



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Dr. Gayane Hovhannisyan, Acting Medical Officer of Health
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ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH STANDARDS MODERNIZATION – MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT FEEDBACK

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health:

- 1) Receive Report No. 020-17 for information; and*
- 2) Approve and forward the feedback prepared by the Middlesex-London Health Unit ([Appendix A](#)) to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for their consideration.*

Key Points

- The draft Standards for Public Health Programs and Services is a key document that establishes Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) policy direction regarding public health program and service delivery.
- Due to the potential impact on our current programs and services, extensive staff consultations were initiated to review and provide feedback regarding the positive developments, concerns, areas requiring clarification, potential challenges and program-specific changes.
- The Middlesex-London Health Unit's response will be forwarded to the MOHLTC for their consideration as they finalize the draft standards and begin implementation planning.

Background

As part of the Ontario Government's Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care, public health transformation was identified as one of five key policy goals. An essential component of this transformation is the modernization of the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), which establish the minimum requirements for fundamental public health programs and services to be delivered by Ontario's thirty-six boards of health. This includes assessment and surveillance, health promotion and policy development, disease and injury prevention, and health protection.

MOHLTC released the draft Standards for Public Health Programs and Services in February 2017, coinciding with the Winter Symposium of the Association of Local Public Associations (alPHA).

Public health units and local boards of health have since sprung to action to review the draft Standards from the perspectives of:

- New program/service requirements;
- Opportunities for greater discretion or program changes;
- Areas with reduced expectations;
- Areas with enhanced expectations; and
- Other risks or feedback important for MOHLTC consideration.

Middlesex-London Health Unit Standards Review Process

The OPHS provide the foundation for how public health programs and services are conducted at the Health Unit. As such, it was imperative that all staff had the opportunity to review and provide feedback regarding the draft Standards.

At the beginning of March, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) distributed the draft Standards consultation document, along with a feedback template, to each program manager. The SLT also used the March Town Hall meeting to discuss the draft Standards and share initial reflections with all staff. The managers, at team meetings, reviewed the draft Standards for potential impacts on their programs and services, and gathered additional comments from staff members. This team feedback was then collated by the directors in advance of the March 24 MOHLTC consultation in St. Thomas. At this session, SLT and Board of Health members were able to seek greater clarity regarding these potential impacts.

Further refinement to the MLHU feedback was considered by the SLT and used to formulate a response to be forwarded to the MOHLTC.

Middlesex-London Health Unit Response

Based on the feedback provided by Health Unit staff, information gathered at the MOHLTC consultation session and refinement from the SLT, the MLHU has formulated a response for the MOHLTC to consider as they finalize the draft Standards. This feedback (see [Appendix A](#)) outlines positive developments, concerns, areas that require further clarification, potential implementation challenges and specific comments pertaining to program and services areas in the draft Standards.

Next Steps

Additional feedback from the Board of Health will be consolidated into the response and provided to the MOHLTC as they continue to revise the Standards and begin implementation planning. The Health Unit will continue to engage with the MOHLTC whenever consultation opportunities are available. When the Standards are finalized, any anticipated program and service delivery changes, or other budget and planning considerations to result from the Standards modernization process, will be brought to the Board of Health.

This report was prepared by the Strategic Projects Team, Corporate Services Division.



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