it is available.

CONCLUSION:

This low-cost opportunity to engage a professional and passionate researcher and generate data to support County services, community efforts, and grant opportunities is timely.

All of which is Respectfully
Submitted

Julie Gonyou

Chief Administrative Officer

Rural Response to COVID-19

PI: Leith Deacon, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Guelph

Project goal: to explore the experiences of residents from across Perth and Huron Counties related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Project objectives: 1) Identify vulnerable populations in Perth and Huron Counties affected by COVID-19; 2) Determine priority programs to support vulnerable populations during and post-COVID-19; 3) Explore opportunities for the non-profit/charitable sector during and post-COVID-19; 4) Identify emergent mental health and economic concerns generated by COVID-19; 5) Provide locally relevant, reliable, and valid data that can be used to advocate for funding and enhance policy development.

Research methods: Employing a mixed-methods research design, this project uses two primary data acquisition methods: 1) Quantitative survey and 2) Qualitative interviews.

Results: Over 3,500 completed surveys were returned and analyzed. Each survey includes over 120 questions. Data is able to be coalesced by region, topic, age, etc. Thus far, mental health has been the the area of focus due to the importance of the issue (see attached two-page overview of results).

Implications: this project has collected local, reliable, valid, and important data that can be used to inform policy decisions and directions and to help formulate and develop appropriate response plans.

Limitation: this project has examined residents over 18 years of age. There is a critical need to include the perspectives and experiences of residents under 18 years.

MENTAL HEALTH FINDINGS OVERVIEW

NOTE: This summary is only a snapshot of some of the results from the Rural Response to COVID-19 project. This summary specifically highlights some of the mental health-related concerns. Cross-tabulations can be completed across all demographic questions crossed with nearly a limitless focus. Should you like a summary of a different area, please contact:

Leith.Deacon@uoguelph.ca

Project goal: to explore the experiences of residents from across Perth and Huron Counties related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Project objectives: 1) Identify vulnerable populations in Perth and Huron Counties affected by COVID-19; 2) Determine priority programs to support vulnerable populations during and post-COVID-19; 3) Explore opportunities for the non-profit/charitable sector during and post-COVID-19; 4) Identify emergent mental health and economic concerns generated by COVID-19; 5) Inform relevant policy decisions.

Project design/methods: This is a mixed-methods research design employing three primary methods: 1) Quantitative residential survey [completed]; 2) Qualitative semi-structured interviews [underway]; 3) Art-based project [in design-phase].

Project timeline (thus far): May-July 2020, weekly meetings with research advisory group held to develop survey tool to ensure accessibility, access, and proper question inclusion. July 2020: funding sources secure (MITACS x 3, County of Huron, Town of St. Marys, University of Guelph). August 28: Digital version of survey goes 'live' in Huron. September 5: Digital version of survey goes 'live' in Perth. September 15: Hardcopy of survey arrives in all houses across Huron County. October – December 2020: ongoing analysis of all data.

Results:

Demographics

- Total completed surveys: ~3,600
- ~70% female, ~29% male, ~1% intersex/prefer not to answer
- ~66% Huron County, 16% Perth County, 5% Stratford, 9% St. Marys, 3% other/prefer not to answer

Individual well-being

- Decrease in self-assessed indicators (physical health, mental health, personal finances, employment satisfaction, personal safety) except retirement and living situation.
- Most significant areas of decreased self-assessment: mental health, employment satisfaction, and personal safety.

Mental health

- Decrease in self-assessed mental health from before COVID to during COVID across all groups
- General, since start of COVID:
 - 45% decrease in individuals indicating excellent mental health
 - 26% decrease in individuals indicating good mental health
 - 32% increase in individuals indicating average mental health
 - 57% increase in individuals indicating satisfactory mental health
 - 78% increase in individuals indicating poor mental health

Rural Response to COVID-19: University of Guelph Research Project

MENTAL HEALTH FINDINGS OVERVIEW

- By sex:
 - 42% decrease in females who indicated excellent mental health, and a 5% decrease in males.
 - 60% decrease in females who self-assessed their mental health as good and a 51% decrease in males.
 - 68% increase in females who indicated their mental health was satisfactory and a 70% increase in males
 - 67% increase in females who self-assessed their mental health as poor and a 71% increase in males who indicated their mental health was poor.
- By age:
 - Decrease in self-assessed mental health across all age groups
 - Most significant: 18-29 cohort: 71% decrease in those who reported excellent mental health in those between 18 and 29 and an 80% increase in self-assessed poor mental health for the same age cohort.
- By age & sex:
 - 95% decrease in females between 18-29 who self assess as excellent mental health and an increase of 75% of females in the same age cohort who self-assess their mental health as poor.
- Under 39 years
 - 76% decrease in individuals who self-reported their mental health as excellent
 - 50% decrease in individuals who self-reported their mental health as good
 - 7% increase in individuals who self-reported their mental health as average
 - 60% increase in individuals who self-reported their mental health as satisfactory
 - 85% increase in individuals who self-reported their mental health as poor since the start of COVID 19.

Take-aways: need to advocate for mental health support for individuals in rural areas. In particular, females, individuals under the 40 years of age are contributing to “newly vulnerable” group.

Additional information: data on all indicators of well-being are able to be cross-tabulated with any question from the survey – please contact Leith Deacon to request.

Contact: Leith Deacon, PhD, Leith.Deacon@uoguelph.ca; 780-803-3594

Collaborating faculty:

Wayne Caldwell, PhD: wcaldwel@uoguelph.ca

Sara Epp, PhD; sepp@uoguelph.ca

Silvia Sarapura, PhD: ssarapura@uoguelph.ca