



City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

To: Chair and Members
Public Health Sub-Committee

Date: February 24, 2025

Report No: BOH25002

Subject/Title: 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget and Public Health Priorities

Ward(s) Affected: (City Wide)

Recommendations

- 1) That the Medical Officer of Health, or delegate, **BE AUTHORIZED** and **BE DIRECTED** to submit the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget to the Ministry of Health, in keeping with the information that is outlined in Report BOH25002.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report and its accompanying presentation is to seek approval to submit the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget to the Ministry of Health.
- As per the Ontario Public Health Standards, boards of health are required to submit the Annual Service Plan & Budget to the Ministry of Health in order to receive Provincial funding to support the delivery of public health programs and services.
- This report and accompanying presentation also provide a high-level overview on Public Health Services' multi-year priorities, intended to provide contextual information and support strategic decision making.

Financial Considerations

Public Health Services delivers a wide range of programs and services to meet the requirements set out in the Ontario Public Health Standards. Most programs are funded using a Provincial/Municipal cost-shared model, except for the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, which are 100% Provincially funded. Public Health Services also provides additional services beyond those required under the Ontario Public Health

Standards to address local needs. These services are either 100% Provincially funded (e.g., Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Ontario Health West, etc.) or 100% Municipally funded. If the Board of Health determines that additional public health services are needed, additional funding would need to be sought and approved by Council.

The Annual Service Plan & Budget is comprised of two parts:

1. Programs funded using a Provincial/Municipal cost-shared model (base budget); and,
2. 100% Provincially funded programs (e.g., the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, etc.).

The financial components of the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget were addressed within the overall Public Health Services budget. This was included in the Healthy and Safe Communities Department report and budget presentation at the General Issues Committee meeting on January 29, 2025. The overall City budget remains under consideration by Council at the time of submission of this report. If there are any changes that impact the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget submission, these will be included in the final submission and a memorandum circulated to the Board of Health and committee.

The total 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget expenditures are \$51.8 M (or 82.1%) of the total \$63.1 M Public Health Services gross budget. This reflects a 3.0% increase in gross Annual Service Plan & Budget expenditures compared to 2024. The anticipated Provincial subsidies and fees for the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget total \$35.2 M, which is a \$0.3 M increase over 2024 or 1%. The net City levy contribution is \$16.6 M, a 7.8% increase on the levy over 2024.

The base budget for 2025 is \$46.7 M, which includes gross expenditures of \$47.7 M, offset by \$1.0 M in fees and general revenues. These figures reflect a 3.0% increase in gross base expenditures from 2024. The anticipated Provincial subsidy for these programs is \$30.1 M, with a Municipal contribution of \$16.6 M. It should be noted that staff incorporated eligible Municipal programming, such as the Opioid Action Plan and non-mandatory oral health programs, into the 2025 submission, adhering to Provincial guidance.

The Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program is anticipated to receive \$4.1 M in funding for 2025. An increase to the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program is essential to cover the rising costs of service delivery.

The Ministry of Health has communicated that they will consider requests for one-time funding for extraordinary costs in 2025. For 2025, Public Health Services plans to request one-time funding at 100% for:

- **The Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program:**
Request \$0.4 M to cover the rising costs of dentures and specialist services required to maintain the service levels provided in 2024.

If the Province does not provide this funding, the ability to refer seniors for these critical services will be impacted. In such a scenario, staff will return to the Public Health Sub-Committee for further direction.

For financial consideration of impacts related to alternatives, it should be noted that boards of health are required to submit a 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget to the Ministry of Health by March 31, 2025, in order to receive Provincial funding to support the delivery of public health programs and services under the Ontario Public Health Standards.

Overall staffing levels for Public Health Services, including programs within the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget, were addressed in the Healthy and Safe Communities Department report and budget presentation at the General Issues Committee meeting on January 29, 2025.

In the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget, the total staffing is 339.1 FTE, which represents a decrease of (0.8 FTE) compared to the 339.9 FTE in 2024. This is a result of transferring a position to another City department.

Background

The 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget has been prepared in accordance with the direction of the Mayor to staff.¹

Analysis

The 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget outlines Public Health Services' plans for the delivery of programs and services, as well as budgeted expenditures, in accordance with the Ontario Public Health Standards. It includes an assessment of local population health needs in Hamilton, priority areas for action, detailed program plans, budgeted expenditures, and requests for Provincial base and one-time funding.

Ontario Public Health Standards

The Ontario Public Health Standards set the minimum requirements for public health programs and services for boards of health across the Province. The Standards focus on disease prevention, health promotion, health protection, and community health surveillance. In line with the Standards, Public Health Services delivers a wide range of services and supports related to health promotion, health protection, and injury and disease prevention to enhance the health and well-being of the Hamilton population. Services encompass immunization, infectious and communicable diseases prevention and control, education programs, family and child health services, population health assessment, substance use, sexual health services, air quality monitoring, school services, dental services, food and water safety, injury prevention, and public health inspections, as well as foundational programs that underlie and support all programs and services. A dedicated team of public health professionals, including nurses,

¹ Mayor of the City of Hamilton. (2024). Mayoral directive to staff: MDI-2024-03. Hamilton, ON: City of Hamilton.

doctors, public health inspectors, dental staff, nutritionists, social workers, epidemiologists, specialist roles and health promoters, collaborates with community partners to address the health needs of the community.

Ministry of Health's Strategy to Strengthen Public Health

In August 2023, the Ministry of Health announced a Provincial strategy to strengthen public health. This strategy focuses on optimizing capacity, stability, and sustainability, and delivering more equitable health outcomes for Ontarians. One component of this strategy involves reviewing the Ontario Public Health Standards with an aim to refine, refocus, and re-level roles and responsibilities of local public health agencies. In May 2024, the Ministry invited all local public health agencies and several public health professional associations and communities of practice to provide feedback on the draft Standards, which was due on June 20, 2024. The Ministry of Health continues to review the feedback and explore additional opportunities to streamline responsibilities to reduce workload burdens. The revised Standards and incorporated documents will be released by August 2025 and take effect on January 2, 2026. Until then, the current Standards and incorporated protocols and guidelines remain in effect. Staff will provide the Public Health Sub-Committee with an overview of the revised Standards and associated impacts on programs and services once available.

The Provincial strategy to strengthen public health also focuses on providing stable, sustainable funding. This includes restoring previously reduced subsidies in 2024 and implementing an annual 1% base funding increase through 2026. Despite these positive changes, Provincial funding growth remains below increases in wages, benefits, and inflation, alongside rising costs associated with population growth and increasing service demand, resulting in budget pressures. As part of this strategy, the Ministry of Health is also reviewing its longer-term Provincial base funding methodology for public health, with implementation planned for 2026.

Development of the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget

Public Health Services has a broad mandate with limited, finite resources, making prioritization essential. Each year, as part of the annual program and budget planning cycle, the Public Health Leadership Team revisits Public Health Services' multi-year priorities. This involves reviewing the current context, including Term of Council priorities, updated local community health status information, and the financial and political landscapes at both the Provincial and local levels. Through this process, the Public Health Leadership Team identifies opportunities for strategic prioritization, resource optimization, and advancing public health goals for Hamilton. This priority setting exercise informs the development of the Annual Service Plan & Budget to:

- Balance core public health functions and mandates, local population health needs, Council priorities, and Provincial direction;
- Strengthen program efficiency;
- Preserve essential services and improve population health outcomes for priority populations; and
- Strategically allocate resources to minimize impacts on service levels and staff.

To address Public Health Services' multi-year priorities, staff worked to identify specific actions to adapt and improve existing programs and services in 2025 and beyond.

In the presentation accompanying Report BOH25002, members will receive the following information that is included in the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget:

- A summary of updated local community health status information;
- Details on Public Health Services' multi-year priorities and action areas to address Hamilton's population health needs. These include:
 - Equity-driven public health and upholding Indigenous rights;
 - Substance use;
 - Child and youth healthy growth and development; and,
 - Climate-related environmental health risks.
- Budget information related to delivering Ministry-funded programs in accordance with the Ontario Public Health Standards.

It is important to note that these multi-year priorities are not new; they address enduring, long-standing issues that require sustained resources and multi-sectoral collaboration. Public Health Services is one contributor among many in these efforts. Appendix "A" to Report BOH25002 provides more information about Public Health Services' 2025 multi-year priorities and action areas.

As a next step, in addition to the information shared during orientation, a performance report will be shared in Q2 2025 about Public Health Services' progress made in 2024 in addressing these priorities and their key action areas. This report will also highlight Public Health Services' programmatic and financial performance towards achieving the objectives set in the 2024 Annual Service Plan & Budget, which extend beyond the four priorities.

The Ontario Public Health Standards outline legislated requirements that direct the delivery of mandatory public health programs and services by boards of health pursuant to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. Boards of health are accountable for meeting all legislative and operational requirements, including submission of the Annual Service Plan & Budget to the Ministry of Health.

The recommendations in this report conform with existing Corporate Policy and business processes for approving and submitting the Annual Service Plan & Budget to the Ministry of Health.

As noted, Public Health Services operates within a broad mandate and limited resources, making prioritization essential to maximize population health outcomes. This plan outlines focused efforts and resources on key priorities to achieve the greatest impact.

While the priorities in this plan are designed to be adequately resourced, Public Health Services must remain flexible and responsive to urgent public health issues and/or emergencies. This may require Public Health Services to temporarily redirect resources away from planned activities outlined in the Annual Service Plan & Budget. In such cases, any resulting trade-offs or adjustments on planned activities would be communicated to the Public Health Sub-Committee and Council as the Board of Health.

The City of Hamilton's Finance and Administration Team was consulted to provide financial and staffing implications for the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget and are supportive of staff recommendations in this report.

Alternatives

As noted above, submission of the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget to the Ministry of Health is tied to funding. If the document is not submitted by March 31, 2025, Public Health Services' programs and services, including priority work, would not be resourced appropriately, and may lead to further direction from the Province regarding reporting or programming.

The financial components of the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget remain under consideration by Council at the time of submission of this report.

The staffing resource implications were embedded in the financial components of the 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget, and remain under consideration by Council at the time of submission of this report.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The recommendations in this report support the following 2022-2026 Council Priorities, Outcomes, and Measures of Success:

1. Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development
 - 1.1. Reduce the burden on residential taxpayers
 - 1.3. Accelerate our response to climate change
3. Responsiveness & Transparency
 - 3.1. Prioritize customer service and proactive communication
 - 3.2. Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving
 - 3.3. Build a high performing public service
 - 3.4. Modernize City systems

The 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget outlines programs and services that promote long-term population health outcomes, while leveraging Provincial subsidies to reduce the financial burden on residential taxpayers. It includes several climate-related actions to help support the City's response to mitigating the environmental health-risks associated with climate change.

The 2025 Annual Service Plan & Budget also prioritizes accessible, equitable public health services through a customer-focused approach with clear, proactive communication. It emphasizes community engagement and collaboration with partners to ensure services are effective and culturally appropriate. Investments in staff development and fostering partnerships demonstrate a commitment to a high-performing public service. Additionally, ongoing efforts to streamline and modernize

systems and processes improve the efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery, ensuring Public Health Services remains adaptable and responsive to emerging and future needs.

Previous Reports Submitted

- [BOH24025](#) - Public Health Sub-Committee Orientation
This report and its accompanying presentation provides an overview of the orientation and continuing education plan for Public Health Sub-Committee members.
- [BOH24001](#) - 2024 Annual Service Plan & Budget and Public Health Priorities
This report details the previous year's Annual Service Plan & Budget, which was submitted to the Public Health Committee for approval.
- [BOH23038](#) - Strengthening Public Health
This report and its accompanying presentation provides an overview of the Ministry of Health's strategy to strengthen public health.

Consultation

- David Trevisani, Manager – Finance & Administration, Healthy and Safe Communities Department

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Public Health Services' Multi-Year Priorities and Action Areas

Prepared by: Konrad Lisnyj, Senior Project Manager
Public Health Services, Healthy Families Division, Planning
& Competency Development

Submitted and recommended by: Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Public Health Services, Office of the Medical Officer of Health