

Media Release

September 5, 2023

Optimal Health and High Quality of Life for CK Residents Vital to Chatham-Kent's New Medical Officer of Health

The Chatham-Kent Board of Health is pleased to announce that Dr. Shanker Nesathurai will be serving as the Acting Medical Officer of Health. As per the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Dr. Nesathurai will be the Acting Medical Officer of Health until official approval is received from the Minister of Health.

"The mission of the public health services is that everyone in Chatham-Kent has the opportunity to reach optimal health and a high quality of life," states Dr. Nesathurai, "There are many priorities ahead, but this mission will guide us in formulating public health promotion and prevention programs."

Dr. Nesathurai comes to Chatham-Kent with a wealth of education and experience. He received his Doctor of Medicine from McMaster University in Hamilton, and his Master of Public Health from Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, MA. He served as the Medical Officer of Health for Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit from 2018-2021, and most recently as the Acting Medical Officer of Health for Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. In addition to training in public health, Dr. Nesathurai is a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation.

Today marks Dr. Nesathurai's first official day on the job, and he is already determined to tackle the public health issues that Chatham-Kent is faced with locally, some of which he believes were magnified due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There were 45 drug-related deaths in Chatham-Kent last year," states Dr. Nesathurai, "45 people taken from their friends and families. Of these deaths, 36 were related to opioid poisonings. This is a challenge that we must work on collaboratively and focus on strengthening our community response."

Dr. Nesathurai also voiced his desire for a renewed focus on programs and services that aim to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of children. "Chronic disease rates in Chatham-Kent are amongst the highest in the province," explains

Dr. Nesathurai, " We've got to get a hold on these issues much earlier on, in order to lessen the burden later on. The biggest impact we can make is on those aged 0-18. Strengthening the programs and services that are aimed to protect them when they are most susceptible, and educate them when they are most receptive, that will have the greatest impact on the future of our community and everyone who calls it home."

Members of the media will have an opportunity to hear from Dr. Nesathurai at the upcoming Board of Health meeting this Thursday, September 7th at 11:00AM. Any questions for Dr. Nesathurai can be directed to ckphucommunications@chatham-kent.ca prior to the meeting.

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