



Issues Briefing Note

Service Area: Public Health

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Note Prepared by:

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Issue #1:

Provide a brief description of the significant or emerging issue or new government initiative, including the nature and impact on member municipalities. (The Issues Briefing Note should not exceed two pages.)

Public Health Funding Review. The Public Health Funding Review Working Group was established in 2010 to look at future funding models for public health's mandatory programs in both organized and unorganized areas. The work of this committee was originally to be completed in 2011, but was delayed due to other government priorities. The Working Group has been re-established and will continue its work in 2012. The terms of reference for the Working Group includes the following statement: "The public health funding review is taking place during a fiscally challenging time. No new funding is currently available to implement review recommendations related to funding levels. Neither will existing base funding be reallocated or redistributed to address the review's recommendations regarding funding. Therefore, any funding adjustments will be implemented on an incremental basis using future increases to the overall provincial funding envelope for public health."

The objectives of the funding review are to develop a more needs-based approach to incremental public health funding, to improve funding responsiveness to service needs through the inclusion of equity and population adjustment factors, and to reduce funding inequities among public health units over time.

Next Steps or Action Required:

Provide a brief description of the next steps or action being taken by the Commissioners' group (e.g. continuing to monitor the issue) and/or the next steps/actions requested from the CAOs' group (e.g. write to the Province requesting specific actions)

It is recommended that CAOs monitor and discuss the progress of the funding review with their Medical Officers of Health and consider the implications for their public health unit or department.

Issue #2:

Provide a brief description of the significant or emerging issue or new government initiative, including the nature and impact on member municipalities. (The Issues Briefing Note should not exceed two pages.)

Funding Obligation Clarification. At the June, 2012 meeting of Board of Health Section of ALPHA, the following was presented as a Ministry position regarding funding contributions from the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care and obligated municipalities:

- It is the duty of boards of health to provide or ensure the provision of public health programs and services as required by the HPPA and OPHS. Part of this responsibility includes setting priorities and determining the appropriate allocation of resources.
- Under section 72 of the HPPA, it is the responsibility of obligated municipalities in a public health unit to pay the expenses of a Medical Officer of Health and the board of health.

- The legislative authority for provincial funding to boards of health can be found in section 76 of the HPPA which specifically states “the Minister may make grants for the purposes of this Act on such conditions as he or she considers appropriate.” This funding is discretionary.
- The Ministry has made every effort to ensure appropriate funding for Ontario’s public health system, including uploading the cost of mandatory programs and providing additional growth funding.
- Since 2003, provincial funding for mandatory and related programs has more than doubled (an increase of approximately 143%), including both uploaded costs and increased investments in public health capacity. This increase translates to \$375.3 million, of which 40.6% (or \$152.2 million) is due to upload from a 50:50 to a 75:25 cost-share, and 59.4% (or \$223.1 million) is due to growth.
- The Ministry is currently not in a financial position to increase base budgets over and above any increases the Ministry may approve for mandatory and related programs over the coming years.
- If the board of health’s total eligible costs exceed the Ministry’s approved funding, then the obligated municipalities are responsible for the costs (as per section 72 of the HPPA).
- The Ministry acknowledges that there are many obligated municipalities within the Province that provide funding to boards of health that exceeds 25% of the mandatory programs budget. We appreciate that this is a result of the commitment of boards of health to provide the most appropriate public health programs and services to their communities.

Next Steps or Action Required:

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For your information.

Issue #3:

Provide a brief description of the significant or emerging issue or new government initiative, including the nature and impact on member municipalities. (The Issues Briefing Note should not exceed two pages.)

Public Health Initiatives. The following initiatives are underway in public health:

1. Strategic Planning. Dr. Arlene King, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health is leading the development of a strategic plan for public health in Ontario. Consultations are underway and completion is expected in early 2013.
2. Provincial Immunization Review. A provincial Advisory Committee has been established over the summer to provide advice to the Chief Medical Officer of Health on opportunities to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of Ontario’s publicly-funded immunization system. The first meeting was held on September 25, 2012 and the committee will meet over the next year to inform the ministry’s development of a Five-Year Immunization Plan for Ontario.

Next Steps or Action Required:

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It is recommended that CAOs monitor and discuss the progress of these initiatives with their Medical Officers of Health and consider the implications for their public health unit or department.
