

Middlesex-London Board of Health External Landscape Review – May 2023

The purpose of this briefing note is to inform MLHU Board of Health members about what is happening in the world of public health and impacts to the work of the MLHU and Board. This includes governance and legislative changes, news from other local public units, external reports on important public health matters, learning opportunities and MLHU events. **Please note that items listed on this correspondence are to inform Board members and are not necessarily an endorsement.**

Local Public Health News

New Acting Medical Officer of Health in Windsor-Essex

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) Board of Health is pleased to announce the appointment of **Dr. Mehdi Aloosh** as the region's new Acting Medical Officer of Health (Acting MOH), effective May 1. Dr. Aloosh brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position as a public health and preventive medicine specialist, and a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. His academic credentials include completing his training in public health and preventive medicine, as well as family medicine, at McMaster University, and obtaining a Master's in Epidemiology from McGill University.



To view the full media release, [please visit the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit's website.](#)

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Board supports collaboration and connection with other public health units in the province and encourages the MLHU's Medical Officer of Health to work with other Medical Officers of Health as necessary for advocacy and idea sharing.

National, Provincial and Local Public Health Advocacy



World Health Organization

World Health Organization (WHO) declares COVID-19 public health emergency over

On May 5, 2023, the World Health Organization's Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declared the end of the COVID-19 global public health emergency.

The WHO Director-General concurred with the advice offered by the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR) Emergency Committee regarding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. He determined that COVID-19 is now an established and ongoing health issue which no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC).

While the global risk assessment remains high, there is evidence of reducing risks to human health driven mainly by high population-level immunity from infection, vaccination, or both; consistent virulence of currently circulating SARS-CoV-2 Omicron sub-lineages compared to previously circulating Omicron sub-lineages; and improved clinical case management. These factors have contributed to a significant global decline in the weekly number of COVID-19 related deaths, hospitalizations, and admissions to intensive care units since the beginning of the pandemic. While SARS-CoV-2 continues to evolve, the currently circulating variants do not appear to be associated with increased severity.

To view the full media release, [please visit the World Health Organization's Newsroom online.](#)

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The COVID-19 pandemic was first declared on March 11, 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO). As a result, almost all aspects of life were impacted, especially how public health operates. The Board has supported the activities MLHU had to do in order to support the community during the pandemic and pivoting of work. With the declaration of the pandemic being over, the Board and MLHU together can begin strategic activities to rebuild, recover and refresh.

Ontario Welcomes Major Investment to Manufacture More Vaccines in Cambridge

On May 4, 2023, the Ontario government has secured a multi-million-dollar investment from Moderna Inc. to expand vaccine manufacturing. The Ontario government is supporting the project with a \$4 million investment through the Ontario Together Fund. Moderna is partnering with Novocol Pharma to add new manufacturing capabilities in their Cambridge facility that will complete the final steps of preparing and packaging respiratory mRNA vaccines for distribution in Ontario and throughout Canada.



To view the full media release, [please visit the Ontario \(Office of the Premier\) Newsroom online.](#)

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

Supporting vaccination to prevent diseases in the community is vital to public health work in Middlesex-London. With a new facility creating mRNA vaccines in Southwestern Ontario will allow for more hospitals, primary care providers and public health units to have more access to vaccine to serve the community.

Government of Canada
Gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Government of Canada announces close to \$857,000 to support maternal mental health on World Maternal Mental Health Day

On May 4 which is World Maternal Mental Health Day and during Mental Health Week in Canada, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, announced close to \$857,000 in funding to three organizations for their projects in support of maternal mental health.

Health Canada will provide \$372,000 to the Women's College Hospital to develop national clinician guidelines for perinatal mood disorders. Public Health Agency of Canada will provide \$279,000 to the Canadian Mothercraft Society to promote secure attachment between mothers and their children and \$206,000 to the Families Matter Society of Calgary to lead projects aimed at promoting positive mental health by increasing access to support services for Black parents struggling with perinatal mood disorders.

To view the full media release, [please visit the Government of Canada Newsroom online.](#)

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Middlesex-London Health Unit's Healthy Start division works hard to promote maternal mental health and provide supports for new mothers who are experiencing mood disorders. MLHU initiated a social media campaign during Maternal Mental Health Week. The Board has previously supported mental health initiatives and it is reassuring to see funding being provided by Health Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada to promote research and guidelines to better support individuals in the community.