

HALIFAX

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Item No. 3

Halifax Regional Council
June 19, 2018

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed by



Jane Fraser, Director Corporate and Customer Services

Original Signed by



Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 18, 2018

SUBJECT: Tick Awareness Campaign

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Motion during Regional Council meeting on May 8, 2018: That Halifax Regional Council request a staff report on the implementation of an immediate TICK AWARENESS CAMPAIGN through PSAs, social media messaging and any other means of communicating public awareness on the issue of ticks including tips on how to protect your person/pet from ticks.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Public health protection and associated promotion is primarily a federal and provincial government authority.

BACKGROUND

The risk and prevalence of tick-bite-inflicted illnesses such as Lyme disease continues to increase across Canada, with Nova Scotia reporting the highest per capita rate of confirmed Lyme disease in the country. In May 2017, the federal government announced \$4 million in funding to establish a Lyme disease research network and create standardized educational materials to increase national awareness to improve prevention, identification, treatment and management of the disease. Nova Scotia Public Health has also been actively sharing its tick awareness and education materials with municipalities. With experts warning that 2018 will be the worst season yet for the black legged ticks that cause Lyme disease, municipalities across the province are stepping up public awareness efforts. The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg launched a \$120,000 education and prevention campaign (Lunenburg County accounted for about 80 per cent of the province's reported Lyme disease in 2016) to address what the local mayor has called "an epidemic in the area." This is not the case for Halifax Regional Municipality.

DISCUSSION

In June 2017, Corporate Communications began sharing the province's tick safety campaign materials through its digital screen network across the municipality (47 locations – 32 external, 15 internal), on halifax.ca, and through its social media channels including paid Facebook ads to drive traffic to the linked website information. This activity continued through October 2017 except for the information on the municipal website, which remained in place.

As the responsible authority, Nova Scotia Public Health maintains the most current and referenced information regarding tick safety for the province. The province's approach (focusing on social rather than traditional media) aims to balance the need to educate people on tick bite prevention and management without creating undue alarm that would keep them from enjoying outdoor parks and facilities. Raising the profile of this information by frequently sharing it through various municipal channels, social media advertising, posters and promoting at existing events is the most efficient and effective way for the municipality to help increase awareness and influence behaviour.

To that end, Corporate Communications received from the province a suite of awareness and education materials in various formats (web, social/mobile, digital screens, downloadable poster file for printing – see Appendix A “Nova Scotia Health Tick Safety Promotion Materials”), which started being deployed during the week of May 14 as noted above in addition to amplifying the province's social media feeds. The information was also shared with staff in Parks & Recreation to determine where it can be most appropriately displayed in print. The municipality's large geography with 900 parks makes it challenging and cost prohibitive to address through signage; Corporate Communications will work with P&R and tick location information provided by the province to determine if and where posters/signage is needed. Posters have been distributed to Recreations centres, Customer Service Centres, and Halifax Public Libraries, and the file can be downloaded at <https://novascotia.ca/ticksafety/poster.pdf> for further distribution.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are nominal costs associated with printing of posters and social media advertising (less than \$1,000) that is covered under Corporate Communications' existing operating budget. Any cost with potential signage at parks would need to be determined based upon assessed need and the quantity and materials involved.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The municipality's communications efforts aim to amplify Nova Scotia Public Health's mandate to raise awareness and educate the public about Lyme disease prevention. Any public engagement on the subject would fall under the province's mandate.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A “Nova Scotia Health Tick Safety Promotion Materials”

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

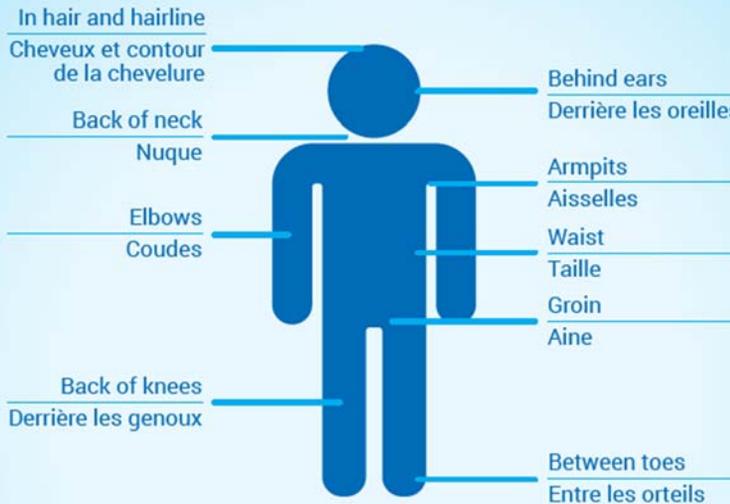
Report Prepared by: Bruce DeBaie, Managing Director, Corporate Communications, 902-490-2348

Appendix A “Nova Scotia Health Tick Safety Promotion Materials”

Digital screens/social media ads



Tick Check Poster

<h2>Tick Check Basics</h2>	<h2>Conseils relatifs aux tiques</h2>
<p>Check your body and clothing for ticks after spending time outside. Ticks like warm places on the body.</p>  <p>In hair and hairline Cheveux et contour de la chevelure</p> <p>Back of neck Nuque</p> <p>Elbows Coudes</p> <p>Back of knees Derrière les genoux</p> <p>Behind ears Derrière les oreilles</p> <p>Armpits Aisselles</p> <p>Waist Taille</p> <p>Groin Aine</p> <p>Between toes Entre les orteils</p>	<p>Vérifiez votre peau et vos vêtements après avoir passé du temps à l'extérieur. Les tiques aiment les endroits bien au chaud.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't forget to check your pets• A bath or shower within two hours of being outdoors makes it easier to spot ticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N'oubliez pas de vérifier vos animaux de compagnie.• Il est plus facile de voir les tiques si vous prenez un bain ou une douche dans un délai de deux heures après avoir passé du temps à l'extérieur.
<p>For more information, including how to remove a tick safely, visit novascotia.ca/ticksafety</p>  <p>NOVASCOTIA NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE</p>	<p>Pour obtenir plus d'information, y compris sur la façon d'enlever une tique de façon sécuritaire, consultez le novascotia.ca/ticksafety (en anglais seulement).</p>