



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 1, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Communicable Disease and Health Hazard Investigations Semi-annual Report July 1, 2014 - December 31, 2014 BOH15005 (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

This report fulfils the Board of Health (BOH) policy on communication between the Medical Officer of Health and the BOH, as outlined in Report PH06038.

Information:

Background Information:

This is a summary report covering the period from July 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014 (Q3 & Q4, 2014). The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) are the guidelines for the provision of mandatory health programs and services for Boards of Health in Ontario. Investigations completed by program areas for Infectious Diseases and Environmental Health in the OPHS are the focus for this report.

Q3 & Q4 (2014) Program Highlights

Infectious Diseases

Panorama

In 2014, PHS began using the electronic public health information system Panorama for all PHS-delivered immunizations. This is the first step towards creating a comprehensive provincial immunization registry. PHS nurses use this system in schools to provide and document immunizations for hepatitis B, meningococcus and

human papillomavirus. This allows point of care data entry and real-time access to client information, and will also significantly improve the assessment of immunization coverage rates within Hamilton and Ontario.

In 2015, the Vaccine Program will be adding a second Panorama module that will integrate the vaccine inventory management systems of both the province and PHS. This will improve vaccine distribution, and help reduce wastage while also supporting improved forecasting and inventory management practices at the local and provincial levels.

Current challenges with the system include the review of over 25,000 duplicate student records; reports requiring considerable cleaning and interpretation; and increased immunization time at school-based clinics. These challenges have resulted in more staff resources required to do data cleaning; follow-up visits to some schools to complete service; and reassigning program staff resources to complete priority work. The Ministry is aware of these concerns and is reviewing funding and taking corrective actions as required.

Infectious Syphilis

Syphilis rates have been increasing over the past 2 years in Hamilton, similar to other jurisdictions in Ontario and Canada. Locally, a web-based awareness campaign was developed in partnership with The AIDS Network. This campaign ran in November 2014 and was successful in reaching over 5000 men at risk for syphilis through websites where they meet other men. PHS noted small increases in the number of tests and phone calls regarding syphilis during November.

OSCAR in clinics

In November 2014, the sexual health clinics began using the OSCAR electronic medical records. This has improved service to over 5600 clients as it allows real-time access to client records, including lab results, at all PHS-operated sexual health and street clinics.

Active Cases of Tuberculosis

Each year PHS receives about 20 confirmed reports of active Tuberculosis (TB), as well as 50-60 reports of suspect active TB cases that require significant public health follow up, but are later determined not to be true cases.

Active and suspect active cases can involve small or large numbers of contacts and their management and care may be complex (e.g. treatment regimens, infection control measures, language issues, compliance and medical follow-up).

It is not uncommon for public health nurses to spend between 9 and 12 months managing each active case (i.e. case follow up, infection control measures, testing, clinical management, directly observed therapy (DOT) of medication, and monitoring for treatment side effects).

The management and treatment of active cases and investigation of suspect active cases has a sizeable impact on the work of program staff, but directly contributes to the control of tuberculosis in Hamilton.

Salmonella enteritidis

Since September 1, 2014, 337 confirmed cases of *Salmonella enteritidis* (SE) have been reported in Ontario and on September 10, Public Health Ontario issued an alert about the increase of non-travel-related SE cases. SE causes diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, nausea and often vomiting and can last for several days, which may result in high levels of work and school absenteeism. Hamilton PHS follows-up with each person diagnosed with SE to ensure measures are taken to minimize the spread to others. An Ontario Outbreak Investigation Coordinating Committee was established November 14th to investigate non-travel-related cases of SE. Hamilton PHS has investigated 9 local cases since September 1, and risk factor data from those investigations, as well as those from other public health units, are being used to try to identify the cause(s) of this increase.

Ebola Virus Disease

During Q3 & Q4, 2014, Hamilton PHS collaborated with local hospitals, the Local Health Integration Network, Hamilton Emergency Medical Services, primary care and other health-care organizations to prepare for the unlikely possibility of Ebola virus disease (EVD) being introduced into our community. This has included:

- Communicating MOHLTC directives to health care partners to ensure our community is ready to respond
- Developing care pathways
- Developing internal situational assessment reports, tools and resources necessary for possible case and contact management

While routine work was put on hold to ensure readiness for EVD, protocols, partnerships, and communications preparations will be relevant for other emerging infections.

Environmental Health

Amendments to Smoke-Free Ontario Legislation

In November 2014, the Ontario government announced amendments to Ontario Regulation 48/06 under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. These amendments are intended to:

- Further protect children and reduce their access to tobacco
- Protect people in Ontario from exposure to tobacco use and second-hand smoke
- Prevent youth from starting to smoke
- Make smoking less socially acceptable by banning it in public places

The Tobacco Control Program will be involved in raising awareness and ensuring these new amendments are followed in Hamilton.

Provincial Harmonized Heat Alert and Response System

Health Hazards program staff have been working with Environment Canada, Health Canada, and the MOHLTC to develop a plan to pilot a harmonized heat alert and response system (HARS) for dealing with heat events during the 2015 Pan Am & Parapan Am Games. This includes plans and procedures for governance, preparedness, partnerships, alerts and triggers, communications, response activities and evaluation. The pilot's goal is to test the use of and effectiveness of HARS in reducing heat-related health vulnerabilities during the games.

Updates for the Food Safety Disclosure Program

In January 2014, PHS launched a new food safety disclosure program that posts colour-coded inspection certificates at the entrances of licensed food establishments in Hamilton:

- Green = Pass
- Yellow = Conditional Pass
- Red = Closed

After the first full year of using this program, PHS staff issued:

- 4934 Green certificates
- 270 Yellow certificates
- 26 Red certificates

Food safety disclosure is intended to improve food safety standards and increase awareness and public access to information. PHS surveyed the public and the food service industry to collect their feedback about the new disclosure program and the food safety zone website. Results of the survey will be made available in 2015.

Programs Covered by this Report

The OPHS outline the requirements for the provision of mandatory health programs and services for Boards of Health in Ontario. Investigations completed by program areas for Infectious Diseases and Environmental Health in the OPHS are the focus for this report. These program areas are:

Infectious Diseases

Includes Reportable Diseases under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA)*:

- Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control
- Rabies Prevention and Control
- Sexual Health, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Blood-borne Infections (including HIV)
- Tuberculosis Prevention and Control
- Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Environmental Health

- Food Safety
- Safe Water
- Health Hazard Prevention and Management
- Vector borne Diseases Control
- Tobacco Control

Reportable Disease cases are from individuals who reside in the City of Hamilton at the time of their diagnosis. The information in **Appendix A** has been extracted from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (MOHLTC) integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS) database and is subject to change due to case follow-up procedures and/or delayed diagnoses.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – ID & EH BOH Health Report Q3 & Q4 2014