

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO

DATE: 2018 September 20

SUMMARY INFORMATION REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2018

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 056-18 re: “Summary Information Report for September 2018” be received for information.

Key Points

- Since August 2017, it has not been possible to provide physician-led services in the Sexual Health Clinic on Thursday evenings due to a lack of physician availability. Services remain available to clients at other clinic times. Nursing services continue to be delivered at the clinic on Thursday evenings.
- The Minister of Finance hosted a roundtable discussion with community leaders in London on August 23, 2018, to gather input on considerations related to the privatization of cannabis retail sales. An additional consultation focused on the legal and fiscal issues was conducted in Toronto by the Attorney General and the Minister of Finance. The Health Unit participated, and prepared a written submission, attached as [Appendix A](#).

Sexual Health Clinic Change in Service

The Sexual Health Team operates clinics on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and on Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. On Thursday nights, the clinic provides family planning services to the community. Historically there have been two physicians assigned to the Thursday-night clinic, but due to the reassignment of one physician and the resignation of another, physician-led services have not been provided on Thursdays since August 2017. Despite recruitment of new physicians, none has been available to work on Thursday evenings due to circumstances such as leaves and locums. Services such as pregnancy testing, STI test results, counselling, STI medication, contraceptive, and needle distribution all continue to be delivered at the clinic on Thursday evenings by Public Health Nurses, but we have been unable to provide family planning exams or consultations at that time. Physician-provided exams and consultations are still available to the public at the clinic on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Public Health Considerations Related to the Privatization of Cannabis Retail

On August 13, the Provincial Government announced its intention to privatize the retail sale of cannabis in Ontario. Online access to cannabis in Ontario will be available starting October 17, 2018, with plans to have privately run storefronts ready for operation by April 1, 2019, pending required legislative changes. Prior to the announcement to change the retail framework, the *Ontario Cannabis Act, 2017* (OCA) and the *Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017* mandated a government-run corporation to provide sale and distribution of cannabis in Ontario. A government-run system without commercialization of cannabis sales is in alignment with a public health approach to legalization, which was endorsed by the Middlesex-London Board of Health during the 2017 public consultation process.

To help facilitate this change in direction, the Province conducted a series of consultations in late August to help inform the development of the new private retail system. On August 23, Doug Downey, Parliamentary

Assistant to the Minister of Finance, hosted a roundtable discussion to gather input on how best to create a well-regulated, well-enforced system that protects youth and keeps our roads and communities safe. Health Unit staff prepared a written submission, attached as [Appendix A](#), to provide the Health Unit's perspective pertaining to: types of eligible cannabis-retail businesses and rules by which they would operate; the roles of municipalities; how to protect youth and children; and how to divert consumers from the illegal market. The evidence from alcohol and tobacco control research shows that greater retail access, higher density of outlets, and extended hours of sale contribute to an increase in use and harms. Effective controls at the provincial and municipal levels can minimize these potential harms and help to mitigate the public health concerns related to a privatized cannabis retail market.



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