



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 15, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Heat Warning Information System (BOH19014) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Andrew Wilson (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5017
SUBMITTED BY:	Kevin McDonald Director, Healthy Environments Division Public Health Services
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable.

INFORMATION

This Information Report details the reasoning for switching from a hybrid 3 Stage Heat Warning System to a harmonized provincial 2 Stage Heat Warning System known as the Harmonized Heat Warning and Information System for Ontario (HWIS).

Historically, the City of Hamilton has employed a 3 Stage Heat Alert System that was developed by and for our specific municipality prior to 2015 (i.e., Stage 1 – Heat Advisory; Stage 2 – Heat Warning; and, Stage 3 – Extended Heat Warning). As part of the 2015 Pan AM Games, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) developed a harmonized Heat Alert & Response System (HARS) for use by the Public Health Units whose jurisdictions were hosting the Games. The adopted HARS was created as 2 Stage Heat Warning System, requiring a minimum of 2 days/2 nights where Environment Canada (EC) forecasts the city of Hamilton to be at or above the trigger temperatures. This system and the triggers were based upon scientific evidence researched for years prior to the Pan Am Games.

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.

It has become evident that Stage 1 Heat Advisories rarely occur, and if they do occur, it is usually at the beginning and/or the end of the heat season and, the majority of the time, Heat Advisories are superseded by Heat Warnings.

Also, scientific evidence has shown increases in hospital visits for Heat-Related Illness (HRI) during heat events lasting for more than 2 days/2 nights, but not for a single-day heat event followed by relief.

Removing the Stage 1 Heat Advisory does not adversely impact the City of Hamilton Community Heat Response Plan. The response plan will continue to support our community partners and stakeholders who assist to provide relief options to members of the public from excessive and prolonged heat events.

It is expected that fully harmonizing our Heat Warning System with other Ontario Public Health Units will reduce confusion among the public that has existed when one health unit issues a heat warning and surrounding Public Health Units have not.

To raise public awareness of this change in practice, Public Health Services will be supplying new promotional materials to our internal and external stakeholders throughout the city. Similar messaging will be used through social media, directing the public to our updated City of Hamilton Heat Warning website, for the most up-to-date information.

Our Heat Warning messaging system will also direct community partners, local media and stakeholders to the Heat Warning website at <http://www.hamilton.ca/heat>.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable.