

Middlesex-London Board of Health External Landscape Review – October 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



Health
Canada

Santé
Canada

Health Canada authorizes Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine targeting the Omicron XBB.1.5 subvariant

Health Canada has authorized the use of the Moderna SPIKEVAX™ and Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine targeting the Omicron XBB.1.5 subvariant for people six months of age and older.

Health Canada received both Pfizer and Moderna's submission for its new COVID-19 vaccine on June 29, 2023. After a thorough, independent review of the evidence, Health Canada has determined that the vaccine meets the Department's stringent safety, efficacy and quality requirements.

To learn more, visit [Health Canada's newsroom](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The MLHU declared the start of respiratory season on October 5th, and the community will be seeking COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations. MLHU began vaccinating high risk individuals October 6th at the Western Fair Vaccine Clinic.

Characteristics of Substance-Related Toxicity Deaths in Ontario: Stimulant, Opioid, Benzodiazepine and Alcohol-Related Deaths



On September 14, Public Health Ontario and the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network released a report titled "Characteristics of Substance-Related Toxicity Deaths in Ontario". This report goes into detail the data of local substance related deaths and their impacts.

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

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

Opioid use has impacted the Middlesex-London community greatly, and staff will be speaking more to this topic in Report No. 58-23 at the October Board of Health meeting.



HASTINGS PRINCE EDWARD
Public Health

HPEPH exploring potential mergers with other health units

At the October 4 Board of Health meeting, the Board of Health for Hastings Prince Edward moved a motion to explore the voluntary merger process. No formal discussions with other health units have been made at this time, although the neighbouring health unit is Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington.

To learn more, visit [the Quinte News' 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 their community. As of this date, 2 health units (Porcupine and Timiskaming) have announced a merger for January 1, 2024.

National, Provincial and Local Public Health Advocacy**Association of Local Public Health Agencies 2023 Fall Symposium**

On November 24, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA) will be hosting their annual Fall symposium. This will include section meetings, presentations by subject matter experts from areas within public health, updates from provincial public health partners, and other sessions relevant to public health.

To learn more, visit ALPHA's [website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

MLHU Delegates (Board Chair, Vice Chair, Chief Executive Officer and Medical Officer of Health) will be attending the fall symposium and representing the MLHU at Board of Health, Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health and the Association of Public Health Business Administrators section meetings.

MLHU News**Local COVID-19 and Influenza Activity Signals Start of Respiratory Season and Vaccination in Middlesex-London**

On October 5, 2023, MLHU issued a media release regarding the upcoming respiratory season and the upcoming vaccination campaign. On October 2nd, the Health Unit received confirmation of the community's first locally acquired case of influenza A. COVID-19 indicators have also seen sustained increases over the last few weeks, such as an increase in test positivity, wastewater surveillance, number of outbreaks, and hospitalization. The Health Unit will begin offering the ministry-recommended Moderna Omicron XBB.1.5 subvariant COVID-19 vaccine at its Western Fair vaccination clinic to individuals at high-risk for influenza and/or COVID-19-related complications or hospitalization, health care workers, and first responders beginning Friday, October 6th.



To learn more, visit [MLHU's Vaccination page on our website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

Respiratory season (including COVID-19 and Influenza) has arrived to the Middlesex-London community. Staff will be speaking more to this topic in Report No. 59-23 at the October Board of Health meeting.