



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 18, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Public Health Services 2017 Department Operational Work Plan (BOH17002(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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Council Direction:

Not applicable

Information:

In January 2017, Report BOH17002 highlighted three priority areas of focus for Public Health Services in the upcoming year. These priorities included:

- Health System Integration;
- Poverty Reduction; and,
- PHS Workplace Culture.

As work began, emerging priorities presented themselves in addition to those originally selected as priority areas of focus including:

- Opioid Response;
- Improved City Services for Vulnerable Populations; and,
- Public Health System Change.

An overview of the work that has been done thus far in 2017 within each of these six priority areas is provided in the report below.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Health System Integration

A focus on health system integration is a priority for Public Health Services (PHS) to effectively engage with community partners in pursuit of health, improve population health outcomes and address health inequities in the community. With the changing healthcare landscape and the new Standards for Public Health Programs and Services (Standards), it is expected that public health units play an active role in creating a shared understanding of population health within the health system and work to improve the health of the population in collaboration with health system partners. Several initiatives are underway at PHS in partnership with the LHIN, McMaster University, Hamilton Health Sciences, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, the Dundas Family Health Team and primary care physicians to better support a population health approach within the health system. More information on the work being done by PHS within the area of health system integration will be outlined in an upcoming report to the Board of Health (BOH).

Poverty Reduction

In early 2016, the General Issues Committee (GIC) approved a motion to invest \$50 million toward affordable housing and poverty reduction in the City of Hamilton. To support this motion, staff in PHS and Community & Emergency Services (CES) were directed to lead the development of a plan for the new investment. Through 2017, collaboration between PHS, CES and community partners focused on efforts to map existing poverty reduction initiatives at all levels of government to identify service gaps and opportunities within the City. This work was used to inform a Poverty Reduction Investment Plan presented to GIC in April 2017 (BOH16034/CES16043). Upon consideration of the plan, Council decided that the full investment in poverty reduction should focus on housing opportunities in the community. As a result of this decision, CES has taken the lead on the implementation of recommendations within the Poverty Reduction Investment Plan moving forward.

PHS Workplace Culture

This priority area is focused on action to support the City's Our People and Performance Plan. In 2017, PHS formed a new Culture Action Work Group. The focus of this work group has been on supporting the rollout of the City's Our People Survey. Once the survey is released for completion in the Fall, the PHS Culture Action Work Group along with PHS leaders will encourage staff engagement to achieve a 75% targeted response rate.

To support continuous learning within the department, PHS has focused on skill development in Evidence Informed Decision Making (EIDM) in alignment with the future direction of PHS. EIDM skills and processes have been applied by staff this year to support health system change through the implementation of the new Standards.

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In the area of performance excellence and accountability, PHS previously had indicators in place to measure performance, however, these indicators were inconsistent across service delivery areas. A review of all PHS performance indicators was conducted in alignment with the results based accountability framework used at the corporate level as well as the new Standards. Following the review, consistent performance indicators have now been recommended for all service areas, and where data is available, these indicators are being used to support the implementation of the Standards and inform corporate requirements including the recent service delivery review update. Moving forward, PHS performance indicators will continue to support evidence informed decision making in program planning as well as help to identify opportunities for continuous improvement within programs, divisions, or across the department.

Opioid Response

An emerging issue in the Hamilton community and across the country in 2017 has been the opioid crisis. At the call of the Mayor, PHS has taken the lead in establishing a collaborative work group with community partners across the health and social sector focused on making an active opioid response in Hamilton. At the Opioid Response Summit hosted by PHS in January, representation was present from community organizations offering services related to opioid prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement (BOH17006).

Since collaboration has begun, significant achievements have been made including the:

- Release of an opioid public awareness campaign;
- Development of a community opioid response plan;
- Launch of the Hamilton Opioid Information System, a website to communicate alerts and opioid data to partner organizations and members of the community;
- Submission of a community opioid response funding request to the provincial and federal governments endorsed by the Board of Health and community partners for funding to enhance the opioid response in Hamilton (BOH17013); and
- Receipt of provincial funding for up to \$250,000 to enhance the opioid response by PHS (BOH17028).

Improve City Services for Vulnerable Populations

With the introduction of the new Standards, many changes have been made to encourage a population health approach to public health program and service delivery. A population health approach works to address the health of the whole population and to reduce inequities in health status between population groups. To support a population health approach, PHS has developed a Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Strategy. The goal of this strategy is to use population health information to guide the planning and delivery of public health programs and services within an integrated health system.

In order to achieve this goal, the strategy focuses on:

- Understanding the health of Hamiltonians;
- Sharing information on health status within PHS and with community partners;
- Providing leadership to facilitate decision making in public health program and health system planning; and,
- Strengthen the community to ensure everyone has the same opportunity for wellness.

The Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Strategy has played a key role in guiding the work underway at PHS to support the implementation of the new Standards and will continue to be used to support public health program and health system planning in the future. More information on the Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Strategy and population health data will be presented at the Board of Health meeting in November 2017.

In an effort to improve City services, the City Manager's Office continues to explore combining the functions of PHS and CES. The work of the two departments is at times interconnected, and services are being provided to an increasingly common group of clients. Merging of the departments is being done with a goal to better serve the citizens of Hamilton through integrated service delivery to achieve the City of Hamilton's Strategy priority of promoting Healthy & Safe Communities.

Public Health System Change

With the passing of the Patients First Act, 2016, transformation has been ongoing across the entire health system, including the public health sector. Three Public Health transformation initiatives were undertaken in parallel with Patients First to support PHS and its role within an integrated health system. These initiatives include the:

- Modernization of the Ontario Public Health Standards to direct Public Health program and service delivery;
- Public Health Work Stream to provide guidance on engagement and formalizing relationships between public health units and Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN); and,
- Expert Panel on Public Health to consider how Public Health is best organized within an integrated health system.

In February 2017, the new Standards were released by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. These Standards direct the delivery of mandatory public health programs and services by public health units, and replace the Ontario Public Health Standards (2008). Within the Standards and supporting Accountability Framework and Organizational Requirements, there have been some significant changes in service

delivery and reporting expectations. One of these changes is the need to not only use but to report on the evidence considered by boards of health in making PHS delivery decisions. As a result, PHS has established staff work groups to review the Standards, collect the best available evidence and make service delivery recommendations based on the evidence to ensure Board of Health compliance (BOH17010(b)).

As part of the public health system transformation, a Public Health Work Stream was established to define the expectations for formal engagement between boards of health and the LHIN established within the Patients First Act, 2016. In July, a report from the Public Health Work Stream was released for consultation. The report focused on:

- Population health assessment through the collection and analysis of population health data to support health system planning;
- Joint planning for health services to address population needs where public health intersects with broader health care system;
- Identification of population health initiatives and opportunities to improve population health and equity; and,
- Governance options for how boards of health within LHIN boundaries could best organize to formalize relationships with the LHIN.

The opportunity to provide feedback on the Public Health Work Stream report was communicated to the BOH and PHS engaged in the consultation process through submission of an organizational response.

To further support public health and its role within an integrated health system, an Expert Panel on Public Health (Expert Panel) was established by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The Expert Panel was asked to make recommendations for an optimal organizational structure for public health in Ontario and how to best govern and staff this structure. As outlined in Report BOH17034, the recommendations made by the Expert Panel include proposed organizational change with the creation of fourteen regional public health agencies through the amalgamation of existing public health units. To support a regional organizational structure, a consistent approach to governance would be implemented through the creation of fourteen regional boards of health. This would be a significant change to the current governance model used by PHS. With the release of the Expert Panel's report, it was identified that there would be opportunities for stakeholders to discuss and provide feedback on report recommendations. Details regarding opportunities for consultation are not known at this time but PHS will engage in the consultation process moving forward to best ensure that public health is positioned to continue to successfully work towards improving the health of the Hamilton community.