



Recruitment and Communications Strategy for Study A: Self-Reported Health Assessment of the Port Colborne Community

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Page 1 of 15

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents2

Background4

Community Concerns4

Communication Objective4

Key Assumption4

The Call to Action.....5

Current Environment5

Assumptions5

Focus5

Strategies5

Key Messages6

 Participation and Community Support.....6

 Scientific Process6

 Confidentiality.....6

Description of Tactics7

 Census/Information Verification Program.....7

 Visual Identity Program7

 Information Brochures/Pamphlets7

 Stakeholder Feedback Sessions8

 Professional Information Sessions8

 Website Postings.....8

 Newspaper Advertising and Flyers.....8

 Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and Paid Advertising.....8



Earned Media.....	8
Presentation Package	8
News Releases/promotional media	9
Glossary - "CHAP Terms Explained"	9
Executive Summaries of Studies - "Studies Explained"	9
CHAP Newsletter	9
CHAP Partners	9
The Ventana Health Assessment Centre	9
Media Preparedness Training	9
Special Events sponsorships/visibility.....	9
Study A Recruitment and Communication Strategy	9
Rationale	9
Overview	10
Tactics	10
Publicity Campaign	10
Advance Notice Period.....	10
Follow-up Period	10
Key Messaging	11

List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Study A - Communication Flowchart.....	12
Figure 2: Sample Advertisement	13
Figure 3: Sample PSA.....	13
Figure 4: Draft Information Brochure Text.....	14

Background

The goals of the communication process are to inform, persuade, motivate or achieve mutual understanding. This is especially important when certain outcomes are expected or where different priorities are perceived.

The success of the Port Colborne Community Health Assessment Project (CHAP) depends upon the participation and interest of **all** current residents. Therefore, it is critically important that the community is fully informed of not only what the health assessment entails, but also what it means to them and to the expectations that they may have. Ventana Clinical Research Corporation will implement four studies to provide an understanding of the health status and concerns of the people of Port Colborne.

Two of the studies, A and B, require the participation of the residents of Port Colborne in that there is a requirement for questionnaires to be completed and medical tests to be undertaken. The other two studies will draw upon information from previously collected data. While driven by the research-based scientific approach, these studies are about people and their health. To successfully implement the CHAP, Ventana has made it a priority to connect with the community. The Ventana goal has been to fully understand community concerns and to make it as straightforward and as easy as possible for all Port Colborne residents to participate in the CHAP process.

Community Concerns

The CHAP research began in April 2001 with Ventana consulting the Port Colborne community to identify their health concerns. The consultations involved an extensive community outreach program utilizing one-on-one and community group meetings, telephone conversations, an Internet mailbox for community members to ask questions, a toll free telephone line, an internet-based questionnaire and a mail-out questionnaire.

It was determined that the health concerns of primary importance were related to the potential effects of the Chemicals of Concern (CoCs) on the health of individuals and the community as a whole. Individuals who participated in the outreach program indicated that they were concerned that certain medical conditions might be related to the CoCs in the Port Colborne region. Cancer was a key concern as were respiratory problems, circulatory issues and general health. Children's health was also an important concern. Residents wanted to know whether high levels of the CoCs were present in their own bodies. The design of the CHAP health assessment program has taken into account the concerns of the community as well as the scientific literature available in the area of chemical contamination. This has resulted in a scientific approach to evaluating the health of the community in Port Colborne and a requirement to ensure that the process, output and issues concerning the health assessment are fully and clearly communicated to all community members.

Communication Objective

"To ensure maximum participation and support for the Community Health Assessment Project from all residents of Port Colborne."

Key Assumption

In order to provide timely and consistent communication, Ventana should be allowed to manage the CHAP communication strategy, as outlined in this document. Further review and/or approvals should only be required for activities that fall outside the scope of this strategy.

The Call to Action

A suitable tagline will be identified that will be used to focus all communications to the community. For example: "Your community, your health"

Current Environment

There are several issues evident that both impact and support the Communication Plan:

- The credibility and objectivity of Ventana ("If INCO is the sponsor will the results be objective?")
- Diverse perspectives within the community ("I don't live on the East Side, I don't have to worry")
- Visibility of Ventana ("Ventana has been out there talking with us")
- Perceived lack of connection and context between the original Scope of Work document and the health studies being undertaken ("How will all the results be brought together to give the community a picture of its overall health profile with respect to the CoCs?")
- Diverse assumptions about what information the CHAP is collecting and what the results will show

Assumptions

- While interest in, and understanding of, all CHAP studies is important, success of the CHAP will be measured by the response rate for study A and the ease of recruitment and completed participation in study B.

Focus

- Clear, consistent and timely communication to community leaders and residents about the various scientific studies in the CHAP
- Localize the messages to give the audience a sense of involvement in the communication process while maintaining objectivity and credibility
- Position Ventana as the scientific and medical experts working under the direction of the Technical Subcommittee of the Public Liaison Committee
- Identify all opportunities to engage Port Colborne residents in the discussion, feedback and participation in CHAP studies
- Effectively communicate the results of all CHAP studies
- Position the CHAP in the context of the Community-based Risk Assessment as separate, yet complementary

Strategies

- Use available community resources to deliver messages (e.g. community bulletin boards, Tribune and Leader newspapers, CHAP website, community meetings and events, etc.)
- Promote the CHAP Health Assessment Centre as an information resource centre as well as the Health Assessment site.
- Establish CHAP Partners; community leaders in support of the CHAP (mayor and council, PLC, MDs, RNs, pharmacists, special interest groups, etc.)

- Provide common language summaries of all scientific research documents on the CHAP website and in printed pamphlets
- Promote Ventana spokespeople as resources to community groups, schools and the media to answer questions about the science and processes of the CHAP
- Explore all opportunities to publish the CHAP results in appropriate journals, and promote the publication of results appropriately

Key Messages

Participation and Community Support

- Ventana is committed to ensure that everyone in Port Colborne is able to understand the scientific basis for the studies and their design
- No one can predict the eventual outcome of the CHAP. As medical experts, we are trying to make sure everyone, from high school kids to seniors, can understand information about the science of the CHAP.
- People need to understand what the CHAP is all about and be encouraged to participate, even if they don't feel their health is at risk.
- Participating in the CHAP is an important step if you have a health concern for your self, your family, your friends or your community.
- The success of the CHAP is in the hands of everyone in Port Colborne. Ventana's role is to make participation in the CHAP as straightforward and easy as possible.
- Completing the health information survey is something everyone in Port Colborne can do.

Scientific Process

- Ventana creates the bridge between science and health for the people of Port Colborne.
- Our data will be obtained by strict adherence to scientific process. These high standards are in best interest of everyone in the community.
- The CHAP is separate from, but a complement to, the Community-based Risk Assessment, providing the science-based health information to the Public Liaison Committee.
- Trained health professionals and information will be available at the CHAP Health Assessment Centre. The Centre will be a place for anyone who wants more information about the CHAP. Everyone who takes part in the study B will be visiting the Centre to complete that part of the project.
- As a well-established clinical research company, Ventana has a track record of completing its research to high scientific standards. That's why we've been chosen to do the CHAP. To have that kind of credibility in the scientific world, Ventana is well aware that it must focus on the science of this project AND the people of Port Colborne.
- Ventana is responsible directly to the TSC and PLC for the work being completed on behalf of the people of Port Colborne. The CHAP will provide the science-based health information for the community.
- Conclusions about health issues or concerns will not be based on one part of the CHAP. Each of the studies builds on and adds to the depth of understanding and information about the others.

Confidentiality

- All data will be collected and analysed under strict conditions of security and confidentiality.

Description of Tactics

Census/Information Verification Program

In preparation for the formal questionnaire mailing, the CHAP is undertaking a program to identify the largest possible sample of Port Colborne residents. The CHAP team has purchased a residential telephone listing from Cornerstone List Brokerages that includes contact information, mailing address and telephone numbers for approximately 6,700 households within the core L3K postal code area. To extend our sampling coverage beyond this core area, we have also obtained from Cornerstone an additional 225 address listings for surrounding rural route areas (various LOS and other postal codes).

Unfortunately, this Cornerstone data will not identify households with an unlisted telephone number or no telephone. To address this issue, we have secured a listing of residential properties from the City of Port Colborne's Property Assessment files to supplement the Cornerstone data. This data contains only addresses with no names or phone numbers.

To ensure that the final residents' list is as complete, accurate and broad as possible, several initiatives will take place. First, some of the Cornerstone data is flagged to indicate address information that may not be complete. To resolve this data prior to questionnaire mailing, all affected residents (approximately 1,000) were contacted by telephone to verify potentially incomplete addresses and resolve addresses that fall outside of the Port Colborne city limits.

Finally, using unique addresses from the Property Assessment files, we will conduct a door-to-door census to obtain additional contact information (i.e., name and telephone number). It is anticipated that the door-to-door census will take place in November.

The CHAP team will train the telephone and census staff on the script to be delivered to each household and the specific information to be obtained. They will not be trained in all aspects of the project and will refer any detailed questions to the CHAP toll-free information line.

Visual Identity Program

Since the CHAP communications strategy is a multidimensional approach, we have developed a visual identity for the project. The visual identity is complementary to Ventana's corporate brand but allows for ease of identification for all CHAP-related initiatives. A logo, colour guide and tagline have been developed.



Your community, your health

Information Brochures/Pamphlets

An information brochure will be a key piece of print material that will identify the role of the CHAP, its objectives and various initiatives, and the importance of the project to the community. This piece, along with all public material will be written in friendly, non-threatening language while maintaining professionalism and credibility (see Figure 4).

Stakeholder Feedback Sessions

The CHAP team will meet with key stakeholder groups within the community to provide information, solicit feedback, address concerns and generate community support. Topics that will be discussed will include: community information resources, optimal communications channels/formats, recruitment/retention, etc.

Professional Information Sessions

It is clear that various health professional groups will be instrumental in providing community leadership and support to the CHAP. The project team plans to arrange study information sessions with the doctors, nurses and pharmacists to answer their questions and solicit their support as "champions" for the process. These champions could then be asked for their permission to quote them in various media (i.e. website, newspaper, etc.)

A peer will ideally lead each discussion group (e.g. the nurses' session will be led by a nurse associated with the CHAP project).

Website Postings

The use of the Internet as an information tool is growing in importance. The CHAP-specific website as well as the Ventana website must reflect the commitment to communicate in a clear, consistent and timely manner. The CHAP website will be a source of community information that will include: contact information, the hours of operation of the Health Assessment Centre, lay summaries of the study protocols and links to all public documents. All major search engines should be alerted to the presence of the site. All appropriate links should be investigated and implemented.

Newspaper Advertising and Flyers

Paid advertising will be used as a broad-based information vehicle (see Figure 2). Contacts with the Welland Tribune and Port Colborne Leader have already been established. Where appropriate, the CHAP "look and feel" (branding) should be reflected. The Port Colborne Leader has an average circulation of 2,541 per issue, and the Welland Tribune – 20,000 on average.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and Paid Advertising

Through our association with the PLC and the Community-based Risk Assessment, the CHAP will be eligible to run various PSAs on local radio and television stations. These are usually limited to short duration or text-based messaging, however can be useful as an addendum to traditional paid advertising (see Figure 3).

Because of the competition for PSA space and airtime, the CHAP will also purchase paid advertising time on local radio stations that cover the Port Colborne region.

Earned Media

The value of editorial space cannot be underestimated. Unlike paid advertisements, editorial copy has been vetted by an unbiased third party (the journalist/editor). While there is always the opportunity for misrepresentation, if a strong relationship of openness is established and media training is conducted for all spokespersons, this should be eliminated.

Presentation Package

CHAP information will be packaged for presentation and discussion at schools, community meetings and special events (includes CHAP presentations, information pamphlets and brochures).

News Releases/promotional media

Community news media are important sources of information for all community members. Community news media require information to be provided in an open, frank manner and value accessibility to key information sources (e.g. Ventana scientists). Milestone events and activities will be the focus.

Glossary - "CHAP Terms Explained"

A glossary will provide simple explanations of complex scientific terms used in the various research studies.

Executive Summaries of Studies - "Studies Explained"

Plain language summaries of all CHAP research studies will be prepared and can be supplied to interested parties in print or via the website.

CHAP Newsletter

As the study progresses it will be important to disseminate some of the information to the broader community. For example the first newsletter might focus on how many homes the newsletter was mailed, the second might focus on return rates, etc. The CHAP newsletter would be available on the website as well as in an electronic version that would be made available to individuals on a mailing list. Additionally, hard copies of the newsletter will be available at the CHAP Assessment Centre and to other community outlets.

CHAP Partners

A program that identifies community leaders interested in ensuring and supporting the efforts to involve Port Colborne residents in the CHAP will be coordinated. Individual video testimonials might be offered through the CHAP website.

The Ventana Health Assessment Centre

The CHAP information and study location within the Port Colborne community will be an important awareness and community support vehicle. At specified intervals during the administration of the mail questionnaire, we will staff the Centre in Port Colborne to disseminate additional questionnaires, answer public questions and receive completed questionnaires. This will give us a physical presence in the community and get the residents accustomed to the Assessment Centre.

Media Preparedness Training

Key spokespersons will be given formal preparation for successful interactions with the media and community.

Special Events sponsorships/visibility

Community special events offer unique opportunities for visibility and information-sharing and to support study recruitment efforts.

Study A Recruitment and Communication Strategy

Rationale

Study A will be the first of the studies to enter the field. Because of the nature of the study, it will require a substantial "front-end" communication strategy to raise awareness, disseminate the key messages, elicit feedback, create understanding and eventually to create sense of involvement and willingness to respond. This strategy, while primarily focused on A, will serve to create an underpinning of support for the subsequent community studies.

Overview

Study A is a community mail survey design targeted to all current residents of the City and Municipality of Port Colborne. Every attempt has been made to ensure that we have captured the majority of households for mailing purposes. A series of telephone calls and mailings will be conducted to maximize response rate. In addition to this targeted communication, an awareness campaign of paid advertising, PSAs, flyers etc. will be run simultaneously (see Figure 1).

Tactics

The multidimensional communications plan starts with identifying the full mailing list that will set the study population and the subsequent sampling frame for Study B. The address information from Cornerstone will be verified against property assessment data and discrepancies will be flagged. A team of trained professionals will undertake to verify any suspect addresses prior to the finalization of the mailing list. It is anticipated that through this process we should be able to include in excess of 91% of the residents of the Port Colborne area in the mailing.

Publicity Campaign

Once the mailing list is complete, the first wave of publicity surrounding the project will commence.

A series of weekly newspaper ads in the Port Colborne Leader and Welland Tribune will start with a full-page advertisement announcing the launch of the health questionnaire portion of the CHAP. We hope to solicit the support of Mayor Badawey to give his official endorsement and support to the project. Each week, subsequent 1/4 page ads will be placed with specific messaging that is relevant to the progress and status of the project (see Figure 2).

A news release will be sent out to the National English Network of Canada NewsWire announcing the study and highlighting Ventana's contribution to the Human Health Assessment process.

A series of public service announcements (PSAs) will run for a three-week period on Cogeco Cable 10 in Port Colborne (see Figure 3).

Advance Notice Period

For approximately two weeks prior to the questionnaire mailing, an advance notice campaign will be conducted. This will consist of a mailing to the entire mailing database of a CHAP brochure and introductory letter. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that each member of the mailing list is aware that the questionnaire is coming and to keep their eyes open for it.

Follow-up Period

We have access to a company in the Niagara region that delivers once weekly to every residence in the community without the requirement of address verification. Their distribution is currently to 8744 residential units covering both urban and rural areas. The same messaging from the flyer can be reproduced in poster format for display in high-traffic areas (grocery stores, community centres, etc.). This will happen approximately one week after the questionnaire is mailed to residents.

In the weeks following the questionnaire mailing, two sets of reminder notices will be mailed (approximately weeks 2 and 4 after the mail-out) to encourage residents to complete the questionnaire (wk 2) and in week 4 to determine the household composition and ask the non-responders to indicate their reasons.

In addition, during weeks 3 and 5, individual phone calls will be placed to each of the non-responders to try and achieve the same outcome.

After these formal communications, a door-to-door visit will be made to all non-responder homes. Two attempts on separate days will be made to try to personally contact the non-responders. If the respondents are still unwilling to participate, the canvasser will try to determine the household composition and the reasons for non-response.

Key Messaging

Prior to Questionnaire Mailing

Mailing 1: (Week 0)

- Introduce the CHAP, particularly Study A
- Explain role of Ventana
- Notify recipient of forthcoming mailed questionnaire
- Notify recipient of 1-866 number

Community Notice (Newspaper) (Week 0)

- Notification of mailing
- Contact the CHAP if they don't receive questionnaire

Questionnaire Mailing (Week 1)

After Questionnaire Mailing

Flyer Distribution (Week 2)

Mailing 2:(Week 3)

- Confirm CHAP objectives and importance of full response rate
- What this initiative means to the PC community
- Any questions/problems? Contact the CHAP

Phone Call 1: (Week 4– non-responders only)

- Confirm CHAP objectives and importance of full response rate
- Verify that questionnaire was received. If not, confirm info and re-send
- Verify intention to complete. Offer assistance if required.

Mailing 3: (Week 5 – non-responders only)

- Deadline for completion of questionnaire
- Any questions/problems? Contact the CHAP

Phone Call 2: (Week 6 – non-responders only)

- Verify intention to complete. Offer assistance if required
- If no intention to complete, probe for at least: a) Number of Years of Residence in PC, b) Age/ Gender of each household member

Door-to-Door Census: (Week 7 – non-responders only)

- If no intention to complete, probe for at least: a) Number of Years of Residence in PC, b) Age/ Gender of each household member

Figure 1: Study A - Communication Flowchart

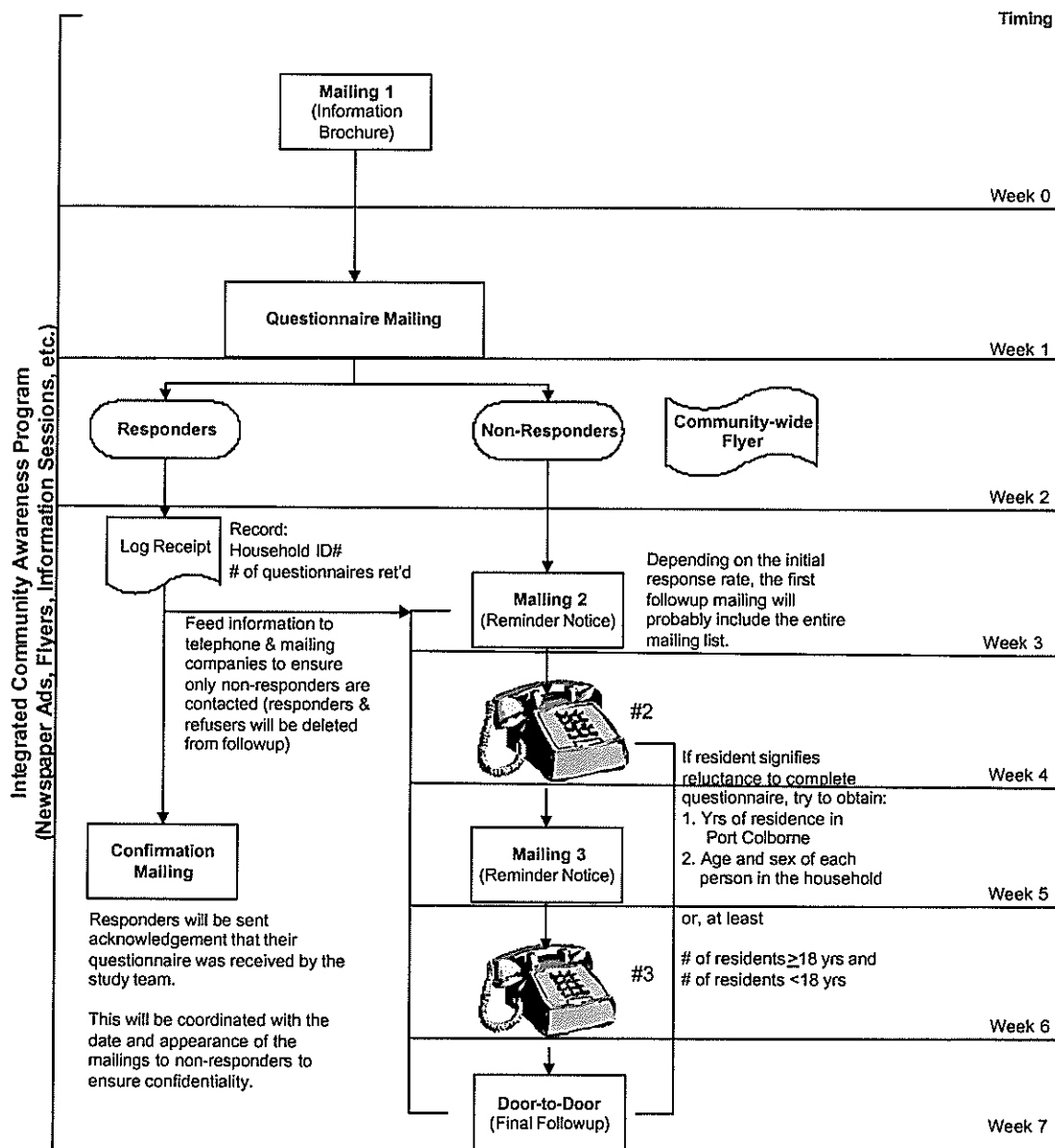



Figure 2: Sample Advertisement

Port Colborne



COMMUNITY HEALTH
ASSESSMENT PROJECT

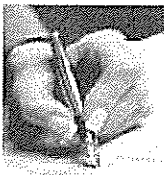
Your community, your health!

What is CHAP?

The Community Health Assessment Project is a series of studies that are being conducted to determine if the general health of the community in Port Colborne is different than in the rest of the province. The first initiative is a comprehensive health questionnaire for everyone currently living in Port Colborne.

Look for your health questionnaire in the mail!

Within the next two weeks, a package of health surveys will arrive at your home – enough for each member of your home. The success of the project depends upon your full participation and interest!



If you do not receive a questionnaire, or for more information on the project, call toll-free 1-866-252-CHAP (2427) or visit www.pc-chap.net

Figure 3: Sample PSA

Cogeco Cable Public Service Announcement – Television Cable 10

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT PROJECT (CHAP) – LOOK FOR YOUR MAIL SURVEY ARRIVING SOON!!! FOR MORE INFO, CALL TOLL-FREE 1-966-252-2427

Figure 4: Draft Information Brochure Text

CHAP – Your community, your health!

What is the CHAP?

The Community Health Assessment Project (CHAP) consists of four separate but related research studies designed to scientifically answer the question: Is the overall health of residents of Port Colborne different than expected when compared to the health of the rest of Ontario?

Study A is a comprehensive health survey that will be mailed to all current residents of Port Colborne that is to be completed for every member of the household. It asks questions about your general physical and mental health, and various chronic health conditions. In the case of children, there are questions about asthma, physical activity and skin conditions. This survey is completely confidential and your name will never appear in any report.

Study B is a series of studies known as "case-control." If warranted based on the findings in Study A, we will identify groups of people that are suspected to have a disease or condition (cases). These people will be compared with a similar group of people who do not have that disease or condition (controls). If there are significant differences, we can see if there are links between these conditions and exposure to certain chemicals that are of concern in the community.

Finally,

Studies C and D are studies that require no additional participation from the community. We will investigate hospital stays for common diseases and rates of cancer in the community, all based on health data previously collected for Port Colborne residents.

Who is Ventana?

Ventana Clinical Research Corporation is designing and conducting the CHAP as a complement to the Community Based Risk Assessment process coordinated by the Port Colborne Public Liaison Committee. Ventana has a track record of completing its research to the highest scientific standards. For more information on the company, please see our website – www.ventana-crc.com

Why are these studies being done?

Due to contamination of areas of Port Colborne with a variety of "Chemicals of Concern" (nickel, arsenic, cobalt and copper) from historical emissions, the community is undergoing a Community Based Risk Assessment. As an important complement to this process, the CHAP creates a bridge between health and science for the people of Port Colborne. While other studies are investigating other concerns such as soil and food contamination levels and indoor air quality, the CHAP is primarily focused on the general health of Port Colborne residents.

What will the studies show?

Through the CHAP process we will get an overall picture of the general health of the people of Port Colborne compared to the rest of the province. In addition, we will determine whether there are variations in the general health between different areas of the city. By conducting these in-depth studies we hope to relate the health of the Port Colborne community to the environmental exposure to nickel, copper, cobalt and arsenic. The final reports from these studies will be available to local officials, health providers and any interested citizens.

How can I participate in the studies?

The success of the CHAP depends upon the participation and interest of all current residents of Port Colborne. We invite to you learn more about becoming involved in the process and what it will mean for your health and your community.

Study A - Copies of the survey will be sent directly to your mailing address and should be completed by everyone in your household. It is very important for the success of the study to get as many responses as possible. If you have moved recently, or for whatever reason haven't received your copy of the questionnaire, or if you require assistance with the questionnaire, please contact us at any of the places listed below.

Study B – If warranted, selected residents of Port Colborne will be asked to take part in the case-control portions of the project. Due to the scientific need to randomly select these participants, they will be contacted directly by project staff. Because of the nature of these studies, we will need to assess both those with and those without disease.

Studies C and D – These studies will be done completely using data previously collected by various agencies and the CHAP. No additional public participation is required.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on the CHAP or for help with the questionnaire, please contact:

Our website	www.pc-chap.net
Our e-mail address	ptcinfo@ventana-crc.com
Our toll-free number	1-866-252-CHAP (2427)
Our Centre in Port Colborne	804 King Street, Port Colborne, ON L3K 4J4 Ph: (905) 834-8104 or (905) 834-8307