

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie Medical Officer of Health / CEO

DATE: 2019 March 21

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## SUMMARY INFORMATION REPORT – MARCH 2019

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 024-19 re: “Summary Information Report – March 2019” for information.*

### **Key Points**

- Following extensive public and stakeholder consultations and a comprehensive review of the latest evidence, [Canada’s new Food Guide](#), released this past January 22, promotes healthy eating and nutritional well-being, and supports improvements to the Canadian food environment.
- Health Unit staff prepared a submission for consideration by Health Canada (attached as Appendix A) to offer input on the draft regulations related to edible cannabis, cannabis extracts, and topicals.
- Phase One of the Client Experience Survey, with a focus on service-seeking clients, has been successfully launched with results and recommendations expected by the end of 2019.

### **Canada’s New Food Guide**

In late January, Health Canada released its new Food Guide and healthy eating recommendations following an extensive public and stakeholder consultation process. [Canada’s new Food Guide](#) includes guidance on what to eat (e.g., vegetables and fruits, whole grains, protein foods) and how to eat (e.g., cooking more often and eating meals together with others). Health Canada released a suite of resources and interactive tools for individuals, health care professionals, and policy makers, including a Food Guide Snapshot, videos, recipes, and an evidence review.

In addition to dietary guidance for individuals and families to help prevent chronic disease, [Canada’s Dietary Guidelines for Health Professionals and Policy Makers](#) address important public health issues, such as creating supportive environments for healthy eating, the food and beverages available in publicly funded facilities and workplaces, food marketing, environmental sustainability, food literacy, the importance of traditional foods for Indigenous Peoples, and collective action on the social determinants of health. Later in 2019, Health Canada will be releasing material for health professionals and policy makers on healthy eating patterns. These will provide more specific guidance on amounts and types of foods, as well as life stage guidance.

The Health Unit’s Nutrition Practice Group (NPG), comprised of the Health Unit’s Registered Dietitians and their Managers, are promoting the new Food Guide resources and key messages to Health Unit staff, community partners, and community members through various strategies, including a webinar for staff and a social media contest for the public during March Nutrition Month. The NPG is exploring the print resources required to meet the needs of specific programs and priority populations across the Health Unit, and updating Health Unit materials to reflect the new dietary guidelines.

## Health Canada's Consultation on the Edible Cannabis Framework

Between December 20, 2018, and February 20, 2019, Health Canada conducted a [public consultation](#) on the draft regulations for edible cannabis, cannabis extracts, and cannabis topicals. These additional cannabis products will be permitted for legal sale under the federal government's *Cannabis Act* no later than October 17, 2019. Health Unit staff from the substance use, food safety, and nutrition program portfolios worked collaboratively to review the draft regulations and submitted responses to provide input regarding how to minimize the public health and public safety risks related to the sale of these products. The submission ([attached as Appendix A](#)) provided input on the draft regulations including information and evidence related to cannabis product rules, THC limits, packaging and labelling requirements, and guidelines related to quality control of cannabis products. In addition, in collaboration with the Ontario Public Health Collaboration on Cannabis, Health Unit staff contributed to the development of a multi-agency submission ([attached as Appendix B](#)). Health Unit staff will continue to monitor Health Canada's progress on the legalization of edible cannabis, cannabis extracts, and cannabis topicals, and will provide updates to the Board of Health as information becomes available.

## Update on the Client Experience Survey

MLHU's organizational Balanced Scorecard includes the priority area "Client and Community Confidence" aimed at seeking and responding to community input, ensuring that clients and the community know and value our work, and delivering client-centred services. One of MLHU's key strategic initiatives related to this priority is the Client Experience Survey. Following identification of a reliable and validated tool, as well as implementation planning in 2018, Phase One of this project was launched in January 2019. This phase focuses on assessing how service-seeking clients experience MLHU staff. Obtaining and incorporating this feedback will support MLHU to live its organizational values, optimize interactions with clients, and enhance the confidence of service-seeking clients in the Health Unit. Eight teams are participating in Phase One; one has already met its survey quota, another will begin gathering data in April, and the remaining teams have data collection underway. A small incentive is being provided to service-seeking clients to encourage survey participation, which seems to be positively influencing client uptake. Planning for Phase Two of this strategic initiative will begin this month and will focus on the experience of mandated clients, with implementation expected early in 2020. An additional phase is planned for 2020, which will focus on understanding the experiences of clients that speak neither English nor French. This initiative will also enable us to meet Requirement #5 of the Public Health Practice Domain, within the Organizational Requirements outlined in the Public Health Accountability Framework in the [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability](#).



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