

**Community Involvement and Municipal Government Change on Health Priority:
The Occupational and Environmental Working Group of the Toronto Cancer
Prevention Coalition**

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The Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition was initiated in 1998 representing 160 members and 60 agencies. The Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition is currently comprised of 7 working groups including: occupational and environmental carcinogens, dietary risk factors, ultraviolet radiation, tobacco, alcohol, screening and detection, and physical inactivity.

One of the 7 working groups, the occupational and environmental working group of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition is represented by a diverse group of various labour, environmental, government and community organizations. In 2001, the working group produced the background working document, "Preventing Occupational and Environmental Cancer – A Strategy for Toronto" listing many recommendations aimed at reducing known carcinogenic exposures for workers, the general public, and children, recognizing the reproductive health links.

The key recommendations from the 7 working groups, focusing on clear priorities for policy and action, were presented by the Toronto Medical Officer of Health and accepted by Toronto Board of Health and City Council on May, 2001. In May 2002, a round table meeting was convened involving stakeholders from the city and community creating a forum for discussion, idea exchange and strategies to move the recommendations forward.

To assist Toronto Public Health in moving Community Right-To-Know recommendation forward, the working group initiated a funded project to identify the gaps in Community Right-To-Know focusing on the Beaches/South Riverdale in Toronto. The results of this research will be discussed as well as an update on the status of that recommendation within Toronto Public Health.

The Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition has placed cancer as an issue of prominence. Not only is this a blueprint for other cities and communities, it also helps to recognize cancer as a health priority within the city. And, in addition to changes at the municipal level, there are implications for federal and provincial policy and activity. This is an example of a grassroots community initiative impacting government.

Conclusions

1. Review the initiation of a grassroots coalition lead by a public health department
2. Understand the occupational and environmental working group's progress to date.
3. Learn about the Community right to know project in the Beaches/South Riverdale community.