

Early Environmental Exposures and Chronic Disease Prevention in Ontario

Collaborative Agreement

between
the **Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment (CPCHE)**
and
the **Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (OCDPA)**
(referred to herein individually as "CPCHE" and "OCDPA" or jointly as "the networks")
regarding
a joint CPCHE-OCDPA initiative on early environmental exposures and chronic disease prevention in Ontario

I. Introduction

CPCHE and OCDPA are collaborating on a two-year joint initiative on early environmental exposures and chronic disease prevention in Ontario, with support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). The project will build the relationship between the children's environmental health sector (CPCHE) and the chronic disease prevention sector (OCDPA) in support of positive changes, in policy and programming, to assist in the prevention of chronic diseases associated with early exposures to toxic substances in the environment or in consumer products. The interest of the networks to collaborate on this joint initiative is in recognition of the potentially important role that early exposures – from pre-conception through adolescence– can have in the development of chronic disease.

Both networks have their own governance agreements (see Annexes 3 and 4). This project is an effort to network the networks. The present Collaborative Agreement will govern their joint activities throughout the duration of this two-year project, building upon and taking into account the two networks' existing working relationships and procedures.

II. Project objectives

The objectives of this collaborative project are:

- To clarify and document the linkages – both known and suspected – between early environmental exposures (including pre-conception, fetal and childhood exposures) and the development of chronic disease, based on existing literature;
- To increase awareness and knowledge of these linkages among CPCHE and OCDPA partner organizations, governmental officials, non-governmental stakeholders (e.g., relevant NGOs, community practitioners, health professionals, industry representatives, journalists);
- To review and identify gaps in policy and programming within Ontario and those relevant to Ontario at a national level;
- To recommend policies and programs in support of children's environmental health protection and chronic disease prevention in Ontario;

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- To enhance capacity and leadership of CPCHE and OCDPA partner organizations to incorporate report findings and recommendations within their priorities and activities; and
- To support coordination and collaboration among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders on these issues, including between and among CPCHE and OCDPA partner organizations.

Additional, complementary objectives are outlined in the Letter of Agreement with OTF (see Annex 1).

III. Guiding principles

CPCHE and OCDPA have identified a set of principles that will guide the implementation of the project. These include:

- the **precautionary principle**, which speaks to the need to take protective or precautionary measures in the face of a threat to environment or health, even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically;¹
- **prevention** as the ultimate goal when it comes to reducing environmental exposures that may pose risks to healthy fetal and child development and lead to chronic disease; and
- an **evidence-informed** approach to setting policy and programming priorities and identifying actions to improve children's environmental health protection and chronic disease prevention.

IV. Key deliverables

Key project deliverables include:

- 1) **Network-to-network collaboration:** Formal collaborative agreement between CPCHE and OCDPA, mutual capacity building and knowledge exchange.
- 2) **Report:** Development and launch of report on early environmental exposures and chronic disease outcomes, addressing both scientific evidence and policy.
- 3) **Policy strategy:** To promote policies that integrate children's environmental health protection and chronic disease prevention.
- 4) **Forum:** To convene CPCHE and OCDPA partner organizations, government and other stakeholders to raise awareness of the links between early environmental exposures and chronic disease and to explore implications for policy and programming in Ontario. The outcomes of the Forum will inform the further development of the report.
- 5) **Knowledge exchange:** To support knowledge exchange among CPCHE and OCDPA organizations and with other stakeholders on issues related to early environmental exposures and chronic disease.
- 6) **Strengthened collaboration** among CPCHE and OCDPA network partners and members (and, as appropriate, other collaborators) to support policy and programming to promote children's environmental health protection and chronic disease prevention
- 7) **Evaluation** of project process and outcomes.

¹ Paraphrased from the "Wingspread" definition.

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These deliverables are further elaborated in the Letter of Agreement with OTF (see Annex 1). Any desired changes to these deliverables must be discussed and agreed by the Steering Committee and then submitted, via the Project Manager, for consideration by OTF. If approved by OTF, the changes will be reflected in a revised project planning document (critical path) and, if required, a revised agreement with OTF.

V. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Secretariat

Following is an overview of the members of the Secretariat team and brief descriptions of their roles and responsibilities:

Lead organization: Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), a CPCHE partner and a member of the OCDPA, is the grantee for the funding from OTF and the lead organization for the joint initiative. OPHA will execute all contracts under the project, in close collaboration with the Project Manager, and will be responsible for financial management and reporting.

Project Manager: Erica Phipps, Partnership Director for CPCHE and Project Manager for the CPCHE-OCDPA initiative, is responsible for overall project management, including coordinating the work of the Steering Committee, overseeing the completion of project deliverables, managing the Secretariat team, sharing information with and facilitating the involvement of the Joint Constellation, sharing information on the project with other stakeholders and government officials, as appropriate, and liaising with and reporting project progress and outcomes to OTF.

Project Coordinator: Hoi Ki Ding, Project Coordinator, is responsible for events logistics and administrative support. She will work closely with the Project Manager, but reports to the Manager of OCDPA.

Report Writer: Myriam Beaulne, Report Writer, is responsible for developing the report on early environmental exposures and chronic disease prevention in Ontario, including research, writing, coordinating/integrating the work of any content specialists hired to contribute to the report, and revising the report in light of Steering Committee and Joint Constellation feedback.

Consultants and substantive experts: Other consultants may be hired by the Secretariat during the course of the project, potentially including substantive experts to contribute to and/or review the research report, and/or consultants to aid in program evaluation and/or the development of the policy strategy. Hiring of consultants is the responsibility of the Secretariat, in consultation with OPHA and the Steering Committee, as appropriate. All secretariat staff and consultancy contracts are with OPHA.

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B. Steering Committee

Role: The primary role of the Steering Committee is to provide guidance and input to support the successful implementation of the project.

Composition: The Steering Committee is comprised of self-selected individuals from CPCHE and the OCDPA, respectively. The Project Manager will seek to ensure that the balance of Steering Committee members from the two networks remains roughly equal: if an imbalance arises, she will work with the coordinators of the two networks to recruit additional members, as needed.

Steering Committee members will serve in their individual capacities and, as such, are not limited to representing the views and/or positions of their organization. They should, however, share such views when relevant and should provide advice on when questions or proposals should be taken to the full Joint Constellation for decision-making.

Term of service: Steering Committee members are expected to serve for the full two-year duration of the project. If a Steering Committee member no longer works with the organization he/she represents or for other reasons needs to resign, a replacement from that organization, or from another organization within the network, will be sought. The Project Manager will coordinate the search for a replacement Steering Committee member.

Responsibilities: Steering Committee members are expected to:

- participate in all meetings and teleconferences related to the project (anticipated frequency is one per month). If a member cannot attend, he/she may nominate an alternate from his/her organization to participate on his/her behalf;
- provide information, expertise, ideas and feedback to support the successful implementation of the project, including review of draft and final versions of all key project deliverables;
- express their positions on key decisions related to project implementation; and
- support effective communication of project objectives, activities and results both within the Joint Constellation and with individuals/groups outside of the project.

Decision-making procedures: The Steering Committee will attempt to achieve consensus in its deliberations on project objectives, scope, planning, implementation, evaluation and characterization of project results. However, it is recognized that this may not always be possible. If consensus is not achieved, the option receiving the greatest proportion of support will be selected, and the dissenting views duly noted in the meeting minutes. Various decision-making aids (e.g., multi-voting) will be employed, as needed, to support effective decision-making and to help build and maintain a sense of common direction and purpose within the committee.

Records of meetings: The Secretariat will prepare draft meeting minutes for all Steering Committee meetings and teleconferences. These will be circulated for review by meeting participants prior to finalization.

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C. Joint Constellation

Role: To make key decisions on project scope and direction, based on proposals developed by the Steering Committee with support from the Secretariat, and to promote the achievement of project objectives.

Composition: The Joint Constellation is comprised of one representative from each of the partner organizations of CPCHE and the OCDPA, respectively (see Annex 2). It will meet at least once per year and will be kept informed of all project activities and achievements via periodic email updates from the Project Manager, dissemination of Steering Committee meeting minutes and other means. The “general member” organizations of OCDPA,² although not automatically part of the Joint Constellation, will be included in the distribution of project updates and other relevant communications and will be invited, at the discretion of the Steering Committee, to project meetings and events. Individual general member organizations of OCDPA may also become part of the Joint Constellation, at the discretion of the Steering Committee. This may be done, for example, when a general member organization has expertise and capacity of direct relevance to the project.

Co-chairs, one from CPCHE and one from OCDPA, will be identified to chair meetings of the Joint Constellation. The co-chairs will be selected by the Steering Committee from among its members. The co-chairs will serve for the duration of the project, unless the Steering Committee determines that a change is needed or in the event of a resignation by one or both of the co-chairs.

Term of service: Joint Constellation members are expected to serve for the full two-year duration of the project. If a Joint Constellation member no longer works with the organization he/she represents or for other reasons needs to resign, that organization shall name a replacement.

Responsibilities: The Joint Constellation will engage on key project decisions and deliverables, including but not limited to:

- project scope, including health endpoints to be addressed in the research report;
- main areas of focus for the policy strategy;
- review of final draft of policy strategy
- review of final draft of research report;
- draft logic model and evaluation plan.

Decision-making procedures: The Joint Constellation will attempt to achieve consensus in its deliberations. In cases where this is not possible, the option receiving the greatest proportion of support will be selected, and the dissenting views duly noted in the meeting minutes. Decision-making aids (e.g., multi-voting) will be employed, as needed, to support effective decision-making and to help build and maintain a sense of common direction and purpose within the constellation. All members of the Joint Constellation will have the opportunity to review and comment on all key project deliverables prior to their finalization, including the report and the policy strategy. Any concerns raised by Joint

² OCDPA has 11 core partners and a broader network of affiliates, referred to as “general members.”

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Constellation members will be taken back to the Steering Committee for resolution. Project deliverables will be presented as the outputs of the Joint Collaborative (i.e., CPCHE and OCDPA).

Records of meetings: The Secretariat will prepare draft meeting minutes for all Joint Constellation meetings. These will be circulated for review by meeting participants prior to finalization.

VI. Communications

The success of this joint initiative will rely on transparency, effective communication and good faith between the two networks and among their respective memberships. The Secretariat staff and members of the Steering Committee and Joint Constellation are expected to refrain from attributing to the joint initiative any observation, conclusion or policy position that has not been duly agreed by the relevant body (i.e., the Steering Committee or Joint Constellation). Any policy-level letters, media releases and/or backgrounders associated with project activities/deliverables will be developed in collaboration with the Steering Committee and reviewed in advance by the Joint Constellation. The networks and their respective memberships are expected to keep confidential all drafts of documents developed through the project, unless otherwise agreed in advance, and will respect embargoed material until the agreed-upon date of public release. The collaborative development of written materials, policy positions or statements in the context of this joint endeavor must also take into account the respective governance agreements of CPCHE and OCDPA, respectively (see Annexes 3 and 4).

Key project deliverables will bear the logos of CPCHE and OCDPA, after having been duly reviewed by the Joint Constellation (see section V – C above on decision-making procedures). At the discretion of the Joint Constellation on a case-by-case basis, logo(s) of individual partner organization(s) may also be included, with prior agreement by the relevant partner organization(s). In the event that individual OCDPA general member organizations wish to have their logos on the document, that will be permitted at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

In recognition of the support provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) for this project, the OTF logo (and other forms of acknowledgement, as appropriate) will be included on all major project deliverables. Guidelines for the use of the OTF logo are provided on the OTF website.

VII. Agreement Period

The period of this agreement between CPCHE and OCDPA begins April 2008 and will end at the completion of the grant (anticipated for April 2010). It is understood that specific deliverables are due according to the terms of the OTF reporting and project timeline. The Project Manager will oversee and manage completion of all project deliverables, per the Letter of Agreement and in consultation with the Steering Committee.

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VIII. Standards and Terms

CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidential information obtained in connection with the fulfilment of the services shall not be disclosed in any manner without the networks' consent.

TERMINATION: This agreement shall be deemed terminated upon completion of the grant and all related deliverables. Both networks reserve the right to terminate this agreement at any time upon thirty days' prior written notice, without penalty or damages. In the event of termination, all content developed and work performed up to the termination date (including the applicable notice period) shall be jointly owned and available for use by each of the networks.

REVIEW: Both networks reserve the right to review work performed by the lead organization, OPHA, and its contractors (e.g., secretariat personnel and consultants). Either network may request changes and make recommendations for quality improvement on reports or documents of related nature. Any impact on costs and schedule in implementing such requests or recommendations will be negotiated prior to changes being implemented.

OWNERSHIP AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY: Both CPCHE and OCDPA share intellectual property to the resource(s) produced as a result of the joint project. Specifically, the networks share the right to non-exclusive, irrevocable, worldwide, royalty-free license to make, copy, translate, use, produce the resulting resource for any purpose, except sale or licensing in commercial competition with each other. In all cases, both networks will be named as contributors.

APPLICABLE LAW AND PRIVACY CLAUSE: This agreement shall be governed by and interpreted according to the laws of the Province of Ontario and shall be performed in accordance with all applicable laws of Ontario and Canada, which both networks agree, is deemed to include the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act ("PIPEDA").

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IX. Contacts

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Signatories:

Date:

Signature:

Connie Uetrecht,
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Co-Chair, Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance

Date:

Signature:

Erica Phipps,
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