



Pandemic Working Group (PWG)

Location: Zoom
Date: Thursday, October 14, 2021
Time: 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Agenda & Notes

Agenda Item	Notes
Attestation Policies Check-In	Discussion deemed no longer relevant due to the length of time that has passed since the initial conversation.
Education	<p>Viamonde: Starting early November, Les Coccinelles from l'Association francophone a l'education des services a l'enfance de l'Ontario is new childcare provider in Waterloo Region. (Contact person: Angele Gurler, angele.gurler@afeseo.ca) Viamonde already has existing partnership with them from other regions. Have a new principal, and Gabrielle will be providing him with an update on CYPT portfolio/work.</p> <p>MonAvenir: No local COVID updates.</p> <p>WCDSB: COVID numbers have remained very low. Also have sports returned to schools, for children aged 7+. High school students need to be fully vaccinated in order to participate.</p>
Vaccination Roll Out	<p>Update on Rapid Antigen Screening: Targeted rapid antigen screening will be made available if/when recommended by a local medical officer of health. Rapid antigen screening may be useful in higher-risk situations (i.e., higher rates of COVID-19, lower rates of vaccination, history of outbreaks in the school / childcare centre). Participation will be for unvaccinated, asymptomatic children and it will be voluntary. Cannot replace lab-based (PCR) tests for those who have symptoms or are high-risk contacts. Work with provincial experts and other public health units on program parameters is underway. More information will be provided in the future.</p> <p>Update on Vaccination for 5 to 11 year olds: No accurate sense yet on when vaccination for 5 to 11 year olds will begin. Also, need to get caught up on regular school vaccines. Will have Public Health clinics open to help facilitate that.</p>



Agenda Item	Notes
	<p>Question raised if there are plans for targeted clinics re: 5 to 11 year old vaccinations. Answer given that plans are under development, but have started engaging with community partners and school boards to ensure that all priority groups will have access to the vaccine when 5 to 11 year olds are approved and the vaccine is available.</p>
<p>Welcoming Newcomer Families from Afghanistan</p>	<p>Families are continuing to come into the Region, about 150 from around the world. About 10 families are in temporary accommodations. Reception House is working with them to help them complete needed paperwork, including in some cases, their status in Canada.</p> <p>Needs include finding permanent housing for these families and finding programing for children outside of school hours. As well, making school registration available for those in temporary accommodations as there is often a lengthy process involved between temporary accommodations to permanent housing.</p> <p>The national commitment to refugees has been doubled to 40,000 being welcomed to Canada. Many will come to Waterloo Region, and therefore need to maintain a long-term view to supporting newcomers.</p> <p>Question raised if process re: schooling for students in temporary housing established with Syrian refugees can be revisited. Answer given that the ask has been made. School board representatives noted that they're happy to be involved in future conversations to making this accommodation possible, and to make the needed connections within the school boards.</p>
<p>Child Welfare</p>	<p>No update.</p>
<p>Member Updates/Other</p>	<p>Carizon – Has received funding to assist with Newcomer Mental Health, but are facing challenges with hiring social workers and especially social workers that speak other languages. Please reach out to Debbie (dengel@carizon.ca) with any suggestions and/or leads on addressing this employment crises or for the possibility of sharing part-time social workers.</p> <p>Question raised on who is Carizon's clientele for this service. Answer given that it is government-sponsored refugees who may need mental health services or counselling. School board social workers would provide support in-school, and refer to Carizon for additional support or if others in the family need support.</p> <p>City of Kitchener – Beginning to welcome families back to indoor spaces. Demand for services that have been developed to support</p>



Agenda Item	Notes
	<p>families in the pandemic has only increased, along with the need of services that were being provided before. Some families have noted barriers in accessing a few services due to the set-up of online registration, etc., but willing to assist on an individual basis.</p> <p>Children’s Services – Childcare centres across Region are becoming more full, as more and more parents become comfortable with sending their children on-site. The search for childhood educators continues to be challenging, along with retention challenges.</p> <p>Frequency of Meetings – Held brief discussion on the right frequency of PWG meetings. Consensus of meeting once per month reached, with the openness of addressing urging matters via e-mail and/or returning to biweekly should the pandemic situation shift.</p> <p>ACTION: In response to new monthly frequency of PWG meetings, Monika will send out updated Outlook calendar invites.</p>
Next Steps	Next meeting: November 4, 2021

Future Agenda Items

- Health and wellness of the workforce
- Supports needed for children/youth/families during pandemic recovery
- FACS trends related to pandemic impacts