



MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT

REPORT NO. 14-21GC

TO: Chair and Members of the Governance Committee

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health
Emily Williams, CEO (Interim)

DATE: 2021 June 17

2020 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Governance Committee recommend to the Board of Health to receive Report No. 14-21 re: “2020 Occupational Health and Safety Report” for information.

Key Points

- The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) annual report summarizes the health and safety accomplishments, challenges, incidents and activities of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) from the previous calendar year.
- In 2020, the number of employee-reported incidents (34) remained the same when compared to 2019.
- The JOHSC participated in two investigations in relation to two employee-reported incident reports.
- Key accomplishments include providing support to staff during the transition of the move to Citi Plaza and the integration of occupational health and safety measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission in the workplace.

Background

Occupational health and safety is an integral aspect of any successful organization. Ensuring that all workplace parties are aware of their roles and responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) is at the foundation of any health and safety program.

As part of the Occupational Health and Safety Program, the Human Resources Coordinator, Health and Safety, submits an annual report ([Appendix A](#)) summarizing health and safety accomplishments, employee-reported incidents, and activities of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) from the previous calendar year. The annual report is shared with staff at all levels of the organization.

Occupational Health & Safety Incidents

The attached report highlights the functioning of the internal responsibility system, in which each member of the organization has a role to play in supporting occupational health and safety and ensuring the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) is committed to fostering a safe work environment.

Over the course of 2020, there were 34 employee-reported incidents, which is a 0% increase from 2019. The most common employee-reported incidents include workplace violence; slips, trips and falls; and struck with/ caught by/ contact with. The largest increase occurred in workplace violence, with an increase from seven reported incidents in 2019 to 16 in 2020. Nine of these incidents involved agitated clients or persons with no

connection to MLHU yelling at or being verbally aggressive towards MLHU staff. Two of these incidents were threats of physical violence and one was an exercise of physical violence. Of the 16 incidents, no employees were harmed or injured. One investigation was conducted in relation to a threat of violence made towards MLHU staff in February of 2020. Further details of these incident reports are included within [Appendix A](#).

Relocation Considerations and Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention

As employees made the physical move from MLHU's former offices at 50 King Street and 201 Queens Avenue to its new office at Citi Plaza, Occupational Health and Safety supported Operations and Information Technology to ensure that new workstations for employees were set up appropriately to prevent potential musculoskeletal injuries due to poor or awkward postures. Additionally, MLHU employees were offered the opportunity to attend in-person ergonomic coaching sessions. These sessions allowed staff to learn about workstation setup as well as strategies to reduce the risk for injury. As staff transitioned to remote work, virtual coaching sessions were offered to support those with challenges setting up workstations safely at home.

Occupational Health & Safety and the COVID-19 Response

A large focus of 2020 was the integration of public health and hazard control measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace. Not only was safety fully integrated into the Incident Management System Response model, but the Occupational Health and Safety Program gained traction throughout the organization. From supporting strategies for the conservation of personal protective equipment (PPE) to providing workstation setup support for remote work, Health and Safety became integrated into many processes and Health Unit programs. Universal masking, limiting in-person interactions, and active employee and client screening all contributed to the prevention of COVID-19 transmission at MLHU in 2020.

Next Steps

The Occupational Health and Safety program at MLHU and the work of the JOHSC continue to make improvements for the health and safety of all employees through awareness campaigns, ongoing training opportunities, and ensuring legislative compliance. The current investment, made at the end of 2020, of an additional FTE in the Occupational Health and Safety Program has allowed for further integration and enhancement of health and safety at MLHU and is playing an integral role in the set-up of mass immunization clinics in 2021.

This report was prepared by the Human Resources Team, Healthy Organization Division.



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