



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Dr. Alexander Summers, Medical Officer of Health
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MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 61-22, re: “Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) Leadership Development Program,” for information.

Key Points

- The Leadership Development Program, supported by the Senior Leadership Team, provides professional learning and development opportunities for leaders to increase their leadership knowledge and skills which affect performance and productivity.
- The recommendations for the Leadership Development Program are the result of the Leading MLHU framework, originally developed in 2015 from surveys, academic literature review, and environmental scans.
- The Leadership Development Program assesses and aligns programs and learning opportunities with leadership domains and core competencies of public health.

Background

“People Reaching Their Potential” is not only MLHU’s vision for ensuring the health of the community, but also includes MLHU employees and ensuring they have an opportunity to grow and develop. In 2022, the Health Unit Senior Leadership Team (SLT) added “kindness” as the cornerstone to everything done at MLHU. This includes providing additional learning opportunities for leaders that promote self-reflection, respect, and inclusion.

In 2015, the Leading MLHU framework was developed from an internal survey of leaders, academic literature review, and environmental scans. Focusing on the outcomes identified, the goal was to use the Leading MLHU framework to enhance the Leadership Development Program.

Between March 2020 and January 2022, MLHU responded to the pandemic and increased leadership support. The Non-Union Leadership Team increased from approximately 40 to 70 leaders across the organization. Many of these leaders were front-line staff who demonstrated leadership potential but did not have any leadership training and had to learn many leadership skills on the job.

Leadership Development Program

The Leading MLHU framework was used to build and refine the leadership development curriculum, develop assessment tools and strategies to measure success, and identify new gaps in knowledge, skills and attitudes that are affecting performance or productivity.

The learning and development opportunities outlined in the Leadership Development Program align with the public health core competencies, leadership competencies, and diversity and inclusion initiatives. The main domains of the program include:

1. Leadership;
2. Effective Management;
3. Strategic Awareness;
4. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving;
5. Leading Change;
6. High Performance Teams; and
7. Foundational Public Health Knowledge.

These competencies will be developed/enhanced through the following program offerings:

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment;
- Vital Learning: Crucial Conversations and Crucial Accountability;
- Managing in a Unionized Environment; and
- LEADS learning series (for experienced leaders).

The academic literature from the Leading MLHU report in 2015 highlighted the need for both leadership and management skills. The articles reviewed helped inform and build the Leading MLHU framework.

Themes from the academic literature review noted:

- Leadership as an essential component for organizational performance.
- Management is different from, and is a precursor to, leadership.

This remains MLHU's philosophy when staff are promoted internally or hired externally into a manager or leadership role, but there is a need to consider developing future leaders with leadership skills prior to becoming a manager. The Health Unit also has staff that, while they do not have direct reports, still have considerable influence and lead projects and/or committees. These employees need to understand both transactional (managerial skills) and transformational leadership skills.

Next Steps

Learning opportunities will continue to be delivered through a variety of methods including in-class, online, blended, and one-on-one coaching. There will be a mix of programs offered internally through an MLHU trained facilitator, as well as external offerings through partner agencies. The Leadership Development Program will continue to be evaluated and strengthened through its delivery methods and course work considering balancing learning time with program duties, and aligning with current challenges, strategies, values, and the vision of the organization.

Leaders will be identified and enrolled in the Leadership Development Program according to their level of experience. The program is a progressive learning strategy allowing leaders to complete specific requirements within a timeline; leaders will advance to the next level of learning when the previous learning requirements are completed.

Employees who have demonstrated the ability to lead or have expressed an interest in developing leadership skills may be enrolled in the Future Leaders courses to increase their knowledge and skills.

This report was prepared by the Healthy Organization Division.



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