



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO

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## **REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY – ACTION PLANNING**

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 048-19 re: “Review of Public Health Services in Middlesex County – Action Planning” for information.*

### **Key Points**

- The Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) made a commitment to review its services in Middlesex County as part of the relocation process.
- A multi-component service review identified stakeholder priorities, current service delivery levels, best practices, and recommendations for improving service.
- Action plans have been prepared for each of the recommendations to ensure that MLHU continues to enhance services to residents of Middlesex County.

### **Background**

A review of services delivered to Middlesex County residents was identified as part of the 2015–20 Strategic Plan. The intention of this review is to align service delivery with the Health Unit’s relocation to Citi Plaza and other strategic initiatives, including Activity-Based Workspaces and Intake Lines.

The Review of Services in Middlesex County is to assess:

- The unique social determinants of health specific to Middlesex County;
- Specific public health issues of importance to Middlesex County;
- Opportunities to integrate with multiple levels of community supports;
- The most important public health challenges and assets in Middlesex County; and
- Best practices for public health program and service delivery to a non-urban population.

The comprehensive report with recommendations was presented to the Board of Health and Middlesex County in the fall of 2018.

### **Overview of the Findings**

Overall, the population of Middlesex County is experiencing good health on a number of measures including teen pregnancy, opioid- and cannabis-related emergency department visits, and life expectancy.

Public health issues that warrant attention include chronic diseases, unintentional injuries, and associated behavioral risk factors.

Best practices that were identified for service delivery to non-urban residents included engaging with community stakeholders; collecting, monitoring, and using local data for service planning; leveraging

community assets; and providing services close to residents via outreach, home visits, physical locations, telehealth, and online.

Findings from surveys of municipal councillors and key informants indicated:

- 85% of councillors are very or somewhat familiar with MLHU programs and services;
- For the health topics that MLHU focuses on, 75% of councillors felt they were extremely important or very important;
- Opioids and drug addiction, immunization, and vector-borne disease were the issues of primary concern to the councillors and their residents; and
- 77% indicated that MLHU programs and services are very accessible or somewhat accessible to residents of Middlesex County.

## **Review Recommendations**

MLHU staff developed recommendations that were reviewed by the Board of Health in the fall of 2018, including:

1. Establishing regular communication channels (delegations, newsletters/correspondence) with all municipal councils (upper- and lower-tier);
2. Enhancing staff and programming presence at the Strathroy office;
3. Exploring a partnership with Middlesex County to use comprehensive libraries for program and service delivery;
4. Ensuring MLHU's planning processes take into consideration the public health needs of Middlesex residents and that staff seek input from Middlesex residents;
5. Developing additional data-sharing agreements with local organizations, as required;
6. Developing a community engagement strategy that includes stakeholders identified during asset mapping;
7. Increasing opportunities to deliver services and connect with Middlesex County residents online, over the phone, and via other non-physical means; and
8. Developing mechanisms for the public to provide feedback on how to improve service delivery.

## **Action Planning**

Specific action items, with assigned leads and expected dates of completion or implementation, were developed by the Senior Leadership Team. These can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## **Next Steps**

MLHU will be sharing the action plans with Middlesex County Council on June 25, and many of the identified action items have commenced or will commence shortly.

This report was prepared by the Healthy Organization Division.



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