

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health
FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO
DATE: 2018 April 19

SUMMARY INFORMATION REPORT – APRIL 2018

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 022-18 re: “Summary Information Report for April 2018” be received for information.

Key Points

- The Health Unit’s Cannabis Municipal Knowledge Exchange Day on March 28 provided up-to-date information from AMO, MOHLTC, and Ontario’s Cannabis Secretariat, and reinforced the need to work collaboratively to support the implementation of a legalized cannabis system.

Cannabis Legalization Requires Continued Collaboration and Cooperation

The City of London is one of an initial twenty-nine Ontario municipalities scheduled for a stand-alone cannabis store, which would be operational in time for the federal legalization of cannabis later this year. In Ontario, preparations for publicly owned retail store-fronts and government-run online sales are well underway to ensure adequate access to regulated cannabis products across Ontario. A functional retail system is imperative to begin directing consumers away from the illicit market toward a legal supply.

To facilitate dialogue and provide an opportunity for collective local preparation for the legalization of cannabis, the Health Unit hosted a Cannabis Municipal Knowledge Exchange Day, on March 28, for municipal staff and elected officials from across Middlesex County and the City of London, local police services, and delegates invited from neighbouring public health units. Each participant received a package containing information from the federal government, the Government of Ontario, the Association of the Municipalities of Ontario, and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Thirty-six of the sixty-three participants attending the forum completed an evaluation form, providing feedback and identifying issues of particular interest that require further exploration. The results of this evaluation, attached as [Appendix A](#), along with notes collected and collated from the forum’s facilitated question-and-answer period, will be used to help inform and identify local priorities for ongoing work, which the Health Unit will help to support in collaboration with our municipal, enforcement, and community partners.

The City of London has convened a Cannabis Working Group comprised of City staff from planning, licensing, bylaw enforcement, fire prevention, and governmental/external relations, and representatives from London Police Services and the Health Unit. The information collected from our Forum will be taken to future meetings with partners for discussion on required next steps. Internally, Health Unit staff will use this information to help inform the development of a cannabis program plan. A federal policy of this magnitude is complex, and while we can draw upon lessons learned from Washington (state), Colorado, Oregon, Alaska, and countries such as Uruguay and Portugal, the governmental frameworks are varied, and the environmental, political, and social context within which we are legalizing cannabis in Canada is different. To best protect public health and safety, and to respond and adapt to this complex policy change locally, it will be imperative that municipal, enforcement, health, education, and community/social service partners work together and share information, as it becomes available.



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