



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Health Sub-Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	December 2, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Public Health Sub-Committee Orientation (BOH24025) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Carolyn Hureau (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6004
SUBMITTED BY:	Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not Applicable.

INFORMATION

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the orientation and continuing education plan for Public Health Sub-Committee members. First, it is important to acknowledge Hamilton's journey to this point, as the establishment of the Public Health Sub-Committee is a significant milestone towards implementation of a semi-autonomous Board of Health.

Hamilton Public Health Services is one of two public health units in Ontario that have a single-tier governance model whereby City Council acts as the Board of Health. While Hamilton's Board of Health governance model has remained consistent over time, discussions about effective public health governance have continued locally, provincially, and nationally. Several provincial and national reports between 2019 and 2023 have recommended that public health governance and decision-making be

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.

informed by evidence, public health expertise, local expertise, and community engagement.^{1,2,3,4}

Beginning in March 2021, Hamilton community members delegated in support of restructuring the board of health. Delegates advocated for the need to include health expertise and the perspectives of community members from equity-deserving groups when making public health decisions (e.g., the perspectives of Black, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+ communities, women, people with disabilities, and people living with low-income).

In April 2023, Council directed staff to consult with appropriate City of Hamilton Advisory Committees, community partners, healthcare professionals, and members of the public regarding Hamilton's current board of health structure and alternate governance options.⁵ As outlined in Appendix "A" to Report BOH23039, results showed there was strong support to ask the provincial government for a change to a semi-autonomous board of health structure whereby decision-making would be shared between elected members of City Council and community representatives with health expertise and lived experience. Under such a governance model, the semi-autonomous Board of Health would be responsible for discussing and making decisions regarding public health programs and services. City Council would retain authority for select decisions, such as the size, composition and selection of Board members, as well as appointment of certain staff positions.

¹ Ministry of Health. (2019). Discussion Paper: Public Health Modernization. https://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/phehs_consultations/docs/dp_public_health_modernization.pdf

² Public Health Agency of Canada. (2021). A Vision to Transform Canada's Public Health System. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phacaspc/documents/corporate/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-publichealth-canada/state-public-health-canada-2021/cpho-report-eng.pdf>

³ Di Ruggiero, E., Bhatia, D., Umar, I., Arpin, E., Champagne, C., Clavier, C., Denis, J.L., & Hunter, D. (2022). Governing for the Public's Health: Governance Options for a Strengthened and Renewed Public Health System in Canada. <https://nccph.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2022/06/OCPHO-Report-Governance-2022-En.pdf>

⁴ Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario. (2023). Being Ready: Ensuring Public Health Preparedness for Infectious Outbreaks and Pandemics. <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-cmoh-annual-report-2022-en-2023-03-15.pdf>

⁵ City of Hamilton Council Meeting Minutes (April 12, 2023). Revised Audit, Finance, and Administration Committee Report 23-005 Amended Item 6.0 (a)(ix): Restructuring the Board of Health Standing Committee. <https://pubhamilton.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=361310>

On January 24, 2024, Council unanimously approved, in principle, the semi-autonomous board of health governance structure.⁶ An application was submitted to the Province of Ontario on March 26, 2024, requesting the required legislative changes be made to implement a semi-autonomous board of health governance model. In the interim, pending the necessary legislative changes by the Province, Council also approved the establishment of a Public Health Sub-Committee consisting of six City Council members, six community representatives, and one education representative.⁶ This Sub-Committee will be responsible for receiving and deliberating on reports from Public Health staff, and submitting recommendations directly to City Council, who remain responsible for final decision-making as the Board of Health.

All Public Health Sub-Committee members have a key role to play in promoting well-being and creating opportunities to enhance the quality of life of Hamiltonians. Understanding the emerging health issues and trends in Hamilton as well as public health governance and legislation will assist members in fulfilling this role. As such, staff have prepared an orientation and continuing education plan. Orientation and ongoing education is also for Board of Health members under the Ontario Public Health Standards (see Appendix “A” to Report BOH24025).

The following four-part orientation series will be provided to all members of the Public Health Sub-Committee:

1. Session #1 – December 2, 2024

- A presentation by external speaker, Karima Kanani, partner at Miller-Thompson LLP regarding good governance principles; and,
- A staff presentation outlining the history of public health in Hamilton, foundational principles, and current priorities.

2. Session #2 – January 13, 2025

- A presentation by the Association of Local Public Health Agencies regarding public health legislation, standards, accountability framework, funding, and governance roles and responsibilities; and,
- A staff presentation outlining organizational structure, programs and services, and current pressures and opportunities.

⁶ City of Hamilton Council Meeting Minutes (January 24, 2024). Public Health Committee Report 24-001 Item 1.0: Options for the City of Hamilton’s Board of Health Governance. <https://pub-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=394194>

3. Session #3 – February 24, 2025

- A staff presentation regarding the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget including a summary of community health status, renewed priorities and action plans, and financial information; and,

4. Session #4 – March 17, 2025

- A presentation by Evelyn Myrie, lead consultant at EMPOWER Strategy Group, about integrating equity, diversity, and inclusion into decision-making processes.

Due to the evolving nature of public health, both in terms of emerging issues and new data and evidence, there is a need for continuing education. Accordingly, background and contextual information will be provided as reports are brought forward to keep the Public Health Sub-Committee abreast of the most recent information and to support evidence-informed decision making.

Supplemental resources from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies are provided in Appendix “B” and Appendix “C” to Report BOH24025.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report BOH24025	Ontario Public Health Standards 2021
Appendix “B” to Report BOH24025	Association of Local Public Health Agencies – Orientation Manual for Boards of Health
Appendix “C” to Report BOH24025	Association of Local Public Health Agencies – Board of Health Governance Toolkit