

Mandatory Health Programs and Services Review

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To:	Board of Health
From:	Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

Boards of Health throughout Ontario ensure the delivery of services as required by the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines (MHPSG) of the Health Protection and Promotion Act. The Ontario government's Operation Health Protection (2004) outlines a three-year action plan to revitalize the public health system. This includes a review and revision of the MHPSG.

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, in partnership with the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Ministry of Child and Youth Services, is currently in the process of reviewing and revising the Standards which make up the MHPSG. A Technical Review Committee of Ministry staff and community stakeholders has been established to oversee the process and each Standard has been reviewed and revised through a series of stakeholder consultations and expert writing panels. The first draft of the new Ontario Public Health Standards will be released on February 19, 2007 for review and feedback. Each Board of Health and Health Unit has been invited to submit comments on the draft through an e-survey tool by Friday, March 9, 2007.

Toronto Public Health staff has established an internal process to co-ordinate the review and consolidate the feedback. The Board of Health has established a MHPSG Sub-committee to provide Board of Health input into the Toronto's response.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications related to this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its January 29, 2007 meeting, the Board of Health established a Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines (MHPSG) Review Sub-committee for the purpose of providing input into Toronto's feedback on the revised MHPSG.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Service delivery in Ontario Public Health Units is guided by the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines. These standards obtain their legal authority under the provisions of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Part II, Section 5 which specifies that boards of health must provide or ensure the provision of a minimum level of public health programs and services in specified areas. The current Guidelines, which date back to 1997, set out 17 standards for minimum public health programs and services targeted at prevention of disease, health promotion and health protection.

In June 2004, the Ontario government announced Operation Health Protection, a three-year action plan to revitalize the public health system. One of the critical components of Operation Health Protection was a review of the organization and capacity of local public health units. The findings of this review were published in the May 2006 report "Revitalizing Ontario's Public Health Capacity: The Final Report of the Capacity Review Committee". At its June 2006 meeting, the Board of Health endorsed the recommendations made in this report. One of those recommendations, under the section on demonstrating accountability and measuring performance, was that performance standards should be introduced that replace existing mandatory health programs and services guidelines within program standards.

COMMENTS

In the fall of 2006, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC), in partnership with the Ministries of Health Promotion (MHP) and Child and Youth Services (MCYS), initiated a comprehensive review of the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines (MHPSG). This review is a key component of the Ministry's overall strategy to rebuild public health capacity across the province. It has focused on revising, renewing and updating the 1997 MHPSG in a manner that includes technical updates to reflect current evidence and best practice in public health, incorporate a greater focus on performance, accountability and sustainability, and add to or consolidate public health functions/programs where appropriate. It is also being accomplished within a framework for local implementation that is within the current provincial fiscal envelope. In other words, this is to be a cost-neutral review.

The MOHLTC has established a review process that maximizes stakeholder consultation within a condensed period of time and aims to complete the process by the spring of 2007. A Technical Review Committee (TRC), including both Ministry and community

stakeholders, was established to guide the overall development of renewed program standards. Although membership of the TRC was by invitation, Toronto Public Health has two Managers on the Committee: Marco Vittiglio, Manager of Emergency Planning and Preparedness and Marjolyn Pritchard, Assistant Director, Communicable Disease Control. Stakeholders from across the province were then invited to participate in a series of workshops in order to obtain input into the review. Over the past several months, writing teams of Ministry staff and community “experts” have been reviewing and revising the standards for each program. Toronto Public Health also had directors, managers and staff participating on all of the consultation workshops and the writing teams.

The first draft of the renamed Ontario Public Health Standards will be released for stakeholder consultation on Monday, February 19, 2007 and will be forwarded to Board of Health members prior to the February 26 Board meeting. The City of Toronto will have two opportunities to provide feedback: one from Toronto Public Health, which should include the Board of Health’s feedback and one from the City of Toronto government as a funder and municipal stakeholder. An internal TPH review process including a MHPSG Sub-committee meeting in early March has been established to ensure a comprehensive review of the draft Standards. Consolidated feedback to the Ministry is required through an e-survey tool by Friday, March 9, 2007.

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SIGNATURE

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