

## 2020 Board of Health Self-Evaluation

**Date:** October 26, 2020

**To:** Board of Health

**From:** Medical Officer of Health

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

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The Minister of Health publishes the [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability](#) as per *Section 7 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act*. The Standards identify the minimum expectations for public health programs and services to be delivered by Ontario's 34 boards of health. Boards of health are accountable for implementing the Standards, including the requirement to have a self-evaluation process of its governance practices and outcomes.

This report contains the results of the self-evaluation of Toronto's Board of Health (BOH), conducted in February 2020. Overall, the BOH self-evaluation survey results were positive, including:

- Verifying that there is strong governance on the BOH,
- Highlighting effective relationships and informed decision-making; and
- Identifying that the BOH is responsive to the immediate and long-term public health needs of the community.

In addition to the positive results, some opportunities and next steps were identified, including:

- Providing board members with learning opportunities regarding the BOH's contribution to governance and leadership as well as its legal liabilities;
- Taking steps to improve board members' comfort in raising issues;
- Providing board members with materials and presentations in advance and allocating more time for discussion at meetings; and
- Facilitating more opportunities for board members to identify key priorities.

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has refocussed the work of Toronto Public Health and the BOH. Given this significant change, this report recommends another self-evaluation of the BOH in 2021.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health to conduct the next Board of Health self-evaluation in 2021 and report to the Board of Health by the end of 2021 with the results of the self-evaluation.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

## DECISION HISTORY

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At its November 27, 2017 meeting, the Board of Health adopted without amendment the report on the 2017 BOH Self-Evaluation.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.HL23.3>

At its November 30, 2015 meeting, the Board of Health adopted without amendment the report on the 2015 BOH Self-Evaluation.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.HL8.7>

At its February 10, 2014 meeting, the Board of Health adopted the recommendations brought forward through the 2013 BOH Self-Evaluation in the governance and compliance update report.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.HL28.4>

## COMMENTS

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The Minister of Health publishes the [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability](#) as per *Section 7 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act*. The Standards identify the minimum expectations for public health programs and services to be delivered by Ontario's 34 boards of health. Boards of health are accountable for implementing the Standards including the protocols and guidelines that are referenced therein.

The Standards have a section entitled: *Good Governance and Management Practices Domain*. The organizational requirements within this domain support the use of recommended best practices in governance and organizational processes. By adhering to these practices, boards of health are able to improve the quality and effectiveness of programs and services, prioritize the allocation of resources, improve efficiency, and strive for resiliency in their organizational culture. This section requires each board of health to have a self-evaluation process of its governance practices and outcomes to be

completed at least every other year.

### **Overview of the 2020 Board of Health Self-Evaluation**

The last City of Toronto Board of Health (BOH) self-evaluation was conducted in February 2020. A letter was sent from the BOH Chair to all board members outlining the process and requesting their participation in a survey. Participation was not mandatory, but strongly encouraged. Nine of the 13 board members participated in the survey. Overall, the BOH self-evaluation had positive results and verified that there is strong governance, effective relationships, and informed decision-making at the BOH.

#### *Self-Evaluation Survey*

The BOH self-evaluation is done through an online and anonymous survey developed by Toronto Public Health (TPH) staff. The survey uses self-evaluation best practice tools from other local public health units in Ontario and from Accreditation Canada's Governance Functioning Tool. The survey is reviewed regularly to ensure it is up-to-date and is used to measure feedback over time. It includes over 30 questions, including some open-ended questions to encourage board members to provide additional comments and/or context for their responses.

### **Findings from the Self-Evaluation**

The following is a summary of the findings of the BOH's self-evaluation. The full survey and results can be found in Attachment 1.

#### *Topic: BOH Roles and Responsibilities*

The majority of board members who responded to the survey reported that they have a strong and common understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the scope, mandate and authority of the BOH. They reported that there is an appropriate structure to contribute to effective governance and leadership, and indicated that as board members they receive adequate and timely information in order to make informed decisions.

#### *Topic: BOH Information Sharing and BOH Relations*

A majority of respondents consistently reported that TPH staff are very supportive and that the BOH Chair conducts meetings well and in a way that moves the business forward. The majority of respondents also stated that they feel that they are adequately supported to interpret, analyze, and assess BOH reports, proposals, and financial information, and agreed or strongly agreed that decisions made are informed by accurate, timely and scientific information.

#### *Topic: BOH Planning*

All respondents reported that they are familiar with the Medical Officer of Health's annual report and annual performance measures and reporting requirements. In addition, all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that board members receive adequate and timely budgetary information. The self-evaluation also revealed that the

majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the BOH is responsive to the immediate and long-term health trends and public health needs of the community; and that the BOH focuses primarily on longer-term policy and program matters to support effective responses to community needs and public health planning.

*Topic: Opportunities*

Respondents indicated that there are opportunities for BOH members on the following subjects:

- Providing board members with added learning opportunities regarding the BOH's contribution to governance and leadership as well as on its legal liabilities and BOH contribution to governance and leadership;
- Taking steps to improve board members' comfort in raising issues;
- Providing board members with materials and presentations in advance and allocating more time for discussion at meetings; and
- Facilitating more opportunities for board members to identify key priorities.

## **Next Steps**

The last BOH self-evaluation survey in February 2020 concluded before the novel coronavirus began circulating in Toronto. Since that time, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has refocused the work of TPH and the BOH. Given this significant change, this report recommends another self-evaluation of the BOH in 2021 to evaluate the Board within the changed landscape resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is recommended that the next self-evaluation of the BOH is to be completed and the results reported to the BOH by the end of 2021.

## **CONTACT**

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Gayle Bursey, Director, Strategy and Preventive Health, Toronto Public Health, 416-338-0661, [gayle.bursey@toronto.ca](mailto:gayle.bursey@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Dr. Eileen de Villa  
Medical Officer of Health

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: 2020 Board of Health Self-Evaluation Survey and Results