



## REPORT FOR ACTION

# Protecting and Promoting the Health of Ontarians: Modernizing the Ontario Public Health Standards

**Date:** March 1, 2018

**To:** Board of Health

**From:** Medical Officer of Health

**Wards:** All

## SUMMARY

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The new *Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability* developed by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care ("the Ministry") came into effect on January 1, 2018. This report provides the Board of Health (BOH) with a brief overview of the modernized Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), including a new Accountability Framework and Organizational Requirements and how they impact the BOH and its responsibilities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Medical Officer of Health recommends that the Board of Health receive this report for information.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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The financial impact to Toronto Public Health (TPH) 2018 Budget Committee Recommended Operating Budget will not be known until the Ministry makes its final decisions on the 2018-19 Budget Submission for mandatory cost shared and 100 percent funded programs. Should the Ministry approve the 2018 Operating Budget request put forward by TPH, there will be no net impact on the TPH 2018 Budget Committee Recommended Operating Budget beyond what has been approved by City Council at its February 12-13, 2018 meeting.

The Acting Chief Financial Officer has reviewed the report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## DECISION HISTORY

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On May 17, 2017, the Board of Health directed the Medical Officer of Health to report back on the final standards for public health programs and services.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.HL19.3>

## COMMENTS

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In November 2017, the Ministry published the *Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability* (OPHS) report as part of the public health standards for the provision of health services and programs. The modernized OPHS, Accountability Framework and Organizational Requirements came into effect on January 1, 2018 based on a two-year development and consultation process involving expert committees, sector involvement, regional consultations, stakeholder engagements, and multiple task forces and working groups. The standards specify the minimum requirements for public health programs and services in Ontario. The report also includes a Public Health Accountability Framework and Organizational Requirements to strengthen Board of Health accountability, governance and operations.

### **Modernized Ontario Public Health Standards:**

Toronto Public Health played an active role shaping the new and modernized OPHS by participating in consultations held by the Ministry and through written formal submissions. A population health approach underlies the new comprehensive policy framework for public health. Within the new standards, themes of health equity are embedded throughout; the importance of multi-sectoral partnerships is stated; and a stronger mandate is provided for Boards of Health to address important public health issues, including mental health, natural and built environments and climate change. Advocacy efforts by TPH were successful in supporting the move to mandate local public health units to work with Indigenous populations.

The modernized OPHS includes 4 Foundational Standards and 9 Program Standards with 95 requirements. The Foundational Standards are: Population Health Assessment, Health Equity, Effective Public Health Practice, and Emergency Management.

The Program Standards are: Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being, Food Safety, Healthy Environments, Healthy Growth and Development, Immunization, Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control, Safe Water, School Health, and Substance Use and Injury Prevention.

Previously in the 2008 OPHS, there was one Foundational Standard and 13 Program Standards with 147 requirements. Some of the standards remain the same and others have been updated. There are two new standards, Health Equity and School Health. The presence of a School Health Standard acknowledges that public health outcomes for children are achieved through programs delivered in partnership with schools. The updated Population Health Assessment, and Health Equity standards now include the flexibility to demonstrate how programs achieve outcomes that meet local needs.

The 2008 OPHS had 26 accompanying protocols. The Ministry has indicated that they will be developing 42 guidelines or protocols to support public health units to implement the modernized standards. Toronto Public Health will continue to be involved in the development of these provincial guidelines and protocols as requested by the Ministry.

Until all guidelines and protocols are finalized, TPH cannot fully assess the impact of the modernized OPHS; however, there is a significant addition under the School Health Standard. Public health units are now required, in collaboration with community partners, to provide visual health supports and vision screening services in accordance with the Child Visual Health and Vision Screening Protocol (to be released in 2018). The Ministry has not yet confirmed which student populations public health units are to provide these visual health screening services to: Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten or both. In Toronto, approximately 50,000 students may require annual screening if the Ministry's protocol indicates that both Junior and Senior Kindergarten students are to be provided these new services. Toronto Public Health is currently assessing the most effective way to administer this new requirement in time for implementation in the 2018/2019 school year and any associated impact on other public health services.

### **Public Health Accountability Framework and Organizational Requirements:**

The Ministry developed a Public Health Accountability Framework (the `Framework`) that outlines the parameters and requirements to hold Boards of Health accountable and reinforce Ministry expectations. The Framework came into effect January 1, 2018 and replaces the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards (2011) that required Boards of Health to comply with 44 requirements under six categories.

The Medical Officer of Health (MOH) participates in the Ministry's Accountability Implementation Task Force that helped provide feedback on the Framework. This includes new annual service planning, and performance and financial reporting requirements to support consistency and compliance across all local public health units.

The Framework now includes four domains (Delivery of Programs and Services, Fiduciary Requirements, Good Governance and Management Practices and Public Health Practice) with 57 organizational requirements.

The Framework outlines an annual Accountability Reporting Cycle which starts with the Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission. This submission will be used to collect information from all public health units in a systematic way, is intended to present a complete picture of programs and services being delivered, and allows public health units to plan their programs and services in a way that addresses the needs of the community and describe indicators of success for each program or service.

Reporting requirements include: Accountability Documents (Organizational Requirements and Ministry-Board of Health Accountability Agreement), Planning Documents (Board of Health Strategic Plan and Board of Health Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission), and Reporting Documents (Performance Reports and Annual

Report). Boards of Health shall also submit action plans, as requested, to address any compliance or performance issues.

The provincial budget submission will now include Standards with activities listed within each Standard. Previously, the budget submission was submitted by Standard only. In addition, the service plan and budget are to be submitted together. This means that every standard and resulting activity will have a financial narrative and budget attached to it. This new process is underway. Other reporting components, such as performance reports, have yet to be finalized, however, the Ministry has confirmed that the Accountability Framework and Organizational Requirements are not tied to provincial funding.

The Ministry is also requiring enhanced transparency and demonstration of impact from all public health units. The Ministry is specifying the types of information that Boards of Health are required to publicly disclose in accordance with the Foundational and Program Standards. For example, health units will be required to post annual performance and financial reports. Toronto Public Health is currently disclosing health protection information such as convictions of tobacco and e-cigarette retailers and results of routine inspections of food premises, pools, and spas. Toronto Public Health also posts the Strategic Plan on the City's website. Measures are being put in place to meet the new additional requirements for disclosure.

The Ministry is shifting focus from monitoring and reporting progress based on compliance activities to focusing on outcomes and the impact achieved by public health programs and services. To that end, the Ministry is developing a Public Health Indicator Framework for program outcomes that will be used at the provincial level to measure health unit achievement of outcomes per Standard. From an initial review of the draft Indicator Framework, Boards of Health will now be required to develop local program outcome indicators for those standards that allow for variability to respond to local needs in program areas such as Chronic Disease Prevention, Healthy Environments, Healthy Growth and Development, School Health and Substance Use and Injury Prevention. This means the Medical Officer of Health will determine where targeted sections of the Standards should be emphasized to meet local needs of the population we serve and will update the Board of Health accordingly.

However, for other Standards the indicators will be determined by the Ministry and some will be difficult to achieve because factors that influence health and health outcomes cannot solely be attributed to public health interventions. In addition, Toronto Public Health will need to comply with more specific requirements related to the Healthy Menu Choices Act and inspection of recreational water facilities, without additional funding. Administratively, significant time and attention has been, and will continue to be, needed to implement the revised annual service planning process that has additional templates and more detailed requirements.

The Ministry has informed public health units that the implementation of the 2018 OPHS, Public Health Accountability Framework and Organizational Requirements is a phased process and 2018 is a transition year. Toronto Public Health will be actively engaged as additional components of the implementation plan are rolled out and will continue to assess any future impacts on public health services in Toronto.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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