

Middlesex-London Board of Health External Landscape Review – May 2025

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

Ontario

Health minister, premier defend Ontario's response to worsening measles outbreak

Measles continues to spread in Ontario, with criticism being held against the Province of Ontario's management of the measles virus on May 7.

Liberal health critic Dr. Adil Shamji, an emergency room physician, said he was flabbergasted by Jones's comments. "It is inexplicable to me, absolutely inexplicable to me that the Minister of Health could stand at a press conference this morning and say that the government's measles response is working," he said.

The government needs to significantly increase its public education on the problem, he added.

"I have always found that patients, when given the right tools, the right information and the right recommendation, ultimately do the right thing," he said.

In a statement, NDP Leader Marit Stiles said the province is failing in its effort to contain the virus.

"Mother's Day is coming this weekend, and families are worried about accidental exposure for vulnerable kids and loved ones. But in the face of the worst outbreak in decades, the government's approach is clearly not working," Stiles said.

To read the full news article, please visit CBC's [website](#).

Canada could lose its measles elimination status if spread lingers, PHAC advisor says



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Dr. Marina Salvadori, a Pediatrics and Infectious Disease physician advisor to the Public Health Agency of Canada warned of the possibility on May 8 as cases in Ontario grew by nearly 200 infections, adding that would only occur if prolonged spread continued beyond mid-October 2025. Measles elimination is the absence of continuous disease transmission for 12 months or more in a geographic area. Canada achieved that status in 1998.

"That could happen. But I think that when people hear 'lose elimination status,' they have a lot of fear that measles will re-establish itself again and be common, and we will all be exposed to it through the next decades," said Salvadori, noting it does not have to mean measles is here to stay.

To read the full news article, please visit The Canadian Press' [website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

Through the leadership of the Medical Officer of Health and Associate Medical Officer of Health, the Board of Health continues to monitor the measles activity in the region. As of May 6, there have been 34 confirmed cases of measles in the Middlesex-London region.

**'The way of the future': WDG Public health leading the way in AI adoption**

The Board of Health for Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph were presented with a [report at their May 7 meeting](#) on ways that artificial intelligence (AI) is being used locally in their public health unit.

The report noted five (5) innovations that the health unit is using AI for:

- AI-Powered Vaccine Record Processing System
- GitHub Copilot for Code Development for productivity
- AI Voicemail Processing for Client and Community Support
- AI Processing of Reportable Disease Lab Results
- ISPA Notification and Measles Risk Letters

At this time, WDG are the only public health unit in Ontario using AI to this extent within their operations.

To read the full news article, please visit Guelph Today's [website](#) and to Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph's Board of Health report, please visit WDG's [website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

At this time, the Middlesex-London Health Unit is exploring different ways of using artificial intelligence (AI). A pilot of an AI product from Telus is planned, with selection of teams to trial the software underway. The Board of Health will continue to be updated on the use of AI within the organization as trends increase.

National, Provincial and Local Public Health Advocacy**Ontario Taking Next Steps to Protect Primary Care**

On May 7, the Ontario government introduced the *Primary Care Act, 2025*. This legislation, if passed, will make Ontario the first Canadian jurisdiction to establish a framework for its publicly funded primary care system so that people in Ontario know what they can expect when accessing primary care services. This legislation is part of the government's Primary Care Action Plan (lead by Dr. Jane Philpott), which will connect two million more people to publicly funded primary care in the next four years.



The *Primary Care Act, 2025* sets out six clear objectives for Ontario's publicly funded primary care system which will ensure people know what they can expect when connecting to primary care:

- **Province-wide:** Every person across the province should have the opportunity to have ongoing access to a primary care clinician or team.
- **Connected:** Every person should have the opportunity to receive primary care that is coordinated with existing health and social services.
- **Convenient:** Every person should have access to timely primary care.
- **Inclusive:** Every person should have the opportunity to receive primary care that is free from barriers and free from discrimination.
- **Empowered:** Every person should have the opportunity to access their personal health information through a digitally integrated system that connects patients and clinicians in the circle of care.
- **Responsive:** The primary care system should respond to the needs of the communities it serves and everyone should have access to information about how the system is performing and adapting.

To read the full media release, please visit the Ontario Government's [newsroom](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Board of Health, the MOH and CEO look forward to reviewing the plans for primary care development in Ontario, specifically in Middlesex-London if the proposed legislation is passed in the Legislature. Many clients of the MLHU do not have access to a primary care physician, and health outcomes may be improved for these clients with regular access to primary care.