



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Ontario Public Health Standards

<b>Date:</b>	January 5, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Board of Health
<b>From:</b>	Medical Officer of Health
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

### SUMMARY

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The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care released the new Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) in November 2008. The OPHS and their related Protocols are published pursuant to Section 7 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7. The new Standards and Protocols establish the minimum requirements for basic public health programs and services including assessment and surveillance, health promotion and policy development, disease and injury prevention, and health protection. Boards of Health are legally responsible for implementing the OPHS and Protocols.

A number of Toronto Public Health (TPH) staff attended the Ministry's November launch which included a series of workshops. The Medical Officer of Health and staff are now working on the development of an internal TPH plan that will:

- communicate the new standards and protocols to staff
- assess Toronto Public Health service compliance with standards and protocols, which provide direction on how boards of health must operationalize specific requirements
- inform ongoing TPH strategic and service planning processes

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:**

1. the Medical Officer of Health report to the Board of Health in May 2009, on the implementation of the Ontario Public Health Standards and Protocols outlining how TPH will incorporate the new standards in strategic and service planning.

## **Financial Impact**

There are no financial impacts arising from the adoption of this report.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The recently published OPHS and Protocols will replace the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines (1997) in January 2009. Both sets of standards specify a minimum level of public health services which should be available throughout Ontario. The adoption by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care of the new Standards and Protocols marks a significant milestone in the provincial government's strategy to renew public health in Ontario.

This strategy, *Operation Health Protection*, was launched in 2004 based on recommendations of the final report of the expert panel on SARS and Infectious Disease Control and the first interim report of Justice Campbell. A three-year action plan to revitalize the public health system in Ontario, the strategy included as one of its priorities the review of the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines (1997).

A Program Standards Technical Review Committee, as well as Writing Teams and Protocol Development Teams, provided strategic and technical advice to guide the development of new standards and protocols. Staff from Toronto Public Health participated in many of these Committees. With ongoing consultation with the public health sector, the OPHS were developed over a two-year period with the official release in November 2008. The adoption of the new OPHS and Protocols represents the first comprehensive and consultative review and revision of guidelines for mandatory public health programs and services in Ontario in eleven years.

## **COMMENTS**

It is expected that Toronto Public Health programs and services will comply with the new OPHS in most areas. A detailed review will identify any areas of non-compliance and incorporate any appropriate service changes or enhancements into service and budget planning for 2009 and beyond. The OPHS, like the 1997 guidelines, are a minimum standard and offer substantial scope for tailoring public health services to meet local population health needs.

The Medical Office of Health and staff are developing a process for renewing the strategic plan for 2010 – 2014. This process will include assessing program and budget implications that will result from the implementation of the new public health standards and protocols. Board of Health members, community partners and staff will be engaged in the renewal of Toronto Public Health's strategic plan for 2010 - 2014.

The OPHS, Protocols and other supporting resources are posted on the MOHLTC website at:

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/pubhealth/oph\\_standards/ophs/index.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/pubhealth/oph_standards/ophs/index.html)

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## **SIGNATURE**

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