

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care****Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

Chief Medical Officer of Health

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August 19, 2015

MEMORANDUM**To:** Board of Health Chairs
Medical Officers of Health and Associate Medical Officers of Health**Re:** Amendment to the Protocol under the Ontario Public Health Standards – Public Health
Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2015

I am writing to inform you of the following changes to the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS):

- The *Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008* has been replaced with the *Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2015*.

The changes to the Protocol were made by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the ministry) based on input from Public Health Ontario (PHO) and Public Health Units.

Amendments in the *Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2015* include:

- Clarification of requirements throughout the protocol including requirements for:
 - Engagement and collaboration with relevant local government bodies and community partners;
 - Reviewing and updating the hazard-identification and risk-assessment;
 - Updating the continuity of operations plan and the emergency response plan;
 - Conducting annual exercises of the continuity of operations plan, emergency response plan, and 24/7 notification protocol;
 - Identifying high-risk populations in the community relevant to specific hazards or threats and assessing potential for disproportionate health impacts to high-risk populations;
 - Evaluating the use of the continuity of operations plan after each use; and
 - Reviewing and updating contacts for 24/7 notifications.
- Minor wording changes to clarify language.

The new *Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2015* is attached for your reference and will come into effect immediately.

It will be available in English and French, respectively, through the OPHS website at the following links:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/emergency_preparedness.pdf

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/fr/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/emergency_preparednessf.pdf

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The ministry will communicate further details regarding these changes to public health units via regular communications to ensure continued compliance with the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the OPHS.

I would like to express my thanks to you and your staff for your ongoing work in upholding the OPHS and Protocols to ensure the continued strength of the public health system in Ontario.

Yours truly,

Original signed by

David C. Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health

Attachment

c: Roselle Martino, Executive Director, Public Health Division
Clint Shingler, A/Director, Emergency Management Branch, Public Health Division
Paulina Salamo, A/Director, Public Health Standards, Practice and Accountability Branch,
Public Health Division
Dr. Peter Donnelly, President and Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Ontario
Dr. George Pasut, Vice-President, Science and Public Health, Public Health Ontario
Dr. Brian Schwartz, Chief, Communicable Diseases, Emergency Preparedness and
Response, Public Health Ontario
Lisa Fortuna, Director, Communicable Diseases, Emergency Preparedness and Response,
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