



Summary
Emergency Health Services and Public Health Modernization Webinar
November 18, 2019
10:00 – 11:00 AM

A live webcast was held on November 18, 2019 to launch the first phase of the Emergency Health Services and Public Health Modernization consultation process, featuring remarks from Christine Elliott, Minister of Health and Deputy Premier; Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health; Alison Blair, Executive Lead for Public Health Modernization; and Jim Pine, Special Adviser, Public Health Modernization; followed by a question-and-answer period moderated by Colleen Kiel, Director (Acting), Strategy and Planning Branch, Ministry of Health.

The following is a summary of key messages. Content has been edited and condensed for clarity and to focus on issues of most interest to alPHa's members. A [recording](#) of the full webcast is available on the [consultation website](#) along with all of the resources referred to therein.

Minister Elliott: Opening Remarks

Minister Elliott characterized this initiative as part of the broader transformation of Ontario's health sector, the goal of which is to ensure that an integrated health system is available to everyone who needs care when they need it. She touched on the progress that has already been made with Ontario Health Teams before introducing the need to ensure that public health and emergency health services are modernized and strengthened in parallel.

She added that municipal partners have clearly communicated the need for a longer and more substantial consultation process, which is what is being launched today. She then introduced the team that will be leading the process to ensure that changes are informed by the expertise and daily experience of those who are on the front lines.

Jim Pine: Remarks

Jim Pine introduced the consultation plan, which he characterized as "resetting the discussion" to gather the best ideas that we can and learn from as many stakeholders as possible throughout the province to modernize these two sectors (EHS and Public Health). He clarified that the consultations for each are being carried out at the same time simply because of their respective integration with the municipal sector. Two separate discussion papers will be released later today, which will outline key challenges (i.e. the "why") and propose some ideas to address them (i.e. the "what").

Timing and location of the consultations are to be determined, and the aim will be to conduct them as part of existing meetings in a variety of settings and locations to make it as convenient for stakeholders as possible. Submissions in writing will also be welcome and there is a dedicated e-mail address to receive these. A survey tool will also be made available and regular updates will be posted on the Connected Care platform (subscribe to these here). He then reported that they are planning to provide a preliminary presentation of what the team has heard to date at the [Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference in January 2020](#).

David Williams: Remarks

Dr. Williams indicated that neither the challenges facing public health nor the prospect of significant change are anything new, and this is another chance to examine the strengths of the existing system and the emerging issues that are confronting it to generate ideas for a vision of what we want the sector to look like in the long-term. The [Discussion Paper](#) will be a core aspect of these discussions, in that it will focus on improving capacity, strengthening alignments with other stakeholders, eliminating duplication and inefficiencies, fostering more consistent priority setting, and ensuring that responses to public health emergencies is robust throughout the province. The team will also be asking stakeholders to provide ideas on the consultation process itself.

Alison Blair: Remarks

Alison Blair focused mainly on the EHS aspect of this consultation. She reiterated that this is in fact a reset and that there are no predetermined outcomes. Please see the recorded webinar if you are interested in more details about this (her remarks begin approximately 20 minutes in).

Colleen Kiel: Q&A

Is there a plan to merge PH and EHS?

No. The discussion papers are separate and the consultations for each are being carried out at the same time simply because of their respective integration with the municipal sector.

Is there consideration of the role of PHO?

Yes. The concept of the “three-legged stool” (Ministry, PHO, local public health) remains foundational and the modernization is expected to touch on all three as part of an iterative process.

What about First Nations and Indigenous communities?

Specific consideration is being given. Please see the memo linked below.

Where and when will consultations take place?

The goal is to start meetings towards the end of this month. Plenty of notice will be provided to allow for proper preparation and every effort will be made to piggyback on existing meetings (e.g. conferences, board meetings etc.). The process itself will be flexible in this regard and ideas about specific timing, locations and engagement with other stakeholders will be welcome. The deadline for submitting responses to the discussion paper questions via the survey tool will be February 10. Initial set of recommendations will likely not happen until early spring 2020.

Will written submissions be accepted?

Written submissions are encouraged and can be transmitted via the ehsphmodernization@ontario.ca e-mail address.

What are the major public health issues now?

Coordination, updating and integration of technology, need for consistency and improving communications to ensure that each part of the system knows what the others are doing. Monitoring of health status is becoming imperative and we need improve the collection and analysis of data for more

timely and decisive responses, better targeting of resources and staff to ensure equity, addressing needs of high-risk groups, and how we apply our epidemiological knowledge to the health care system.

Are the April 2020 dates for implementation that were announced in the 2019 Ontario Budget still valid?

No. We can't implement what we don't know we're implementing.

RESOURCES:

- Consultation Website [English](#) and [French](#) (portal to most of what is included below).
- [Discussion Paper: Public Health Modernization](#)
- [November 18, 2019 Webcast recording](#)
- E-mail address: ehsphmodernization@ontario.ca.
- [Survey Tool](#)
- [Memo to First Nations / Indigenous Communities](#)
- [Sign up here to receive Connected Care updates](#).

alPHA will be making a submission to the consultation and will be requesting feedback from our members to inform it. Please visit [alPHA's Public Health Modernization page](#) to view materials collected to date related to this initiative since the 2019 Budget announcement on April 11.

We hope you find this information useful.