



REPORT FOR ACTION

Toronto Public Health Organizational Review

Date: November 22, 2019

To: Board of Health

From: Medical Officer of Health

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to the request from the Board of Health to report on the status of the Toronto Public Health (TPH) organizational review. While TPH has experienced many changes, much growth and evolving priorities, as a whole, TPH has not been reviewed in its entirety since its creation through the City's amalgamation in 1998. It is within this context that, in 2017, City Council directed the Medical Officer of Health to review TPH's organizational design.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

On February 17, 2017, City Council requested the Medical Officer of Health to conduct a review of the operating budget and staffing in preparation for the 2018 Operating Budget process to identify opportunities for additional savings and to assess organization design for appropriate management span of control in Toronto Public Health.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX22.2>

COMMENTS

This report responds to the request from the Board of Health to report on the status of the Toronto Public Health organizational review. While Toronto Public Health has experienced changes, growth and evolving priorities, as a whole, TPH has not been reviewed in its entirety since its creation through the City's amalgamation in 1998. It is within this context that in 2017, Toronto City Council directed the Medical Officer of Health to conduct an organizational review to identify opportunities for savings and to assess the organization's design, including management span of control.

Since Council's direction in 2017, several emerging issues were identified to be considered in the organizational review. These issues included:

1. managing immediate and longer term budget pressures;
2. satisfying new 2018 provincial Public Health Standards that require an increased use of evidence and policy interventions to address population health;
3. keeping pace with changes in the scientific literature regarding improvements in public health practices; and
4. addressing emerging health issues identified by other City divisions and the community as it grows and densifies.

In April 2018, TPH completed the procurement process to hire an external consultant to conduct TPH's organizational review. The successful proponent was MNP LLP, a consulting group with 60 years' experience in management consulting, strategic planning and corporate finance in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Taking into account the Council direction and emerging issues, outcomes of the review were determined, including to:

- identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in the TPH structure, processes and delivery capacity;
- identify ways to deliver increased operational efficiencies while maintaining effectiveness;
- review similar public health organizations to gain insights into the delivery of progressive public health programming; and
- provide a recommended organizational design and implementation plan.

The consultant team began work in May 2018 and completed their review by December 2018. Their completed work included a current state review, a new organization design and recommendations for how TPH could address the evolving needs of Toronto residents based on input from staff, stakeholders, other jurisdictions and best practices from the field. Documents summarizing the work and recommendations from the consulting team can be found in Attachment 1.

In 2019, TPH began to work closely with City partners to act on the recommendations of the review. However, this work was paused in April 2019 following the provincial budget announcement concerning the modernization of Ontario's Public Health Units. While the Province has yet to determine its long-term vision for the governance, mandate and funding allocation for local public health units (including TPH), there is sufficient clarity

regarding TPH's financial position for 2020 to restart the process of implementing the recommendations in the organizational review.

Findings and Recommendations from the Organizational Review

One of the first steps undertaken as part of the organizational review was a current state assessment of TPH. Through this assessment process, the following needs and opportunities for improvement were identified:

- The opportunity to organize similar functions together to create strategic and program integration and accountability rather than through several independent units operating in a "siloed manner";
- The need to create a foundational support function that coordinates services across TPH and liaises with the City's corporate service rather than having each directorate developing individual approaches to Human Resources or Technology issues, etc.;
- The opportunity to make full use of all existing roles by reconsidering how work is assigned rather than relying on traditional approaches;
- The need to develop an agile and responsive workforce and organizational design; and
- The need to increase the use of evidence and data in program development to ensure outcomes are achieved through the most effective use of resources.

Based on these findings, as well as on stakeholder and staff input, it was proposed that TPH move towards a new organizational structure which groups the organization's functions into four main areas:

1. Health Protection: which focuses on public health's mandate of preventing and reducing the burden and/or spread of infectious and communicable diseases, and reducing or eliminating exposures to hazards in our environment through prevention, treatment, inspections, enforcement and containment.
2. Health Promotion: which works within a social and environmental determinants of health framework to promote healthy behaviours and shape environments that support health across the lifespan to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequities.
3. Effective Public Health Practice: which provides central and consolidated resources to identify, gather and organize the latest evidence, information, and interventions, including enabling technology, in order for Toronto Public Health to develop and deliver leading edge health promotion and protection interventions that improve the health outcomes of our population.
4. Public Health Foundations: which supports the effective planning and operation of Toronto Public Health, through strategic planning, community and stakeholder relations, project management, and administrative functions.

Moving towards this functional structure provided the framework to address City Council's 2017 direction and the emerging issues, including uncertainty regarding the province's longer-term vision for the governance, mandate and funding allocation for local public health. The following are examples of proactive measures that have been taken to gradually implement TPH's reorganization:

1. Adjusting service delivery to increase organizational efficiency and effectiveness. This includes moving educational and information resources and materials from in person to online channels, in accordance with client feedback; replacing low value communicable disease follow-up activities and communication methods with more efficient alternatives; and eliminating duplication by combining processes for inspecting the same site.
2. Use of attrition to address span of control where the number of direct reports are relatively small.
3. Better coordinating the work of teams which have similar goals and/or functions to create better program synergies and an improved client interface (e.g. seeking to harmonize school-based functions and to simplify the number of contact points within TPH for schools, etc.); and
4. Embedding policy functions within program areas to more effectively meet policy requirements in the new 2018 Public Health Standards (e.g. locating policy functions related to water, climate change and environmental issues within the Healthy Environments team).

Going forward, TPH will continue to implement the recommendations from the organizational review and will continue to demonstrate leadership in the broader field of public health. Despite the current climate of uncertainty regarding the future governance, mandate and funding of the public health sector, TPH will remain focused on delivering on its core objectives: to improve the health status of Torontonians, to reduce disparities in health status, to prepare for and respond effectively to outbreaks and emergencies and, in so doing, to enhance the sustainability of the health care system.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 - Toronto Public Health Organizational Review Summary Documents