



Hamilton

# Public Health Sub-Committee Orientation Session 1 – Public Health in Hamilton

History & Fundamentals  
2024 Priorities

December 2, 2024

# History & Fundamentals

# Public Health in Hamilton: In the Beginning...



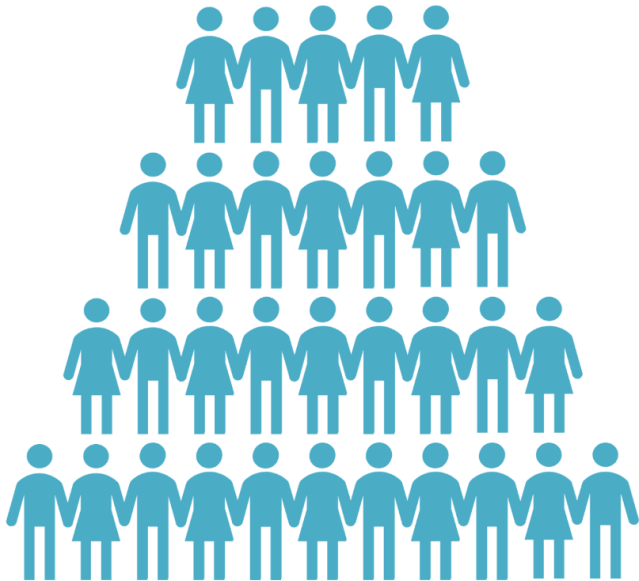
- Hamilton's **first Board of Health** was established in **1873**
- **Dr. Charles O'Reilly** was appointed as the first Medical Officer of Health
- By **1925**, there were 9 divisions with a total of 75 staff and the estimated population was over 114,000.
- By **1967**, there were 158 staff and the estimated population was over 298,000.
- **Today**, we have 478 staff and the estimated population is 613,686.

The work of public health evolved overtime; however, the impact of the **local government** on the health of Hamiltonians was evident from early on.

# Public Health in Hamilton: Our Approach

## Population Health Approach

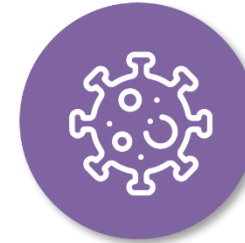
Public health focuses on the health of the **entire community**.



## Core Functions



Health  
Protection



Disease  
Prevention



Emergency  
Management



Health Promotion &  
Policy Development



Assessment &  
Surveillance



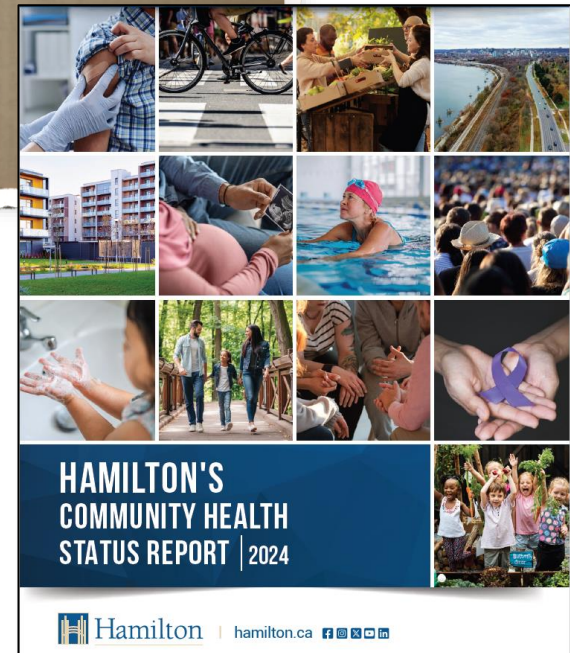
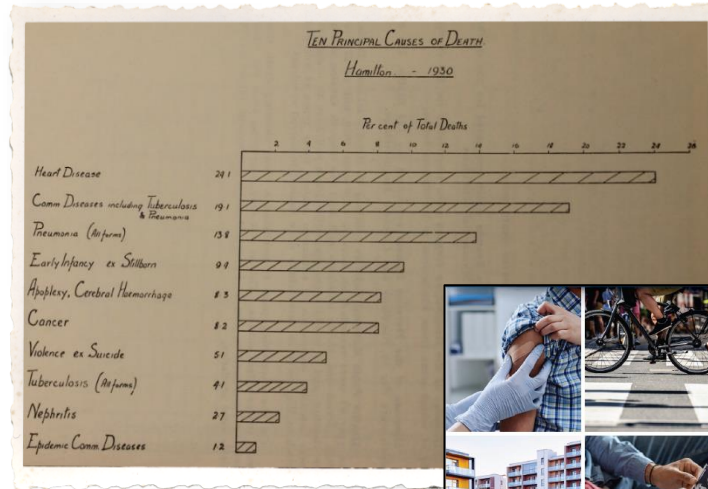
# Public Health in Hamilton: Population Health Assessment

Understanding the health of our local population is critical to our work – this process is known as **population health assessment**.

We **use** population health assessment, alongside other evidence, to:

- **Set priorities**
- **Plan our programs & services**

We **share** this information so that our community can **collectively work together** to improve our population's health.



# Public Health in Hamilton: Responding to Local Health Issues

Assessing and monitoring the health of the population enables us to be responsive to local health needs and emerging issues

## Examples:

- **1909-1911** – First municipality to provide safe milk for babies and toddlers.
- **1922** – First City in North America to implement a widespread school-based immunization program against diphtheria.
- **1955** – All students were vaccinated against polio and by 1957 there were no deaths resulting from the disease.



# Public Health in Hamilton: Responding to Local Health Issues Cont'd...

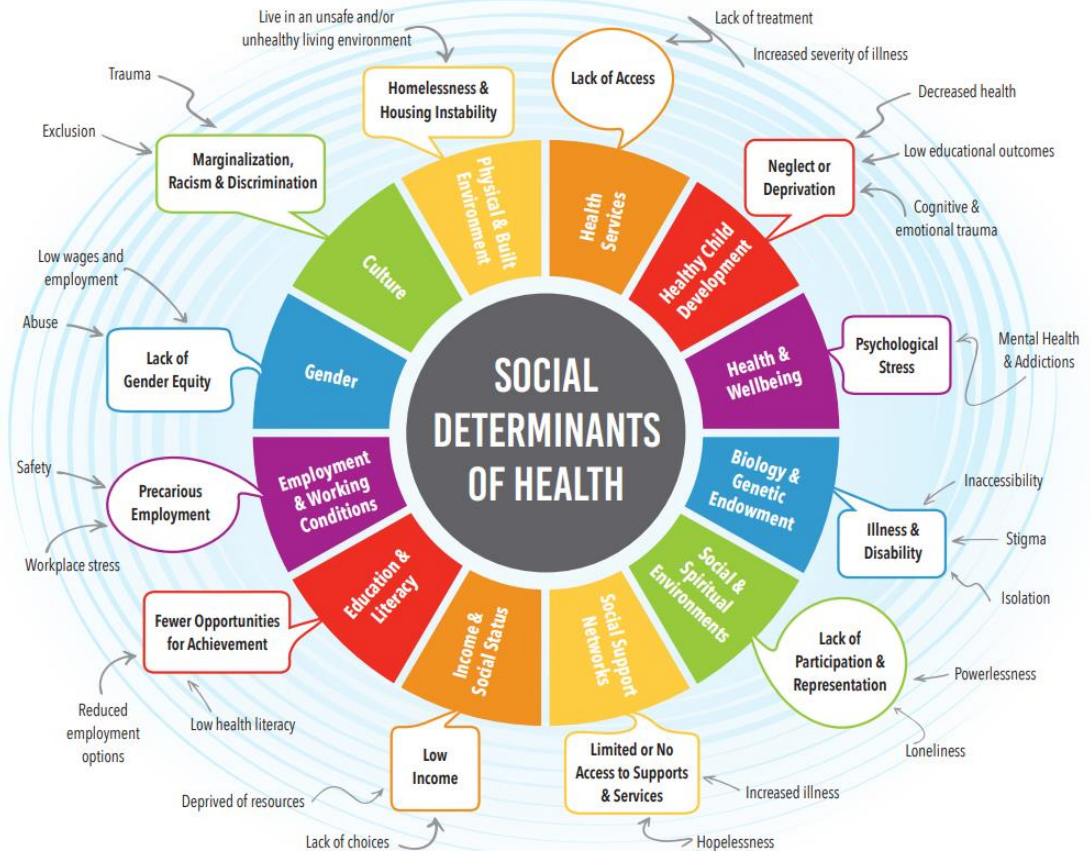


## Examples continued:

- **2008** – First public health unit in Canada to introduce the Nurse Family Partnership program to young, low-income, first-time parents.
- **2012** – Hamilton was the first community in Ontario to implement a comprehensive smoke- and vape-free parks & recreation bylaw.
- **2015** – After receiving our first case of terrestrial rabies in a raccoon, Hamilton became a leader in rabies investigation and prevention.
- **2020-2022** – Hamilton Public Health Services administered 435,401 doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

# Public Health in Hamilton: Social Determinants of Health

- Health is influenced by a broad range of determinants, many of them are social determinants.
- Consequently, some individuals and populations are at greater risk for poorer health outcomes.
- Understanding these health inequities and mobilizing collective action** to address them is a key role of public health.



Source: United Way Halifax (2021)

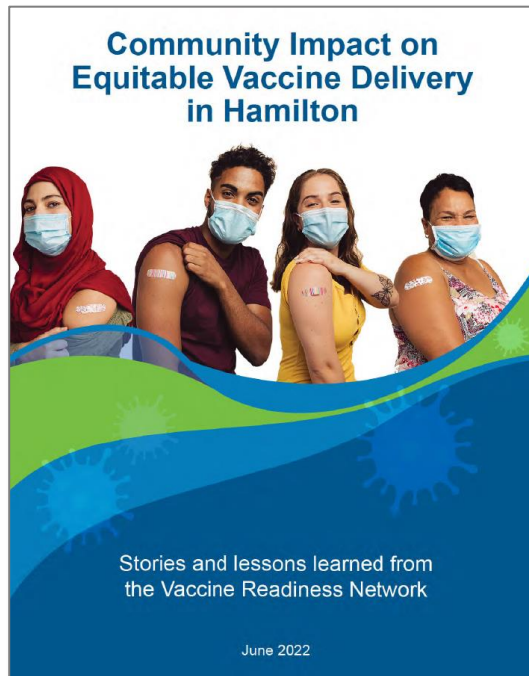


# Public Health in Hamilton: Social Determinants of Health *Cont'd...*



## Examples of initiatives to reduce health inequities

- **1997** – Healthy Babies, Health Children program was launched. This program ensures families with young children who are at high-risk have access to early intervention support.
- **2020** – The **Vaccine Readiness Network** was established to share updates related to the COVID-19 vaccine rollout and discuss shared roles to enhance access among priority populations.
- **2024** – Implementation of **Hamilton Public Health Services' Indigenous Health Strategy** was initiated



# Public Health in Hamilton: Partnerships & Collaborations

Partnerships & collaborations are vital to public health.

## Examples:

### Partnership with Schools and School Boards

- Our partnership with school boards and schools dates back to 1908 when the first School Program was initiated in Hamilton. This partnership continues and together we help students achieve optimal health and reach their full potential.

### Healthy Birth Weights Coalition (initiated in 2013)

- Aimed to strengthen the system of care to reduce low birthweight risk and ensure optimal health for mothers, babies and neighbourhoods.



### Active Sustainable School Travel Task Force (initiated in 2015)

- Aimed to increase the number of staff and students who use active, sustainable transportation to get to and from school, thereby addressing environmental, health and safety issues.

### Hamilton COVID-19 Response Table (initiated in 2020)

- Representatives from health and social services working to support a collaborative response to prevent and respond to the spread of COVID-19.

# 2024 Priorities

# Public Health in Hamilton: Priority Setting

We have **multi-year priorities** and action plans that are reviewed and updated annually based on population health assessment and other sources of evidence.

## Key Planning Questions

- What are the current and emerging health issues in our community?
- What has changed (i.e., improved or worsened)?
- Is there new or updated evidence regarding effective interventions?

## Evidence-Informed Decision Making



Source: National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools



# Public Health in Hamilton: **2024 Priorities**

**Health  
Equity**

**Child & Youth  
Healthy Growth &  
Development**

**Mental Health &  
Substance Use**

**Climate  
Impacts**

## What we are seeing in the Hamilton community

There are inequities in our community that do not let everyone have the same opportunity for good health.

There are inequities in nearly all areas of health. The biggest issues are related to substance use, self-harm, assault, and diabetes.

Income and housing needs are strongly associated with inequities observed for these health outcomes.

## What we are focusing on



- Enhancing **staff competency** to improve equitable health outcomes in programs
- Enhancing the **collection and use of data on the social determinants of health** for Hamiltonians
- Increasing **engagement with priority populations** in identifying and addressing health inequities and collaborate with community partners
- Engaging with **Indigenous communities and organizations** to guide & support us with the development and delivery of culturally safe public health services
- Measuring and **demonstrating the impact** of programs on health inequities in our community



# Child and Youth Healthy Growth and Development

## What we are seeing in the Hamilton community

Increasing rate of babies born with low birth weight and decreasing rates of exclusive breastfeeding.

Nearly 1 in 3 kindergarten students are vulnerable in at least one domain of early development.

Percentage of students with up-to-date vaccine record continues to be lower compared to pre-pandemic.



## What we are focusing on



- Helping **mothers achieve optimal physical and mental health** during the prenatal and postpartum period
- Reducing the number of **children aged 0-6 years** at risk for poor **social and emotional development**
- Continuing to partner with school boards / schools to help school-aged **children & youth achieve optimal health** by focusing on mental health & well-being, access oral health care and vaccination

# Mental Health & Substance Use

## What we are seeing in the Hamilton community

Each year, over 1,000 Hamiltonians die from tobacco (783 deaths), alcohol (208 deaths), and opioids (168 deaths).

Opioid-related deaths went up by over 400% in Hamilton from 2005 to 2022, and this rate is consistently greater than the provincial rate.

There is an increasing rate of self-harm among youth, with 1 in 8 reporting they have seriously contemplated suicide.

## What we are focusing on



- Strengthening our approach to **trauma- and violence-informed care**
- Increasing resiliency and promoting **youth mental health and well-being**
- Enhancing the **Municipal Alcohol Policy** to mitigate the harms associated with alcohol use on municipal properties
- Enhancing **harm reduction** education, programs, and services to support safer substance use among people who use substances





# Climate Impacts

## What we are seeing in the Hamilton community

Hamilton's annual average temperature is projected to increase from 8.3°C to 10.4°C in 2050 and 12.5°C in 2080.

From 2012 to 2021, residents of Hamilton visited the emergency department over 1,200 times for heat-related concerns.

Since 2013, Lyme disease cases have increased in Hamilton, with a record high of 81 cases reported in 2023.



## What we are focusing on



- Increasing **surveillance, public awareness, and detection of climate-sensitive vector-borne diseases** in order to reduce the incidence in the Hamilton community
- Promoting the **development of healthy built and natural environments** and mitigating the impacts of climate change
- Increasing **preparedness and public awareness** to respond to threats related to climate change

# Orientation: Next Steps

## Session 2

January 13, 2025

- Overview of public health in Ontario (Loretta Ryan & Monika Turner)
- Public health in Hamilton
  - Part 2: Programs & Services

## Session 3

February 24, 2025

- 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget
  - Community health status
  - Renewed priorities and action plans
  - Financial information

## Session 4

March 17, 2025

- Integrating equity, diversity and inclusion into decision-making processes (Evelyn Myrie)

**Note:** Relevant ongoing education will be provided as reports are brought forward

# How Can You Learn More?

## Additional Online Resources Available

- Ontario Public Health Standards:  
<https://files.ontario.ca/moh-ontario-public-health-standards-en-2021.pdf>
  
- Association of Local Public Health Agencies' (ALPHA):
  - Board of Health Orientation Manual  
([https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.alphaweb.org/resource/collection/86D31666-E7EA-42F1-BDA1-A03ECA0B4E3D/BOH\\_orientation\\_manual\\_2022\\_Nov\\_15\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.alphaweb.org/resource/collection/86D31666-E7EA-42F1-BDA1-A03ECA0B4E3D/BOH_orientation_manual_2022_Nov_15_FINAL.pdf))  
and;
  - Other Resources:  
([https://www.alphaweb.org/page/BOH\\_Shared\\_Resources](https://www.alphaweb.org/page/BOH_Shared_Resources))
  
- Hamilton's Community Health Status Report:  
(<http://www.hamilton.ca/HealthData>)

# QUESTIONS?