

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

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TO: Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit

DESTINATAIRE : Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa

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SUBJECT: NEW ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH STANDARDS OVERVIEW

OBJET : SURVOL DES NOUVELLES NORMES DE SANTÉ PUBLIQUE DE
L'ONTARIO

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Board of Health with an overview of the new Ontario Public Health Standards released by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) on November 16, 2017.

BACKGROUND

On November 16, 2017, the MOHLTC held a Public Health Summit, attended by Councillor Shad Qadri, Chair of the Board of Health, Dr. Isra Levy, Medical Officer of Health, and Ms. Esther Moghadam, Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Health Promotion. At this summit, the MOHLTC unveiled the new *Ontario Public Health Standards – Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability* (the “OPHS”/the

“Standards”), which include four (4) Foundational Standards and eight (8) Program Standards. A total of 23 protocols and 14 guidelines in support of the OPHS are anticipated, of which eight (8) protocols and (one) 1 guideline have been made available to date.

The release of the new OPHS follows a two-year modernization exercise undertaken by the MOHLTC, which included consultation with and input from public health units across Ontario as well as stakeholders from the health care sector and the public, and reflects the work of various advisory committees, working groups, and task forces. OPH has participated at every opportunity and the Board has received regular updates with respect to same.

The OPHS are published by the MOHLTC under Section 7 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and set out the minimum requirements for the mandatory public health programs and services to be delivered by public health units in Ontario. The protocols provide or will provide direction to public health units on how to operationalize specific requirements of the Standards, and the guidelines provide or will provide information on how public health units should both approach and apply the requirements. The last comprehensive update of the Standards occurred in 2008, although Standards and protocols have been issued or amended in the intervening years on a case-by-case basis.

OVERVIEW OF NEW OPHS

The new OPHS will come into force on January 1, 2018, with implementation being phased-in over a still unspecified time period. They address the following core areas of public health:

- Foundational Standards (incl. Population Health Assessment, Health Equity, Effective Public Health Practice, and Emergency Management)
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being
- Food Safety
- Healthy Environments
- Healthy Growth and Development
- Immunization
- Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control
- Safe Water
- School Health
- Substance Use and Injury Prevention.

Core public health functions have been preserved in the new OPHS, with the delivery of programs and services by the public health unit to be informed by evidence, local needs and priorities, and best practices.

As previously reported to the Board through the Medical Officer of Health's verbal reports, the OPHS place renewed emphasis on the reduction of public health inequities and the identification of local strategies to reduce them, as well as the requirement to consider the unique needs and capacities of priority populations.

Public health units will be required to engage in multi-sectoral collaborations (e.g. with municipalities, local health integration networks (LHINs), Indigenous communities, and other relevant stakeholders) in relation to policy development and in the advancement of healthy public policy.

The OPHS include new obligations such as a requirement for formal engagement between Boards of Health and LHINs in the areas of population health assessment, joint planning for health services to address population needs, and population health initiatives. A new requirement has been added for the provision of child visual health screening and supports, including the provision of annual vision screening in the school setting by public health professionals beginning in September 2018. Expanded obligations have also been added for the public disclosure, on the public health unit's website, of the results of routine or complaint-based inspections of various settings and premises, such as food premises, tanning beds, and personal services settings.

Through the Accountability Framework and Organizational Requirements, the MOHLTC also confirmed that it will establish expectations and requirements for public health units in four key accountability areas: delivery of programs and services, fiduciary requirements, good governance and management practices, and public health practice. A Ministry-Board of Health Accountability Agreement will continue to establish key operational and funding requirements for Boards of Health. In addition, the MOHLTC will require the submission of a number of planning and reporting documents, such as an annual service plan and budget submission, regular (quarterly or semi-annual) programmatic and financial performance reports, as well as a year-end summary report and attestation.

NEXT STEPS

Based on information provided by the MOHLTC, it is expected that additional protocols, guidance documents, report templates, and other resources will be made available in the coming months as the implementation of the OPHS is phased-in.

As has been reported previously, OPH has been engaged since early 2017 in an ongoing and extensive review of the then-draft OPHS and draft accountability

framework and organizational requirements. As a result, work has occurred at all levels of the organization to prepare OPH to comply with the new set of requirements, including the recent re-alignment of OPH service areas to better position programs and services within OPH to effectively meet the demands of the OPHS. This work will continue into 2018 and updates will be provided to the Board as further information becomes available. While the MOHLTC expects that the new OPHS will be implemented in a revenue / cost neutral manner, OPH will assess and identify cost implications and mitigating strategies as programs begin to phase in new requirements in 2018.

'Original signed by'

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