

Middlesex-London Board of Health External Landscape Review – December 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



Algoma
PUBLIC HEALTH
Santé publique Algoma

Algoma Public Health votes for study on merger with Public Health Sudbury and Districts

On November 22, the Board of Health for Algoma Public Health (APH) voted in favour of engaging a company with Public Health Sudbury and Districts (PHSD) to explore the feasibility of a merger.

Medical Officer of Health for Algoma, Dr. Jennifer Loo noted that “if the province were to mandate a merger, the feasibility study would at least prepare the two health units for what that would look like.”

To learn more, visit the [Algoma Public Health website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

On August 22, 2023, the Ontario Ministry of Health (through Minister Sylvia Jones) announced their plan to invest in a stronger public health sector. One of the avenues was to provide financial incentives to public health units wishing to begin a voluntary merger process. Boards of Health will need to determine if a merger with another health unit is beneficial to serving the community further. As of this date, 2 health units (Porcupine and Timiskaming) have announced a merger.

National, Provincial and Local Public Health Advocacy

Public Health Ontario Challenged by Lack of Clear Roles, Consultation on Key Decisions and Co-ordination on Priority Research Projects



Office of the
Auditor General of Ontario

On December 6, the Ministry of the Auditor General (Ontario) released its Annual Report and value-for-money audits. One of these audits included [Public Health Ontario](#).

The following findings in summary were found:

- Public Health Ontario Not Leveraged to Achieve Full Capacity and Potential
- Public Health Ontario Laboratory Not Operating Efficiently
- Poor Procurement Governance Due to Weak Policies and Lack of Enforcement
- Efforts to Collect Better Data on Performance Indicators Need Improvement

To learn more, the full audit of [Public Health Ontario on the Office of the Auditor General's website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

One of the conclusions from the audit is that “Public Health Ontario does not yet sufficiently collaborate with the Ministry of Health and local public health units to clearly define and ascertain the agency’s role in areas such as undertaking public health research, disseminating knowledge, and delivering public health laboratory services.” The Board of Health if desired may advocate for more collaboration and funding to support the important work of public health.



2024 Budget Consultations

The Province is seeking ideas from workers, families, business owners and communities on the 2024 Budget.

To learn more, visit the [Ontario 2024 Budget website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Board of Health has made decisions on restructuring in order to be able to continue vital public health programming while conducting intervention-based work. Providing feedback to the Province on the budget is important for providing impacts of the lack of sufficient public health funding.

2023 Fall Symposium – Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa)

On November 24, the Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Chief Executive Officer, Medical Officer of Health and Associate Medical Officer of Health attended the 2024 Fall Symposium, hosted by aLPHa and the Eastern Ontario Health Unit.



Topics that were discussed included:

- Reflections from Southwestern Public Health's Merger
- aLPHa Strategic Plan Session
- Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010 (ONCA) Update
- Public Health Ontario Update

To learn more, visit the [Association of Local Public Health Agencies' website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

aLPHa provides many resources, networking and advocacy opportunities for board members in the province. It is critical for Board Members to engage with advocacy partners, especially during this time of fiscal challenge.

MLHU News



MLHU Set to Close Western Fair District COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Clinic on December 16, 2023

After three years of operation at the Western Fair District, the Middlesex-London Health Unit's (MLHU) mass vaccination clinic will be permanently closing on December 16, 2023. The clinic first opened in partnership with London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) at the Western Fair District Agriplex in December 2020 and relocated to the Western Fair District's main building in October 2022, operating for a total of 518 clinic days between the two locations, and provided 235,407 doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

Where and how to book an appointment after December 16:

1. Pharmacies: Please contact the pharmacy directly to confirm about vaccine availability and to book an appointment. For a list of participating pharmacies, visit: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/vaccine-locations>
2. Healthcare Provider: Check with your Healthcare Provider about vaccine availability and book directly with their office.

Please visit the Health Unit's webpage on [COVID-19](#) to learn more.

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Board of Health thanks all who worked and attended the Western Fair Vaccination Clinic and assisted in vaccine delivery or had a vaccine. The Board of Health notes that the Western Fair Vaccination Clinic has not been built into the 2024 budget, as this was funded by the COVID-19 funding through the Province of Ontario, which has been discontinued.