

Public Health Services’ Multi-Year Priorities and Action Areas

Equity-Driven Public Health and Upholding Indigenous Rights



Priority Goal: To address health inequities in the community, we:

- Embed principles of health equity, anti-racism, and anti-Indigenous racism into our daily work;
- Engage with priority populations to ensure our programs and services are barrier-free, culturally safe, and can be accessed by those who need it the most; and,
- Work in allyship with Indigenous communities to uphold their inherent rights and recognize their wholistic view of health, which includes the mind, body, spirit, and a deep connection to the land.

Priority Action Areas for Public Health Services:

Embed Learning into Public Health Practice

Data for Equity

Community Engagement

Action Area: Apply principles of health equity, anti-racism, and anti-Indigenous racism into our daily work and contribute towards a culture of ownership, sustainability, and continuous learning.

- Through 2026, apply learnings from training in health equity and anti-racism, Indigenous cultural safety, and trauma and violence-informed care to our daily work.

Action Area: Enhance the collection and use of social determinants of health data to share information on health inequities in Hamilton.

- Through 2028:
 - Continue to inform operations by using many sources of evidence, including data, to better understand health inequities in Hamilton and demonstrate impact on reducing them, while engaging and sharing information on health inequities with the community;
 - Expand social determinants of health data collection with a consistent approach across Public Health Services’ programs; and,
 - Take direction from the Indigenous community to determine how data and information about them will be collected, protected, used, or shared in our work (internally and/or externally).

Action Area: Meaningfully engage priority populations to improve public health practice using culturally safe and evidence-based strategies that reflects lived experiences, as well as uphold the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination for better health outcomes.

- Through 2027, meaningfully engage with priority populations and Indigenous communities to deepen our understanding of their lived experiences and the impacts of colonization. Public Health Services is committed to strengthening relationships and building trust, listening to community voices with intention, and collaborating on the co-design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services.

Child and Youth Healthy Growth and Development



Priority Goal: Achieve optimal child and youth growth and development.

Priority Action Areas for Public Health Services:



Action Area: Support the development of safe, stable, nurturing families to reduce impact of Adverse Childhood Events in children.

- Through 2028:
 - Increase enrollment in prenatal programs for priority populations to improve parental knowledge and referral to services to support safe, stable, nurturing families; and,
 - Increase referral to mental health services for pregnant people and children aged 0 to six in priority populations to support safe, stable, nurturing families.

Action Area: Improve the mental health of school-aged children and youth (aged six to 18) within identified priority populations.

- Through 2027, improve child and youth mental health through early identification and support for mental health vulnerabilities.
- Through 2028, improve child and youth mental health through supporting the creation and maintenance of healthy school environments within identified priority schools.

Action Area: Improve the oral health of children and youth who belong to priority populations.

- Through 2028, increase the number of children and youth accessing preventative dental care services by 10%.

Action Area: Increase vaccine confidence to reduce hesitancy and increase vaccine coverage rates for all *Immunizations of School Pupils Act* and school-based vaccines.

- Through 2028, achieve federal and local targets for routine infant, childhood, and adolescent immunizations.

Action Area: Increase access to services for children and families who belong to priority populations.

- Through 2028, increase opportunities to connect families to programs that contribute to healthy growth and development to reduce barriers to access through use of a consolidated intake tool.

Substance Use



Priority Goal: Prevent and reduce the burden and harms associated with substance use.

Priority Action Areas for Public Health Services:

Trauma- and Violence-
Informed Care

Municipal Policies on
Substance Use

Strategies to Reduce
Harms Associated with
Substance Use

Substance Use
Prevention

Systems Coordination

Action Area: Strengthen Public Health Services’ approach to trauma- and violence-informed care.

- Through 2028:
 - 100% of Public Health Services staff provide emotionally and physically safe environments through the incorporation of trauma- and violence-informed care principles, supported by organizational policies and procedures; and,
 - Promote implementation of trauma- and violence-informed approaches in community organizations and services (interacting with people who use substances).

Action Area: Enhance the Municipal Alcohol Policy to mitigate the harms associated with alcohol use on municipal properties.

- Through 2025, lead and coordinate the revision of the Municipal Alcohol Policy and support the implementation of the revised policy to promote healthy, safe, and enjoyable environments on City properties.

Action Area: Provide a continuum of approaches to address harms associated with alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and other substances.

- Through 2028, implement programs and services to decrease harms and increase supports for safer substance use among people at high risk of substance-related harms.

Action Area: Promote supportive environments to prevent substance use and related harms.

- Through 2028, develop programs, services, and policies to prevent substance use among youth and young adults.

Action Area: Provide systems coordination to address substance use in Hamilton.

- Through 2025, enhance the response to drug toxicity events and trends in Hamilton.
- Through 2028, facilitate and coordinate the Hamilton Drug Strategy and associated working groups to support a coordinated approach to addressing substance use in Hamilton.

Climate-Related Environmental Health Risks



Priority Goal: Promote healthy built and natural environments that support health and mitigate existing and emerging risks, including the impacts of a changing climate, and to enable consistent and effective management of emergency situations.

Priority Action Areas for Public Health Services:



Action Area: Increase surveillance, public awareness, and detection of climate-sensitive vector-borne diseases to reduce the incidence of vector-borne disease in the Hamilton community.

- Through 2026, increase awareness of tick identification and prevention measures among Hamilton adults aged 18 years and over, including parents.
- Through 2028:
 - Monitor for ticks capable of transmitting Lyme disease;
 - Increase awareness of mosquito borne-illness prevention measures and source reduction strategies;
 - Monitor for mosquito-borne diseases to predict spread to humans so control measures can be taken; and,
 - Monitor and respond to reported cases of potential rabies exposures.

Action Area: Coordinate and implement activities aimed at reducing heat-related impacts in the Hamilton community.

- Through 2028:
 - Oversee, maintain, and evaluate a Community Heat Response Strategy annually;
 - Provide heat-related information, education, and outreach to partners and the public;
 - Issue and communicate heat warnings, extended heat warnings, and stand downs annually as per Environment Canada criteria and implement associated actions;
 - Maintain heat-related population health surveillance during annual extreme heat season; and,
 - Improve relationships with and supports for those at greatest risk of the impacts of heat.

Action Area: Address the public health impacts resulting from poor air quality and enable the public to take precautions through monitoring and communications.

- Through 2028:
 - Communicate Special Air Quality Statements (Air Quality Health Index seven - 10) and Air Quality Alerts (Air Quality Health Index 10+ due to Wildfire smoke) annually as per Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and implement associated actions and available supports;
 - Provide air quality/pollution-related information, education, and response to partners and the public;
 - Enhance population health surveillance related to air quality and wildfire smoke events;

- Develop and/or review policies and standards that seek to improve air quality in the City of Hamilton; and,
- Collaborate and coordinate with community stakeholder groups annually to improve collaboration on air quality initiatives in the community.

Action Area: Increase preparedness and public awareness to respond to threats related to climate change.

- Through 2025, in partnership with the City’s Emergency Management Coordinators, test and validate the City’s response to an extreme heat emergency.