

**2. PROVINCIAL BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT ON PUBLIC HEALTH  
RESTRUCTURING**

**ANNONCE DU BUDGET PROVINCIAL SUR LA RESTRUCTURATION DE LA  
SANTÉ PUBLIQUE**

**BOARD OF HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That Ottawa City Council:**

- 1. Request that the Mayor of Ottawa write to the Province of Ontario to communicate Council's unequivocal support for the work of Ottawa Public Health;**
- 2. Request the Province maintain the health protection, health promotion, and prevention mandate of Ottawa Public Health;**
- 3. Request the Province maintain the current 75 percent provincial, 25 percent municipal funding formula for Ottawa Public Health and public health programs in Ontario; and**
- 4. Request the Province initiate consultations with municipalities and public health agencies on the public health system in Ontario.**

**RECOMMANDATIONS DU CONSEIL DE SANTÉ**

**Que le Conseil municipal d'Ottawa :**

- 1. Demande au maire d'Ottawa d'écrire au gouvernement provincial de l'Ontario pour indiquer que le Conseil municipal soutient sans équivoque le travail de Santé publique Ottawa;**
- 2. Demande au gouvernement provincial que soit maintenu le mandat de protection et de promotion de la santé et de prévention de Santé publique Ottawa;**

- 3. Demande au gouvernement provincial que soit maintenue la formule de financement actuelle, à hauteur de 75 % de fonds provinciaux et 25 % de fonds municipaux, pour Santé publique Ottawa et les programmes de santé publique de l'Ontario;**
- 4. Demande au gouvernement provincial de lancer des consultations avec les municipalités et les organismes de santé publique à propos du système ontarien de santé publique.**

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Ottawa Board of Health Annual Report dated April 15, 2019 (ACS2019-OPH-BOH-0007)

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Rapport du Santé publique Ottawa daté le 15 avril 2019 (ACS2019-OPH-BOH-0007)

**Report to  
Rapport au:**

**Council  
Conseil**

**24 April 2019 / 24 avril 2019**

**Submitted on April 18, 2019  
Soumis le 18 avril 2019**

**Submitted by  
Soumis par:**

**Councillor Keith Egli, Chair, Ottawa Board of Health /  
Conseiller Keith Egli, Président, Conseil de santé d'Ottawa**

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**Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE      File Number: ACS2019-OPH-BOH-0007**

**SUBJECT: PROVINCIAL BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT ON PUBLIC HEALTH  
RESTRUCTURING**

**OBJET: ANNONCE DU BUDGET PROVINCIAL SUR LA RESTRUCTURATION  
DE LA SANTÉ PUBLIQUE**

## **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That Ottawa City Council:**

- 1. Request that the Mayor of Ottawa write to the Province of Ontario to communicate Council's unequivocal support for the work of Ottawa Public Health;**
- 2. Request the Province maintain the health protection, health promotion, and prevention mandate of Ottawa Public Health;**

3. **Request the Province maintain the current 75 percent provincial, 25 percent municipal funding formula for Ottawa Public Health and public health programs in Ontario; and**
4. **Request the Province initiate consultations with municipalities and public health agencies on the public health system in Ontario.**

## **RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Conseil municipal d'Ottawa :**

1. **Demande au maire d'Ottawa d'écrire au gouvernement provincial de l'Ontario pour indiquer que le Conseil municipal soutient sans équivoque le travail de Santé publique Ottawa;**
2. **Demande au gouvernement provincial que soit maintenu le mandat de protection et de promotion de la santé et de prévention de Santé publique Ottawa;**
3. **Demande au gouvernement provincial que soit maintenue la formule de financement actuelle, à hauteur de 75 % de fonds provinciaux et 25 % de fonds municipaux, pour Santé publique Ottawa et les programmes de santé publique de l'Ontario;**
4. **Demande au gouvernement provincial de lancer des consultations avec les municipalités et les organismes de santé publique à propos du système ontarien de santé publique.**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Government of Ontario released its 2019 Budget at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 11, 2019. As part of its budget announcements, the Government proposed significant changes to the structure, governance and funding for public health services in Ontario. In particular, the proposal is to reduce the number of public health units across Ontario from 35 locally-based to 10 regionally-based health units and the current 35 local boards of health would be replaced by 10 regional boards of health under a new common governance model. The Province also indicated that a new funding model would be announced. Information has yet to be released to explain either the proposed governance model or how the new funding model would differ from the current one or what the implications may be for municipalities.

In response of these announcements, at its meeting of April 15, 2019, the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit approved the following motion:

Motion 4/3

Moved by Vice-Chair T. DeGiovanni

“WHEREAS the Provincial government’s 2019 Budget, released on April 11, 2019 announced some significant changes to how public health services in Ontario are structured, governed and funded;

AND WHEREAS there are many unknowns about how and when the Province proposes to implement these changes;

AND WHEREAS the Province is proposing to reduce the number of health units in Ontario from 35 locally-based health units to 10 regionally based health units;

AND WHEREAS local public health is known for its responsiveness to local needs, basing many of its programs and services on local evidence, data, and priorities;

AND WHEREAS the proposed restructuring is likely to result in a loss of local control and local responsiveness of public health programs and services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit request that Ottawa City Council:

- Request that the Mayor of Ottawa write to the Province of Ontario to communicate Council’s unequivocal support for the work of Ottawa Public Health;
- Request the Province maintain the health protection, health promotion, and prevention mandate of Ottawa Public Health;
- Request the Province maintain the current 75 percent provincial, 25 percent municipal funding formula for Ottawa Public Health and public health programs in Ontario; and
- Request the Province initiate consultations with municipalities and public health agencies on the public health system in Ontario.”

Of note, the Board of Health for the City of Toronto Health Unit met on [April 15, 2019](#) and approved a similar motion (see Document 1).

The five (5) primary functions of Ontario's public health sector are population health assessment, disease and injury prevention, health protection, promotion of health and wellness, and emergency preparedness and response. In addition, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) works within the community, supporting people from pre-birth through to end of life with programming and service offerings that are most often delivered in partnerships.

In an era where there is a greater focus on providing better, more timely and patient-centred care, the public health system more than carries its weight, making significant contributions to reducing the demands placed on hospitals and primary care providers. Public health actions now result in fewer emergency room visits today, as well as the prevention of more visits tomorrow. The following are but a few examples of how Ottawa Public Health provides value for the overall health system and why locally-based partnerships are important to its work:

- OPH assists families prenatally and with newborns so they may get a good start in life. Created in partnership with CHEO, the Parenting In Ottawa/Être parents à Ottawa (PIO) website, is a resource for parenting from pre-conception right through the teen years. On this site people can connect directly with a Public Health Nurse on-line for telephone or chat support, and participate in moderated conversations on a variety of topics. OPH's most intensive support for parents involves in-home visits by Public Health Nurses and home visitors with different cultural backgrounds. Screening of new parents, usually after the birth of a child, identifies risk factors that trigger this additional support. The PIO website is also a resource for grandparents and other caregivers, to brush up on the latest evidence-based approaches to early childhood development. For every \$1 spent on early childhood development, the health care system saves up to \$9 in future spending on health, social and justice services.
- OPH reaches school-aged children through health promotion activities and programs such as vision screening in school. Many school children are not benefitting from free optometrist eye exams and 3 to 5% are at risk of permanent vision loss each year in Ottawa. Therefore, OPH is piloting screening 5-year-olds in school and working with local optometrists to increase access to glasses as needed.
- OPH provides immunization services to reduce the harms caused by infectious diseases. In addition to school-based immunizations, OPH has ventured into giving childhood and catch-up immunizations to populations with barriers to

primary care, such as in shelters for families with unstable housing and for refugees. This is done in partnership with local organizations such as the Centretown Community Health Centre and the YMCA. Every \$1 spent on immunizing children with the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine saves \$16 in health care costs.

- OPH engages in partnerships with community organizations, such as with Inner City Health and Community Health Centres, to assist people with substance use issues to reduce the harms from substance use and find a pathway to treatment and reduction or cessation of use. As the need to address opioid overdose continues, OPH is also focussing on the myths about cannabis and continuing to shine a light on the substance causing the greatest burden of illness after tobacco – alcohol. Every \$1 spent on mental health and addictions saves \$7 in health costs and \$30 dollars in lost productivity and social costs.
- One of OPH's roles is to promote and protect health through healthy public policies. The City of Ottawa has been a leader in Ontario, advancing by-laws that create smoke-free spaces. Every \$1 invested in tobacco prevention programs saves up to \$20 in future health care costs.
- OPH has also engaged in public policy work related to: advancing reconciliation with Indigenous communities; promoting active transportation policy; and engaging in the development of the City of Ottawa's new Official Plan, because walkable, connected communities are important for population health.
- OPH also partners with the City of Ottawa as an active participant in city-wide emergency responses and works with partners to plan and prepare for emergencies before they occur.
- The LHIN has supported OPH's work, in partnership with the city Recreation, Culture and Facilities Services Department, to provide the growing seniors' population with fitness and wellness programs that include falls prevention - the number one cause of injury-related emergency room visits and hospitalizations among older adults.

By ensuring that Ottawans get a healthy start, remain healthy, are able to quickly return to health and well-being at all ages, the public health system delivers value for money.

## **DISCUSSION**

Provincial Budget Announcements:

- In 2019–20:
  - Improve public health *program and back-office efficiency and sustainability* while providing consistent, high-quality services, be responsive to local circumstances
  - Adjust provincial–municipal *cost-sharing of public health funding* (currently about 75 provincial, 25 municipal)
  - Streamline the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (*Public Health Ontario*) to enable greater flexibility with respect to non-critical standards based on community priorities
- By 2020-21
  - Establish *10 regional public health entities and 10 new regional boards of health* with one common governance model
  - Modernize Ontario’s public health *laboratory system* by developing a regional strategy to create greater efficiencies across the system and reduce the number of laboratories
  - Remove back-office inefficiencies through digitizing and streamlining processes to ensure public health agencies focus their efforts on providing better, more efficient front-line care
- By 2021-22:
  - Achieve *annual savings of \$200M* by modernizing public health units through regionalization and governance changes to achieve economies of scale, streamlined back-office functions and better coordinated action by public health units
    - The current provincial contribution for cost-shared programs is \$750M, which leads to the figure of 27% of the funding being cut that has been discussed in the media.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) has not yet communicated with the public health sector about these budget directions. There is not yet any information available about what this will mean specifically for Ottawa Public Health or for local health units and local boards of health. However, the announcements raise a number of questions and OPH will likely have to look at its priorities and how it allocates its budget.

Most of OPH's budget (about 86%) is for the salaries, wages and benefits of employees, so any reductions would likely have implications for employees and would raise concerns about maintaining capacity to carry out core protection, promotion and prevention work.

While the proposed changes are significant and raise important concerns about maintaining capacity for carrying out core protection, promotion and prevention work, there are opportunities that could be realized with a regional approach.

Previous reviews of the public health system have led to recommendations that there be fewer health units in Ontario. Most recently, in 2017 the then-Minister of Health appointed an Expert Panel on Public Health to provide advice on public health governance, organization and structure, and integration of public health perspectives into the work of LHINs. At that time, the Ottawa Board of Health brought forward a [report](#) to City Council with recommendations in response to the proposal.

Larger health units have greater capacity for foundational standards like population health assessment, for recruitment and retention of skilled professionals, and are better able to quickly mobilize for urgent responses. The province has indicated that savings could come with more collaboration on back-office practices, like purchasing, and digital processes. Ottawa Public Health is very interested in initiatives that could involve electronic records, for instance.

What is important to keep as a guiding principle is that the population's health needs vary across the province and so flexibility for local adaptations to service provision is key. Maintaining a way for municipalities to influence delivery of public health services is important, not only because elected officials represent the needs of their populations but also because many of the drivers of health are outside of the healthcare sector. With a regional lens on public health programming, efforts need to be made to keep specific needs of Indigenous communities and Francophones as priorities. If the Province moves forward with implementation of 10 regional health units, the goal must be timely and quality public health services that prevent disease and injury for all now and into the future and that are responsive to local needs and priorities.

## **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

## **CONSULTATION**

No public consultation was undertaken in preparing this report.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impediments to approving the recommendations in this report.

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

**ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Document 1 - Board of Health for the City of Toronto Health Unit motion on the Provincial budget announcement on public health restructuring

**DISPOSITION**

Following Council approval, the Chair of the Board of Health and the Officer of the Medical Officer of Health will work with the Mayor's Office to prepare a letter for submission to the Province.