



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
Office of the Medical Officer of Health

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 20, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Ontario Public Health Standards Modernization – Board of Health Response BOH17010(a) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Jennifer Hohol (905) 546-2424, Ext. 6004 Thomas Martin (905) 546-2424, Ext. 3539
SUBMITTED BY: SIGNATURE:	Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services Department

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That staff be directed to prepare a letter to the MOHLTC of Health and Long-Term Care for submission by the Mayor on behalf of the Board of Health and Public Health Services as an official response to the Standards for Public Health Programs and Services, and that the letter address:
- (i) Difficulty in assessing the full operational impact of the new Standards in absence of completed policies, protocols, guidance documents and annual service plan templates,
 - (ii) The need for a shared understanding of a population health approach across the health and social sector,
 - (iii) Time it will take for public health staff and the board of health to work with community partners to meet the Standards,
 - (iv) The need to build capacity within public health and across community partners for how to use population health data to inform public health and health sector planning,

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- (v) Existing capacity, resource and funding challenges,
- (vi) Request for continued consultation with local public health units and boards of health in the development of new policies, protocols, guidance documents and annual service plan templates referenced in the new Standards, and
- (vii) Request for ongoing communication and consultation to support broader health system transformation including the Expert Panel on Public Health, the Public Health Work Stream and the new Accountability Framework.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new Standards for Public Health Programs and Services (Standards) were released by the MOHLTC of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) for consultation by boards of health and public health units in February 2017. The Standards replace the existing Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), and will become effective as of January 1, 2018.

The MOHLTC has encouraged feedback on the Standards in the form of one written submission on behalf of an organization to be submitted by April 21, 2017. The purpose of the consultation process was to identify:

- Areas of additional clarification and content needed within the Standards,
- Anticipated operational considerations, and
- Implementation requirements and supports.

Members of the Board of Health (BOH) were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the Standards through internal focus groups facilitated by Public Health Services (PHS) staff. PHS staff were offered an opportunity to provide input through focus groups and an online survey. Feedback on the Standards collected from the BOH and PHS staff has been consolidated to inform the recommendations within this report.

Alternatives for Consideration – See page 5

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for recommendation(s) only)

Financial: No financial implications

Staffing: No staffing implications

Legal: No legal implications

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

In November 2015, the MOHLTC formally announced a review and modernization of the OPHS to support ongoing transformation of the health system in Ontario. The OPHS are guidelines published by the MOHLTC that direct mandatory public health programs and services. As evidenced by the passing of the *Patients First Act, 2016*, transformation is happening across the entire health system, including the public health sector. The modernization of the standards is just one component of public health transformation to better integrate public health into the greater health system.

An executive steering committee was formed to oversee the modernization of the OPHS. Changes to the OPHS took into consideration:

- Essential public health functions,
- Health needs of the population from public health perspective and functions,
- Impact and effectiveness of the current program standards,
- Most appropriate role for public health sector within an integrated health system, and
- An enhanced emphasis on responding to local needs and decreasing health inequities by addressing the needs of priority populations and planning programs to address identified local needs.

The new Standards were released by the MOHLTC for consultation by boards of health and public health units in February 2017. A presentation was delivered to the BOH on March 20, 2017 outlining key changes to the Standards and potential organizational impacts. BOH members were offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the Standards at focus groups facilitated by PHS staff. Feedback was also collected from PHS staff through focus groups and an online survey. The feedback collected through consultation with the BOH and PHS staff was consolidated and is summarized in the Analysis And Rationale For Recommendation section of this report.

The Standards for Public Health Programs and Services will become effective as of January 1, 2018.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The OPHS are guidelines published by the MOHLTC that direct mandatory public health programs and services delivered by local public health units. The BOH is held accountable to the requirements within these standards through the Public Health Funding and Accountability Agreement. The new Standards will replace the OPHS effective January 2018.

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RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Members of the BOH were encouraged to share their feedback on the new Standards through focus groups facilitated by PHS staff. Feedback was also collected from PHS staff through focus groups and an online survey.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION (Include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data if applicable)

The feedback collected through consultation with the BOH and PHS staff was consolidated to inform the recommendations in this report.

The purpose of the consultation process was to identify:

- Areas of additional clarification and content needed within the Standards,
- Anticipated operational considerations, and
- Implementation requirements and supports.

Areas of Additional Clarification

The Standards use supporting policies, protocols and planning documents to provide further direction on how mandatory public health programs and services should be delivered. In many areas of the Standards, these supporting documents are not yet available for review. Additional clarification is needed as to the content within these documents in order to fully assess the operational impacts of the Standards.

Anticipated Operational Considerations

There are many examples of requirements throughout the Standards where the BOH is expected to create partnerships and work with family doctors, hospitals, schools, social service and community partners in new ways. While many of these partnerships are already in place, it will take time to understand how PHS can work with these partners to meet the Standards.

The goal of the new Standards is for public health programs and services to improve population health outcomes and reduce health inequities. A successful population health approach relies on understanding the population of a community. Currently within the health and social sector, there are different levels of understanding about what population health means. A shared understanding of a population health approach among community partners needs to be realized for successful implementation of the Standards.

Population health assessment provides the necessary information to understand the health of a population through development of population health profiles and monitoring of the impact of public health interventions. Using and working with population health data may be a new practice for community partners. There is a need to build capacity for how to use population health data to inform both public health and health sector planning.

Though the Standards offer new opportunities to adapt program and service delivery to local community needs, there are also other areas of increased standardization. The full implications of the Standards are not yet known, including capacity, resource and funding challenges.

Implementation Supports

To continue to support public health units in the successful implementation of the Standards, it is recommended that the request be made to the MOHLTC for continued consultation with local public health units and boards of health in the development of the new policies, protocols, guidance documents and annual service plan templates referenced in the Standards. Once these documents are available, public health units will need time to assess organizational impact and development implementation plans for compliance. It is also recommended to request that the MOHLTC provide ongoing communication and consultation to support broader public health system transformation including the Expert Panel on Public Health, the Public Health Work Stream and the new Public Health Accountability Framework. This will help to ensure alignment of implementation and compliance of the Standards to the overall public health system transformation.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

(Include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and Pros and Cons for each alternative)

The BOH could choose not to submit formal feedback to the MOHLTC on the new Standards. This alternative would have no financial or staffing implications.

This alternative is not recommended as the BOH will be held accountable for compliance with the Standards in 2018. Providing feedback to the MOHLTC will allow for additional clarification and identification of operational considerations and implementation supports to achieve successful compliance.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive city where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not Applicable