

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Bryna Warshawsky, Acting Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 February 19

OVERVIEW OF FIVE PROVINCIAL INITIATIVES

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 024-13 re “Overview of Five Provincial Initiatives” be received for information.

Key points

This report outlines five provincial initiatives with relevance to public health:

- 1) The Public Health Sector Strategic Plan
- 2) Public Health Ontario Strategic Planning
- 3) Funding Review Working Group
- 4) Audits of Public Health Units
- 5) 2011 Chief Medical Officer of Health Report entitled “Maintaining the Gains, Moving the Yardstick”

This report outlines five provincial initiatives with relevance to public health.

1) The Public Health Sector Strategic Plan

The Public Health Sector is defined as the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health; the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (including the Public Health Division and the Health Promotion Division); the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; Public Health Ontario; and Public Health Units. The Chief Medical Officer of Health and a group of Medical Officers of Health (Public Health Leadership Council) have been leading the development of a strategic plan for the Public Health Sector. The aim is to develop a long-term vision and to identify priority areas of collective focus over the next three to five years. Numerous consultations have been held resulting in the identification of four strategic health goals and one sector goal further defined into eight collective areas of focus. Consultation is ongoing with the intent of releasing the Strategic Plan in April 2013 following which an implementation plan will be developed.

2) Public Health Ontario Strategic Planning

Public Health Ontario has been operating for four years. It was created in response to recommendations following the SARS outbreak in order to provide scientific and technical advice to those working to protect and promote the health of Ontarians. Public Health Ontario consists of over 1000 people in 26 locations and includes the provincial laboratory system. The organization is now developing its second strategic plan to cover the five-year period from 2014-2019. An evaluation of past practice and numerous consultations are informing the development of the five-year plan, including a consultation meeting for Southwest Ontario organizations on January 29, 2013 in Sarnia. More information about the [Public Health Ontario strategic planning process](#) is available on their web site. The current draft of the [Strategic Plan](#) is available for review and comment.

3) Funding Review Working Group

The funding for mandatory programs delivered by public health units has been based on historical funding patterns which have resulted in inequities in per capita funding between health units. Funding Review Working Group was established in 2009/2010 to assess the provincial funding provided to public health units in an effort to ensure a fair, transparent, and consistent method of funding. The group was to review the current status of public health funding; provide advice on future funding models to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; and advise on approaches to implementing the new model. The group has looked at factors that drive the cost of delivering service, such as the geography of the health unit and the need for services in other languages, as well as the drivers of need in the community which include some sociodemographic factors. A draft model was discussed with health units in January and feedback has been provided. Further discussion is anticipated regarding refinement of the model, how the model might be implemented, and the implications of the model on funding for individual health units. [Appendix A](#) contains a letter from Dr. Arlene King, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, with regard to this initiative.

4) Audits of Public Health Units

Beginning in 2012/13, audits of two public health unit per year are being planned. The audits were approved by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and will be conducted by the Ontario Internal Audit Division. The audits are to ensure compliance with the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards, the Public Health Accountability Agreement and the Smoke-Free Ontario Agreement. The scope of these audits will not include an assessment of the provision of public health programs and will be different than the financial audits conducted by external auditors. Instead the Ministry audit is to ensure that, as agencies who receive Transfer Payment funding, health units are meeting the requirements related to financial, operational, and value for money with regard to the use of these funds.

5) 2011 Chief Medical Officer of Health Report entitled "Maintaining the Gains, Moving the Yardstick"

On February 7, 2013, the Chief Medical Officer of Health released her annual report to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for 2011. It was entitled "[Maintaining the Gains, Moving the Yardstick](#)". It establishes a list of 12 health indicators that help to describe how healthy Ontarians are from a public health perspective. The indicators, which can be monitored over time, are: 1) Smoking and alcohol use during pregnancy; 2) Low birth weight; 3) Healthy child development at school entry; 4) Immunization coverage of school pupils; 5) Smoking prevalence; 6) Overweight and obesity; 7) Preventable mortality; 8) Compliance with Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines; 9) Self-reported positive mental health; 10) Burden of infectious diseases; 11) Hospitalization for falls in seniors; and 12) Life expectancy at birth.

Each chapter of the report outlines why the indicator is important and what it measures; efforts to address the problem in Ontario; the Ontario data; how Ontario compares to other jurisdictions; and opportunities for improvements. The report highlights how the determinants of health (such as education and income) impact on the indicators.



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