

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO

DATE: 2019 November 21

LAUNCH OF UPDATED COMMUNITY HEALTH STATUS RESOURCE

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 069-19 re: “Launch of Updated Community Health Status Resource” be received for information.

Key Points

- As part of the Ontario Public Health Population Health Assessment Standard, boards of health are required to assess and share information externally on the current health status of the local population and subpopulations in order to inform planning of interventions that are responsive to residents’ needs.
- The Middlesex-London Health Unit meets these requirements, in part, through its online [Community Health Status Resource](#).
- All of the Resource’s content has been updated via a strategic project during the period August 2018–November 2019. New content has also been added and internal processes have been established to regularly update the data.
- The Health Unit is uniquely positioned to support our community health partners via our expertise in population health assessment.

Background

Population health assessment is a core function of the public health system and a first step in planning community health programs and services that are responsive to residents’ needs. It considers the health of populations and subgroups, and considers the circumstances that affect residents’ health, such as where they live, level of education, and income.

As part of the Ontario Public Health Population Health Assessment Standard, boards of health are required to assess current health status, health behaviours, preventive health practices, risk and protective factors, health care utilization relevant to public health, and demographic indicators, including assessment of trends and changes. Boards of health must also provide this population health information to the public, community partners, and other health-care providers so that they are aware of relevant and current population health information.

The Health Unit meets these population health assessment requirements, in part, through its online [Community Health Status Resource](#). The Resource was launched in 2012 and was enhanced via a 2018–19 strategic project. The project involves both updating the content of the Resource and embedding practices that will support routine, ongoing updating to ensure the health indicators remain relevant and the information is up-to-date.

Current Project Status

All fifteen topics in the Resource have been updated and published online. These include: 1. Geography and Demographics, 2. Social Determinants, 3. General Health, 4. Injury, 5. Substance Use, 6. Behaviour Risk Factors, 7. Chronic Disease, 8. Oral Health, 9. Infectious Disease, 10. Immunization, 11. Healthy Pregnancy, 12. Birth and Early Development, 13. Child and Youth, 14. Healthy Environments, and 15. Urban Indigenous Health.

Enhancements include:

- Augmenting our assessment of health inequities, where the data permits, by including rural/urban status, education, income, and employment status;
- Partnering with the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre to include data from Our Health Counts London in the Resource (and thereby carrying out a recommendation of the Health Unit's organizational plan for reconciliation);
- Increasing interpretation of findings to focus the reader on the meaning of the results; and
- Including aggregated data tables and technical appendices to support the community's use of population health data.

Internal processes have been established to regularly update the Resource.

Next Steps

Starting in November 2019, promotion of the Resource to key community partners will be undertaken to ensure that partners are aware of this information and integrate it into their planning. Furthermore, accompanying data tables and technical appendices will be completed and published by the end of 2019. Starting in 2020, a four-month planning cycle will be initiated to support routine, ongoing updating of the Resource.

Conclusion

Through population health assessment initiatives such as the Community Health Status Resource, the Middlesex-London Health Unit is uniquely positioned within the local health system to identify groups whose health is at risk and to help identify health system priorities to support the overall health and wellbeing of the whole population.

This report was prepared by the Associate Medical Officer of Health and the Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Team.



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