

SPRING 2009



News from The SHaC

2008-09 Shows Big Increases

In the fall of 2008, we celebrated our 20th Anniversary in the community. Statistics from the past year indicate that, more and more, members of the Lunenburg County community are recognizing us the go-to people for sexual health information and education. Have a look at the busy year just completed:

- Client Services Increase
- The Year In Review
- Membership Renewal Time

Service	Number	Increase From 2007-08
Community & School Presentations	68	258%
Information Requests	2541	216%
Services Provided*	737	260%
Client walk-ins	288	231%
Condoms	6417	96%

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* "Services Provided" are for individuals only (not groups) and include: pregnancy tests, pregnancy options info, information and support counselling on issues such as birth control, emergency contraception, STIs, sexual orientation, sexual assault/abuse, puberty, healthy relationships, parenting, menopause.

Note that, due to limitations in government funding, we keep part-time hours throughout the year and we close completely in the summer. The above stats are for the hours we were open in '08-'09. We can estimate that during our closure this summer, we will miss approximately 847 client requests and not provide 246 needed services; 96 people will come to the Centre and find it locked, and 2139 free condoms will not be provided to those in need.

Help us spread awareness and provide services. Your memberships fees and donations help to extend our hours and provide more services.

The Year In Review



In 2008-09 SHCLC was recognized by local agencies for its valuable work:

SHIFT Project (Sexual Health Information For Teens) Lunenburg County United Way provided funding to create 16 pamphlets for Lunenburg teens. Surveys were sent to schools and doctors to see if they would be interested, and which topics they felt would be of most use to them. These pamphlets were designed in black and white and were taken to student focus groups at Parkview High and Forest Heights. Changes to graphics and wording were made based on the teens' recommendations. 16 pamphlets on brightly coloured paper and free pamphlet holders were distributed to Jr & Sr high schools and doctors' offices throughout Lunenburg Co.

Website Project Watch for launch of our new site! With a grant from the Community Health Board, we hired HolmPage Productions to redesign our website. Plus, we will be adding more information and resources.

Eastlink TV Series Pilot Project In partnership with the Yarmouth Sexual Health Centre who were approached by Eastlink to do a sexual health show, we developed and filmed the pilot episode. If approved, a series of programs will be taped and aired either regionally or provincially.

We were asked by Public Health to partner with them to provide Professional Training:

Keeping Sex Alive in the Classroom Province-wide in-service training for Family Studies teachers.

Can U Talk Sex? In-service training for South Shore Regional School Board *Healthy Living* teachers.

There was a huge demand for our participation in school and community sexual health education. Here are a few examples:

International Day Against Homophobia Presentations on Respecting Sexual Orientation were offered to all LC Jr. Highs. A whopping number responded saying it was very badly needed in their school. Some schools wanted all grades and classes talked to. We didn't have time to talk to everyone, but we did get 33 presentations done and they were very well received.

New Germany Rural High Wellness Day We have participated for several years in a row. This year was the first time male students were involved in the day. We did 3 presentations, two called "Condomania", and one "Talk with Rock" session where the students could ask anything related to sexual health.

Friendship Friday at Lunenburg Junior High Invited to talk about respecting sexual orientation. It was so well received we were invited back to talk to the senior high school students.

Forest Heights Community School—Sex Ed for Lunch An optional session for students on a variety of issues.

Health Promotions Day at Forest Heights Community School Two 2-hour sessions, "Condoms 401" and "Talk with Rock," for the Grades 10–12 students.

Gold River Health Centre Presented a session on menopause for a special health day for patients.

Family Resource Centre Session on PMS, perimenopause, and sexual issues for a parent group.

Awareness Events:

20th Anniversary We celebrated serving the community for 20 years by doing an ad series in the local paper and holding a Sexual Health Trivia Night at the Knot Pub. This was done during the pub's regular trivia night, but with our unique theme and lots of special prizes. Many regulars said that there were more teams participating at this one, and that it was the most fun they'd had at a trivia night.

CKDU Radio Show Our "Respecting Sexual Orientation" received much attention and we were invited to do a half-hour segment of the "Over the Rainbow" show with Denise Holliday, a program dealing with transgender and gay issues.

Wayves Magazine An article on the high demand for respecting sexual orientation education was published in *Wayves*, a magazine for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities in Atlantic Canada.

AIDS Awareness Week We sent information to our members and provided schools with information for their own displays.

7th Annual Sexual Health Awareness Day We sent out an informative email to our members about the history of birth control in Canada, the theme of this year's Awareness Day.

Parents:

“It’s Easier Than You Think!”

This is a new resource for parents about talking to your kids about sexual health. Developed by Sexual Health Access Alberta (a ‘sister’ centre of ours) this 6 page brochure gives more details than a 1 page pamphlet can. Available at our office, or download at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/03/090312114801.htm>

Advisory for Nursing Moms

Health Canada is advising nursing mothers about the rare but serious health risk to breastfed babies posed by codeine use in mothers. Once ingested, codeine is converted into morphine. The babies of nursing mothers who rapidly metabolize codeine may be at increased risk for morphine overdose. Codeine is found in prescription and non-prescription products used to relieve pain or to treat coughs.

For more info: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/2008/2008_164-eng.php

Teachers

You can book us for your class (biology, history, PDR, child studies, etc.) to speak on various topics like birth control, STIs, pregnancy options, condoms, safer sex, respecting sexual orientation, etc. Requests should complement your teachings (not replace them).

Contact us for a list of available presentations, or we can customize one for you.

New on the Shelf:



New library books and videos available for loan:

- * **Canadian Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections**, published by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Health Professionals without a copy can also download the information from http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/sti_2006/sti_intro2006-eng.php

Or, the whole binder can be ordered online from the Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange, at http://orders.catie.ca/product_info.php?products_id=25347

Automatic updates are also available for those who register their contact information.

- * **Complete Nutrition Guide to Menopause**
- * **The Secret Pleasures of Menopause**
- * **Boys, Girls & Body Science: A First Book About the Facets of Life**
- * **Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals**
- * **The New Speaking of Sex: what Your Children Need to Know and When They Need to Know it**
- * **The New Male Sexuality: The Truth About Men, Sex, and Pleasure**
- * **And Tango Makes Three**
- * **100 Q&A About Erectile Dysfunction, 2nd ed.**

Lesbian Teens at Higher Pregnancy Risk

Lesbian, gay and bisexual teens are at a higher risk of becoming pregnant or causing a pregnancy than their heterosexual peers, says a new study.

The authors suggest the discrimination, sexual abuse and harassment that gay, lesbian and bisexual teens face may prompt them to indulge in more sexually risky behaviour like having sex without using condoms, starting to have sex before the age of 14 or having multiple sexual partners.

Lead author Elizabeth Saewyc said that a succession of surveys in British Columbia since 1992 show that in general, all teens are becoming more sexually healthy and taking fewer risks than they did when the survey was first administered. But there are still disturbing differences between lesbian, gay and bisexual teens and their heterosexual counterparts, she suggested. The findings are drawn from data compiled through the B.C. Adolescent Health Survey, administered every five or six years to between 15,000 and 30,000 Grade 7 to 12 students in schools across the province.

This research article, which compares findings from the 1992, 1998 and 2003 surveys, showed girls who described themselves as bisexual were nearly twice as likely as girls who said they were heterosexual to have been pregnant. And in 2003 lesbian teens were more than 2.5 times as likely to have been pregnant at least once. Male teens who described themselves as bisexual or gay were between 3 and 4 times more likely than heterosexual boys to have impregnated a girl - which is actually a decline from earlier surveys.

Saewyc said it is a common misconception that gay boys don't have sex with girls. We assume that sexual attraction, sexual behaviour and sexual identity are going to be 100 per cent consistent for people. That's not the case. Especially not for teenagers," she said from Vancouver. "So they may know who they're attracted to. They may identify. But they're not necessarily only going to be having sex with their same gender."

Gay and lesbian teens may have sex with members of the opposite sex for a variety of reasons. Some do it to hide, to deflect the abuse that they see inflicted on gay, lesbian and bisexual teens. They call it "camouflage." "For some, it may be that they've been told that this is abnormal and wrong and they may think: 'Well, if I just have sex with enough opposite-gender people that will cure me,'" Saewyc said. "And for some, it is camouflage. It's passing. For some, it's curiosity - 'Well, how do I know I'm really gay until I've tried and decided no, I really don't like that?'"

David Wolfe, a clinical psychologist who has a chair in children's mental health at Toronto's Center for Addiction and Mental Health, said the way to address the elevated pregnancy rates among bisexual, gay and lesbian teens is to find ways to stop making them feel so stigmatized. "The take-away (message) to me is we have to normalize in our education of teens around such sexual orientation," Wolfe said in an interview from London, Ont. "It's much like racism and sexism has always been - it's still something that's permitted to continue in the schools." He said there needs to be more openness in the education process about the fact that there are different sexual orientations. "I'm not necessarily saying to normalize it by making Dick and Jane become Dick and Fred or something. But I think that in their health education, they have to understand the variability of human sexuality. ..." "Parents may look at it as saying that somehow we're endorsing this behavior. ... But what it's really saying is that this is a reality. There are people there with different coloured skin. There are people there with different sexual orientation. And you don't try to meld them all together and pretend they don't exist ... and label them as somehow wrong." "We are creating our own problems by creating problems for them," Wolfe insisted. "By not giving them a chance to have a voice in it. Then it becomes a bigger problem - and we blame them for it."

Sources: Canadian Press 12-17-2008 and www.365gay.com/news/study-lesbian-teens-at-higher-pregnancy-risk/



SNIPPLES...

Premature Ejaculation May Be Genetic Disorder

Researchers from Finland interviewed more than 3000 men, mostly twins and their brothers, about first sexual experiences and erectile dysfunction and/or premature ejaculation. This study confirms a previous smaller study that premature ejaculation appears to be strongly linked to genetic factors and is not just psychological. For details see:

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/05/090527130838.htm>



Local Editor Wins Award

Vernon Oickle's editorial from July 15/08, "Give Dr. Morgentaler His Due" has won top honours for both national and local editorial, at the Atlantic Community Newspapers Association 2009 awards ceremony in Halifax June 6.

See Story: <http://www.southshorenow.ca/archives/2009/06/1609/news/index030.php>

Original Article: http://southshorenow.ca/archives/2008/07/1508/pdf/complete_LP_web%2016.pdf

Take Folic Acid for 1 Year Before Conceiving Says New Study

A new study conducted at the University of Texas showed that taking folic acid for one full year prior to conceiving reduces the chances of a premature birth by 50%. The study was published in the May 12 issue of PLoS Medicine. For details see:

<http://news.health.com/2009/05/12/before-conceiving-take-folic-acid-for-one-full-year/#more-18367>

Diaphragm no Longer Available

Barrier device contraceptive options are getting fewer for Canadians. The latest to be go is the Ortho Diaphragm. However, in places where they are stocked, some may still be available. The diaphragm was not a popular option and this may be the reason it was taken off the market.

This follows the removal of the cervical cap a couple of years ago. Remaining barrier options include the sponge and the condom.



AIDS Vaccine Gets Closer

Two AIDS researchers may have made another step towards a vaccine for AIDS. They isolated a part of the virus that is essential to its spread—it's 'Achilles heel'—in this case, the part that helps it enter healthy cells. Other researchers have been able to elicit antibody reactions, but it only worked with certain strains of HIV. This particular part of the virus is common to most variants of HIV so it may be more helpful in finding a vaccine which will work for most HIV strains. For details see:

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/03/090312114801.htm>

A growing body of research shows that regular exercise may improve sexual function for both men & women by improving physical & mental health.

<http://www.nwhealth.edu/healthyU/getMoving/funfacts/5.html>



Sex Can Increase Intimacy and Relieve Pain

Having sex and orgasms increases levels of the hormone oxytocin, which helps us bond and build trust with our partner. (Oxytocin is also suspected in helping women bond with their infants because it is released during breast feeding.) Oxytocin also causes endorphins to be released and thus pain declines. So if your headaches, arthritis pain, or PMS symptoms improve after sex, thank the higher oxytocin levels. For more health benefits of sex, go to:

<http://www.webmd.com/sex-relationships/features/10-surprising-health-benefits-of-sex?page=2>



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**We will be closed
for the summer.
Our last day will be
July 3 and we will
reopen Sept. 13.**



For easy donations any time of the day or year, go to

www.canadahelps.org

Press **"I am a donor"**

Enter our name or part of it in the search area.

Follow the links and fill in your amount. We will be notified by CanadaHelps when you are done and they will send you your tax receipt.

You can donate...

- for yourself
- in memory of someone
- to honour someone
- as a gift for a special occasion

You can ...

- Make a one time donation
- Set up monthly donations

**In today's world,
it's all about choice**

Membership Form

I understand that the Lunenburg County Sexual Health Centre provides unbiased and nonjudgmental information and resources regarding sexual and reproductive health, and encourages informed, responsible attitudes toward sexuality throughout the lifespan.

I understand that the annual membership fee of \$10 (for waged people) or \$2 (for unwaged or students) entitles me to the right to vote at any general and/or annual meeting of the LCSHC, and to be eligible to be elected to the Board of Directors.

Tax receipts will be issued for fees and donations of \$10 or more.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

(your email is never shared with any other organization, person, or business)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Once you become a member, you can borrow resources, including reference books and videos, from our library. Members who provide an email address will also receive our newsletters with up-to-date sexual health information, new resources, etcetera, as well as special announcements.

- Please check here if you do not wish to receive quarterly newsletters or special announcements by email.

