

## Middlesex-London Board of Health External Landscape Review – April 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

#### **Mpox in Ontario: May 1, 2022 to March 28, 2023**



Public Health Ontario and Ontario Health have released a new epidemiological summary on Mpox in Ontario, which is divided by public health unit.

To view the full report, [please visit Public Health Ontario's website](#).

#### **Impact to MLHU Board of Health**

The Board of Health was provided an update on the 2022 Mpox Outbreak in Middlesex-London from the Infectious Disease Control team. This report from Public Health Ontario provides further information regarding confirmed cases in each public health unit.

### National, Provincial and Local Public Health Advocacy

#### **2023 Ontario Budget**



On March 23, 2023, the Province of Ontario released the 2023 Ontario Budget. Highlights of the budget related to community and social services include:

- Investing an additional \$33 million over three years to add 100 undergraduate medical student seats beginning in 2023, as well as 154 postgraduate medical training seats to prioritize Ontario residents trained at home and abroad beginning in 2024 and going forward.
- Starting in fall 2023, expanding the program to allow pharmacists to prescribe over-the-counter medication for more common ailments, including mild to moderate acne, canker sores, diaper dermatitis, yeast infection, pinworms and threadworms, and nausea and vomiting in pregnancy.
- Investing \$1 billion over three years to get more people connected to home care.
- Investing \$22 million to hire up to 200 hospital preceptors to provide mentorship, supervision and training to newly graduated nurses, \$15 million to keep 100 mid-to-late career nurses in the workforce and \$4.3 million to help at least 50 internationally trained physicians get licensed in Ontario.
- Providing an additional \$425 million over three years to support mental health and addictions services, including a five per cent increase in the base funding of community-based mental health and addictions services providers funded by the Ministry of Health.
- Investing \$170 million over three years to support the Ready, Set, Go program to help youth achieve financial independence through life skills development, supports to pursue postsecondary education, training and pathways to employment.

To view the full 2023 Ontario Budget, [please visit the Ontario Budget website](#).

#### **Impact to the MLHU Board of Health**

The Board of Health (along with Boards of Health for other public health units) are actively advocating for increased financial support to provide crucial public health programming for the communities they serve. Without adequate funding received, work outlined in the *Ontario Public Health Standards* will not be reached to its full potential. Public health is different than health care, and the Board has advocated to the Province for more public health service funds previously.

## 2023 Canada Budget

On March 28, 2023, the Government of Canada released the 2023 Canada Budget. Highlights of the budget related to public health, community and social services include:



- Investing \$198.3 billion to reduce backlogs, expand access to family health services and ensure provinces and territories can provide the high quality and timely health care.
- Investing \$46.2 billion in new funding to provinces and territories through new Canada Health Transfer measures, as well as tailored bilateral agreements to meet the needs of each province and territory, personal support worker wage support, and a Territorial Health Investment Fund.
- This funding is to be used to improve and enhance the health care Canadians receive, and is not to be used by provinces and territories in place of their planned health care spending.
- The federal government will also work with Indigenous partners to provide additional support for Indigenous health priorities by providing \$2 billion over ten years, which will be distributed on a distinction basis through the Indigenous Health Equity Fund.
- Invest \$13 billion over five years, starting in 2023-24, and \$4.4 billion ongoing, to Health Canada to implement the new Canadian Dental Care Plan. The plan will provide dental coverage for uninsured Canadians with annual family income of less than \$90,000, with no co-pays for those with family incomes under \$70,000. The plan would begin providing coverage by the end of 2023 and will be administered by Health Canada, with support from a third-party benefits administrator.
- Invest \$250 million over three years, starting in 2025-26, and \$75 million ongoing, to Health Canada to establish an Oral Health Access Fund. The fund will complement the Canadian Dental Care Plan by investing in targeted measures to address oral health gaps among vulnerable populations and reduce barriers to accessing care, including in rural and remote communities.
- Invest \$36 million over three years, starting in 2024-25, to Health Canada to renew the Sexual and Reproductive Health Fund. This fund supports community-based organizations that help make access to abortion, as well as other sexual and reproductive health care information and services, more accessible.
- Invest \$359.2 million over five years, starting in 2023-24, with \$5.7 million ongoing and \$1.3 million in remaining amortization, to support a renewed Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy, which would guide the government's work to save lives and protect the health and safety of Canadians. This includes funding for community supports, prevention programs, supervised consumption sites, and action to tackle drug trafficking.
- Invest \$158.4 million over three years, starting in 2023-24, to the Public Health Agency of Canada to support the implementation and operation of 988. As of November 30, 2023, Canadians will be able to call or text 988 at any time to access quality, effective, and immediate suicide prevention and mental health crisis support.

[To view the full 2023 Canada Budget, please visit the Canada Budget website.](#)

### Impact to the MLHU Board of Health

The Board of Health has supported initiatives related to health equity, oral health, sexual health, mental health resources and work involving the opioid crisis in Middlesex-London. With funding at a scarcity for these services, it is vital that the Government of Canada is looking to invest in areas where funding has fallen short for local public health units.

## MLHU Events



### Canadian Public Health Week at MLHU

On April 6, 2023, MLHU celebrated Canadian Public Health Week! For the second year in a row, the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) is highlighting the many contributions of public health professionals and agencies in our country, highlighting the many ways public health plays a key role in promoting and protecting the health of Canadians coast-to-coast. Canadian Public Health Week ran from April 3-7, 2023.

As part of Canadian Public Health Week this year, the CPHA has launched a "Did you know..." campaign on social media. The effort aimed at increasing the public's awareness and knowledge of public health services in our communities. As part of this effort, MLHU has posted key facts about public health in London and Middlesex County, as well as photos of our staff members in action in our community on social media.

For more information about Canadian Public Health Week, [please visit the Canadian Public Health Week website.](#)

**Impact to MLHU Board of Health**

Canadian Public Health Week highlights the work of public health across Canada and celebrates the work that MLHU staff do to support the Middlesex-London community. The Board of Health recognizes, acknowledges and supports MLHU staff in their work!