



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO

DATE: 2018 September 20

PUBLIC HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE 2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health:

- 1. Receive Report No. 059-18 “Public Health Considerations for the 2018 Municipal Election” for information; and,*
- 2. Direct the Medical Officer of Health to send the “Healthy People, Healthy Communities” primer, attached as [Appendix A](#), to all municipal candidates in the Middlesex-London area in advance of the election to profile the role that municipal councils play in influencing individual and community health.*

Key Points

- Decisions made by municipal councils play an important role in influencing individual and community health.
- The *Healthy People, Healthy Communities* primer, attached as [Appendix A](#), provides a list of questions and public health considerations that candidates running in the 2018 municipal election may wish to ask themselves when making decisions about the issues that our community is facing.

Background

Health is influenced by many factors, including genetics, individual lifestyles and behaviours, and the physical, social and economic environments in which we live. The social and physical factors that are beyond an individual’s biology and control, are known as the social determinants of health. Under the Health Equity Standard of the [Ontario Public Health Standards](#), public health units are mandated to address the social determinants of health and decrease health inequities such that “everyone has equal opportunities for optimal health and can attain their full health potential without disadvantage due to social position or other socially determined circumstances”. Health equity means that all individuals, groups, and communities have a fair chance to reach their full health potential without being disadvantaged by social, economic, and environmental conditions.

Public Health Considerations for Municipal Council Decision Making

The next Ontario municipal election will take place on October 22nd, 2018. Decisions made by municipal councils play an important role in impacting the health and well-being of individuals and entire communities. Policies and service delivery decisions made by municipal councils can influence the social determinants of health, including food access, income, housing, employment, education, social cohesion and the physical environment. To profile the role that municipal councils have in building healthy, vibrant and inclusive communities, the *Healthy People, Healthy Communities* primer was created. The primer provides a list of questions and public health considerations that candidates may wish to ask themselves when making decisions about the issues that our community is facing.

Elected officials play a very important role within our community and we depend upon them to make decisions that will improve the health of our community and its residents. The primer asks municipal candidates to think about the different factors that influence the social determinants of health, and the role that they may play as a member of a municipal council who is shaping the policies that may have an unintended or intended public health impact.

Next Steps

With Board of Health approval, Health Unit staff will send the *Healthy People, Healthy Communities* primer, attached as [Appendix A](#), to every candidate in Middlesex County and the City of the London who is running in the 2018 municipal election. By sharing this information, the Health Unit has an opportunity to profile that health and health equity can be achieved through policy decisions that are made outside of the health sector.



Christopher Mackie, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health / CEO