



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 15, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Semi-Annual Infectious Diseases and Environmental Health Report (BOH19007) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

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

INFORMATION

This is a summary report covering the period from July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018 (Q3 and Q4, 2018). 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 areas in the OPHS are the focus for this report. These program areas are as follows:

Infectious Diseases

Includes Reportable Diseases under the Health Protection and Promotion Act

- Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control;

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.

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

Environmental Health

- Food Safety;
- Safe Water;
- Health Hazard Prevention and Management;
- Vector Borne Diseases Control; and,
- Tobacco Control.

Reportable disease cases are from people who reside in the City of Hamilton at the time of their diagnosis. 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 databases maintained by Public Health Services (PHS), and are subject to change due to case follow-up procedures and/or delayed diagnosis.

Appendix A provides information to the Board of Health (BOH) in a summarized format based on issues brought commonly to staff by BOH members. Appendix “A” includes data for three prior years, as well as the current year, which allows for trend monitoring. It is also organized to delineate information for routine monitoring of infectious diseases and environmental health issues (Part 1 and 2, respectively), and workload (Part 3). Technical Notes (Appendix “B”) are also provided for this report as they have been updated since Report (BOH15024).

During the 2019 year there may be changes to this report. Additional performance reports are now required through the MOHLTC Annual Service Plan and Budget and as part of ongoing continuous improvement efforts we are seeking opportunities to combine reporting where possible. The content of this report will continue to be reported to the BOH, however, it may be in combination with other performance metrics.

Program Highlights (July 1 – December 31, 2018)

Sexual Health

Rates of sexually transmitted infections continue to rise in Hamilton and Ontario. In 2018, rates of all Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) jumped to nearly double the rate that was observed between 2005 and 2010 (2018: 414.6 per 100,000 population vs. 2005-2010: 244.2 per 100,000 population), representing the highest rates in the City of Hamilton since 2005. This spike was driven mostly by diagnoses of chlamydia and gonorrhoea. Year-round, the sexual health program (SHP) offers free testing and treatment, free condoms and safe sex counselling for reportable STIs via our sexual

health, street health and outreach clinic testing sites. In 2018, the SHP expanded the availability of testing at its outreach clinical sites, and updated clinic online video tours. The final quarter of 2018 saw the launch of online testing campaign for syphilis and HIV, targeting men at high risk of both diseases, and the kick-off of a six-month clinical services review to identify opportunities to combat rising STIs. The sexual health clinic review is using local data to determine STI priority populations within Hamilton and engaged the expertise of sexual health nurses and program managers to identify effective evidence-informed strategies for STI prevention and treatment. Looking ahead to 2019, the sexual health program will continue to monitor the trends of STIs, and through the sexual health clinic review, will evaluate and implement best practices for reducing STIs among our priority populations.

Health Hazards and Vector Borne Disease

Air Quality and Climate Change (AQ&CC)

Staff worked in partnership with Mohawk College's Centre for Climate Change Management (CCCM) and the City of Burlington to establish the Bay Area Climate Change Office and the Bay Area Climate Change Council. The Bay Area Climate Council met in Q3 and Q4, 2018 to begin establishing priority climate actions. This regional collaborative governance model is meant to accelerate climate change action across the two cities to help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

The AQ&CC Team, while accomplishing these climate change goals, also worked to push forward other air quality initiatives. Staff successfully planned and implemented the very first Hamilton Air Summit in September 2018 that received positive media recognition and attendance from key community stakeholders. Further analysis on the Hamilton Airshed Modelling System (HAMS) that was originally presented to Board of Health in April 2018 was completed in partnership with Golder Associates Ltd. A sub-regional analysis was performed on air pollutant distribution across the City of Hamilton. A workshop was hosted in November 2018 with several members of the community attending to learn more about the sub-regional analysis and help determine next steps to further improving air quality in Hamilton.

Health Hazards Vector-Borne Diseases

In 2018, Hamilton Public Health Services (PHS) expanded and continued their rabies awareness campaign encouraging pet owners to vaccinate their pets, stay away from wildlife and to report any animal-to-human exposures. Social media, various websites, billboards and radio advertisements reminded people that rabies is still present in the Hamilton area. Local data is suggesting that people are following PHS's recommendations by avoiding wildlife and as a result we are receiving fewer reports of rabid wildlife. Most importantly, we are seeing fewer residents requiring rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) following exposures to animals; only 83 people received

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rabies PEP, the lowest number compared to any year since the outbreak started in 2015. Additionally, Q3 and Q4 of 2018 saw the lowest amount of PEP utilized when compared to the same quarters for all years since the outbreak.

Provincially, the raccoon rabies strain is spreading to more Ontario jurisdictions and now includes the fox rabies strain. While Hamilton has seen an annual decline in the number of rabid animals since 2016, the urban setting has still proved challenging in gaining control over the outbreak, now reaching its fourth year. As the geographical spread of rabies grows, we must remain vigilant and continue to remind residents to avoid wildlife, vaccinate their pets, and report any animal bites.

Tobacco

On October 17, 2018, Bill 36, the Cannabis Statute Law Amendment Act, 2018 was passed and received Royal Assent to harmonize the Regulations concerning cannabis, tobacco and electronic cigarette products. Bill 36 amended the Smoke-Free Ontario Act (SFOA), 2017 to prohibit the smoking of cannabis in the same places where smoking tobacco and the use of electronic cigarettes (vaping) is prohibited. Related amendments for displaying and promoting vapour products were also finalized by the government. Tobacco Control Enforcement is reporting a decrease in the total number of Electronic Cigarette Act (legal enforcement) inspections for 2017 as a result of the change in legislation that occurred that will include vapour products as part of the SFOA 2017. An education period after the SFOA was enacted, as part of progressive enforcement strategy, may ultimately show an inflated compliance rate among electronic cigarette vendors.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report BOH19007: Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Report: July – December 2018