

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JUNE 15, 2010

ANAPHYLAXIS ENDORSEMENT

Recommendation

Councillor Tony Carella recommends that the motion for which notice has been given to the House of Commons by Dean Allison, MP for Niagara West-Glanbrook---“That anaphylaxis is a serious concern for an increasing number of Canadians and the government should take the appropriate measures necessary to ensure these Canadians are able to maintain a high quality of life“, be endorsed, and that the Clerk of the House of Commons be so informed.

Contribution to Sustainability

The lives of many Canadians are threatened by anaphylaxis; and hence, a coordinated response by the federal government is appropriate.

Economic Impact

Nil

Communication Plan

Corporate Communications will issue a media release once this recommendation is adopted by Council.

Background – Analysis and Options

Anaphylaxis is a medical condition describing people with severe, life threatening allergies. Reactions are rapid in onset and may cause death without immediate treatment. Food is the most common cause of anaphylaxis, but insect stings, medicine, latex or exercise can cause reactions. In Canada, the most common food allergens are milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, shellfish, fish, sesame and wheat. Anaphylaxis has no cure, though important research and efforts to find a cure are underway. Avoidance is the required preventative measure.

The MP's motion is welcomed by hundreds of family members of the local group Niagara Anaphylaxis Support and Knowledge (NASK). They seek to motivate support across Canada for the Niagara MP's efforts to raise greater awareness on Parliament Hill and prompt responsible action with Government officials. NASK President Cindy Paskey explains, “As more and more Canadian families face the challenges of raising a child with one or multiple severe allergies, a coordinated, thoughtful set of government initiatives will help to raise public understanding of anaphylaxis, and provide greater safety of its children and citizens. We ask government to take steps to help to reduce the risk of unnecessary and preventable anaphylactic attacks. Everyone benefits. Medical emergencies are avoided. Lives are saved.”

Ms. Paskey adds, “Of necessity, there is a great deal of personal responsibility when living with anaphylaxis. Avoiding your allergens is the only way to stay alive. With the support of MPs and government officials, we can raise greater public understanding, promote responsible safety measures, educate people on the signs of a reaction and how to help a person in need - similar to CPR education. This coordinated government approach will lead to reducing risk and to safer environments for those living with life-threatening allergies and to those providing care and services. Canadians and our governments have successfully tackled a wide range of health concerns that has made

Canada a safer, healthier, happier place to live. Anaphylaxis deserves the same attention.”

The NASK group is very optimistic about the prospects of their awareness drive given recent attention in Ottawa on anaphylaxis. Just weeks ago, the House of Commons passed a unanimous motion to recognize May as Food Allergy Awareness Month. The Canadian Transportation Agency is about to make a ruling regarding airlines’ safety protocols respecting allergies. Also, Health Canada is reviewing new food labeling regulations that highlight the importance of listing ingredients and allergy information.

Mindi Ferkul, NASK member says, “We are very thankful to Dean Allison and his commitment to this awareness drive. We will reach out to MPs and have other Canadians concerned about the government’s response to this issue reaching out to their local MPs. Through this effort with Parliamentarians, we trust we will see action from the government, from the Health Minister and Transport Minister. The Government should demonstrate positive leadership on this issue.”

As the federal government is uniquely placed to address this threat throughout the nation, the motion tabled by Dean Allison, MP, warrants the endorsement of this Council.

Regional Implications

Nil

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

It is appropriate that Council endorse the motion tabled in the House of Commons, on behalf of those residents of Vaughan who live under the threat of anaphylaxis.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

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