



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Dr. Alexander Summers, Medical Officer of Health  
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## MLHU 2022 VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES OPERATIONAL PLAN

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 24-22, re: “MLHU 2022 Vaccine Preventable Diseases Operational Plan” for information.*

### **Key Points**

- As of March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 91.6% of individuals 12 years of age and older have completed their primary COVID-19 vaccine series; of individuals 5 to 11 years of age, 46.8% have completed their primary series.
- Additional COVID-19 booster doses will likely be required in 2022, and MLHU must maintain infrastructure and health human resources to respond to episodic increases in demand for the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The *MLHU 2022 Vaccine Preventable Diseases Operational Plan* articulates the strategic vision and operational plan to guide the Middlesex-London Health Unit’s (MLHU) distribution and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine. It also outlines the integration of COVID-19 immunization operations with non-COVID-19 immunization operations.
- During periods of low demand for COVID-19 vaccine, MLHU will leverage operational resources to maximize non-COVID-19 immunization coverage of school-age children, as well as ensure broad and equitable access to the influenza vaccine in the fall of 2022.

### **Background**

The first laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19 in Middlesex-London was reported to the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Since that first case and the declaration of the pandemic on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, MLHU operations have evolved and adapted to address the case and contact management and vaccination needs of the community.

Vaccines were introduced to Middlesex-London in December of 2020. Under the strategic and operational leadership of MLHU, by January of 2022 over 1,116,000 vaccines have been delivered in the region. Distribution of the vaccine started in December 2020 through the mass immunization clinic at the Western Fair Agriplex, operated by the London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC). In the months to follow, MLHU added three more mass immunization sites (Caradoc Community Center in Mt. Brydges, and Earl Nichols Arena and North London Optimist Community Centre in London), and operated a significant number of mobile and pop-up clinics. In October 2021, MLHU took over operations of the Agriplex clinic. Additionally, MLHU created and implemented a vaccine distribution program to onboard, train, and provide vaccine to long-term care homes, retirement homes and primary care clinics. Along with pharmacy partners, these strategies have resulted in very high vaccination rates in the region; as of March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 91.6% of individual 12 years of age and older have completed their primary COVID-19 vaccine series and of individuals 5 to 11 years of age, 46.8% have completed the primary series.

## MLHU 2022 Vaccine Preventable Diseases Operational Plan

The *MLHU 2022 Vaccine Preventable Diseases Operational Plan* ([Appendix A](#)) articulates the strategic vision and operational plan to guide the Health Unit's distribution and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine. It also outlines the integration of COVID-19 immunization operations with non-COVID-19 immunization operations.

Due to waning immunity and the anticipated emergence of new COVID-19 variants, additional COVID-19 booster doses will be required in 2022 and beyond. MLHU must maintain infrastructure and health human resources to respond to episodic increases in demand for the COVID-19 vaccine. The Vaccine Preventable Disease (VPD) Team, within the Environmental Health and Infectious Diseases Division, has been restructured and expanded to meet this demand. A critical focus has been the hiring and development of leadership staff, as well as the cross-training of front-line staff. The team is operationally responsible for all the Ontario Public Health Standards and Protocols referencing or pertaining to immunization, including the administration and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

During periods of low demand for COVID-19 vaccine, MLHU will leverage operational resources to maximize non-COVID-19 immunization coverage of school-age children, as well as ensure broad and equitable access to the influenza vaccine in the fall of 2022. During the pandemic, portions of the routine work of the VPD team were minimally maintained or put on hold, including the screening of school-age children to ensure adherence with the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA). With the periodic decrease in demand for COVID-19 vaccine, the additional health human resources will be used to screen students to ensure they are up-to-date in regards to all vaccines required under the ISPA, as well as provide expanded opportunities for vaccination through school-based mobile clinics and the mass immunization clinics (MICs). The VPD team will also offer expanded access to the influenza vaccines in the fall of 2022 through the MICs.

### Moving Forward

Vaccination is a key public health intervention in the prevention of infectious diseases and has been integral to mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, MLHU is prepared to respond to fluctuating needs and demands to administer and distribute the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as increase immunization coverage for critical non-COVID-19 vaccines. The *MLHU 2022 Vaccine Preventable Diseases Operational Plan* ensures that the VPD Team is prepared to pivot and adjust to the needs of the community.

Beyond 2022, the role of a local public health unit in the administration and distribution of vaccines, such as the COVID-19 vaccine, is not yet known. Health Unit leadership will continue to seek clarity from provincial officials and adjust operational parameters as required.

This report was prepared by the Environmental Health and Infectious Diseases Division.



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