



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO

DATE: 2020 February 27

PUBLIC HEALTH MODERNIZATION – BOARD OF HEALTH SUBMISSION

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health:

- 1) *Receive Report No. 006-20 re: “Public Health Modernization – Board of Health Submission” for information;*
- 2) *Review and approve [Appendix A](#) “Public Health Modernization – Recommendations of the Middlesex-London Health Unit”; and*
- 3) *Direct staff to forward the submission in the various formats available to the Ministry of Health.*

Key Points

- In April 2019, the Ontario government proposed changes to the structure and funding of public health in the province, including amalgamations of local public health units and significant budget reductions. The government has subsequently reevaluated these changes and committed to extensive consultations across the province on how best to transform and strengthen the role of public health.
- In late November 2019, the Ministry of Health released a discussion paper which will frame the conversation about public health modernization. The Ministry has invited input and feedback through written and in-person consultation.
- The Middlesex-London Health Unit has engaged with staff, the Board of Health, and other stakeholders to formulate an organizational response to the discussion paper.

Background

In April 2019, the provincial budget proposed to significantly restructure Ontario’s public health system, including the dissolution of its 35 health units and the creation of 10 new regional public health entities. New boards of health were to be established, and substantial adjustments to provincial-municipal cost-sharing were proposed, as well as a reduction of the overall budget envelope for local public health. Consultations were expected to be held by the Ministry of Health in the summer and fall of 2019.

Subsequently, the provincial government indicated that the proposed amalgamations and budgetary changes required further consideration and confirmed the need for robust and broad consultation. It has been specifically noted that there are no pre-determined outcomes from this consultation process and that all reasonable options will be considered. This work is being led by Jim Pine, Special Advisor, Alison Blair, Executive Lead for Public Health Modernization, and Dr. David Williams, the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

The consultations were launched on November 18, 2019 via a webinar and the release of a discussion paper. The Ministry has invited input and feedback through written and in-person consultations with public health and municipal stakeholders. Written responses are due for submission by February 10, 2020. The Ministry recommendations will be developed in Spring 2020.

Development of a Response to the Submission.

Previous efforts and reflections on the structure and function of local public health have informed MLHU's response during this consultative process. In July 2019, the Board of Health approved a response paper titled Keeping Middlesex-London Safe and Healthy to be forwarded to the Minister of Health, other boards of health and relevant stakeholders ([Report No. 053-19](#)). Previous reports of relevance to this process include Review of Public Health Services in Middlesex County ([Report No. 055-18](#)) and What Makes a High Performing Health Unit? A Research Report to Inform Strategic Planning ([Report 01-15GC Appendix C](#)). Additionally, in identifying themes for feedback to the Ministry, staff reviewed dozens on previous reports on public health in Ontario.

Five consultations with staff, management, and a Board of Health and Senior Leadership Team session were conducted in January 2020 to develop the MLHU response and recommendations. Over 100 staff and board members attended the consultations or emailed feedback they felt should be included. The recommendations are summarized in [Appendix A – Public Health Modernization – Recommendations of the Middlesex-London Health Unit](#).

Next Steps

The Middlesex-London Health Unit will continue to actively engage in consultation opportunities that arise and advocate for the recommendations put forward in the submission. The province expects that decisions on public health modernization will be announced in the late spring of 2020.

This report was prepared by the Healthy Organization Division and the Associate Medical Officer of Health.



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