

# CITY OF HAMILTON

## MOTION

Public Health Sub-Committee: January 13, 2025

**MOVED BY R. LENNOX**.....

**SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR C. KROETSCH**.....

### **Feasibility of Implementing Wastewater Surveillance**

WHEREAS, disease surveillance is a core tenant of a strong public health system, making it possible to identify and forecast threats to public health, respond quickly by deploying resources effectively, and informing policy and program development;

WHEREAS, wastewater surveillance is an accurate, effective and cost-efficient tool for monitoring community transmission of respiratory viruses and other potential public health threats, such as mpox and H5N1 (and can quickly shift to include other pathogens as needed);

WHEREAS, wastewater surveillance for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) became a mainstay of surveillance and was used to inform policy decisions on public health measures and public health risk communication pertaining to active transmission levels;

WHEREAS, when wastewater surveillance was available, Hamilton Public Health used the data to inform local health providers of mismatches occurring between signals of infectious disease transmission in wastewater data and clinically-reported cases, indicating potentially undiagnosed cases occurring in the community (e.g. mpox, 2023);

WHEREAS, the province discontinued its wastewater surveillance program on July 31, 2024;

WHEREAS, federal wastewater surveillance through the Public Health Agency of Canada is limited in scope to only four cities across Ontario;

WHEREAS, other public health units in Ontario (Peterborough and Ottawa) have opted to continue their wastewater surveillance programs in partnership with local academic institutions (Trent University); and

WHEREAS, wastewater surveillance can provide an early warning of viruses (e.g. H5N1) in a community or high-risk setting and support an early public health response.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That staff be directed to report back to the Public Health Sub-Committee with a report outlining the feasibility of implementing a local wastewater surveillance program, including respiratory viruses (influenza, SARS-CoV-2, RSV), mpox and H5N1.