

Toronto Public Health 2024 Operating Budget Submission

Date: September 22, 2023
To: Board of Health Budget Committee
From: Medical Officer of Health
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report outlines the Toronto Public Health (TPH) 2024 Operating Budget Submission for consideration by the Board of Health. Toronto Public Health's 2024 Operating Budget Submission is \$280,596.8 thousand gross, \$78,679.1 thousand net and 1,898.0 positions.

This 2024 Operating Budget Submission is lower than the 2023 Approved Operating Budget by \$91,859.6 thousand gross, \$81,326.3 thousand net and 409.0 positions, as it is expected extra-ordinary COVID-19 funding from the Ministry of Health will not be available in 2024. Additional information on the change between the 2024 Operating Budget Submission and the 2023 Approved Operating Budget is available in Table 1 in this report.

The 2024 Operating Budget Submission includes in-year changes, and base changes as detailed in the recommendations in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. City Council approve the Toronto Public Health (TPH) 2024 Operating Budget Submission of \$280,596.8 thousand gross, \$78,679.1 thousand net, and 1,898.0 positions, as summarized in Table 1, Overview of the TPH 2024 Operating Budget Submission, in this report, which includes the following incremental changes from the TPH 2023 Approved Operating Budget:

- a. a decrease of \$2,382.9 thousand gross, \$0 net and 7.0 positions for the Injectable Opioid Agonist Treatment Program;

- b. a decrease of \$3,570.7 thousand gross and \$0 net for the 100% federally funded Toronto Voluntary Isolation Centre;
- c. a decrease of \$5,950.0 thousand gross and \$0 net for the 100% provincial funded COVID-19 School-Focused Nurses Initiative;
- d. a decrease of \$49,122.9 thousand gross, \$50,443.3 thousand net and 386.0 positions for the 100% provincially funded COVID-19 General Response;
- e. a decrease of \$36,978.3 thousand gross and \$36,978.3 thousand net for the 100% provincially funded COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign;
- f. an increase in revenue of \$1,351.0 thousand to accept additional funds from the provincial government to support the delivery of Ontario Public Health Standards programs and services;
- g. an increase of \$1,495.9 thousand gross and \$1,495.9 thousand net for inflationary cost of food increases in the Student Nutrition Program;
- h. an increase of \$6,026.0 thousand gross and \$6,026.0 thousand net for salaries and benefits; and
- i. a decrease of \$1,376.7 thousand gross, \$79.6 thousand net and 16.0 positions for 2024 administrative and technical adjustments.

2. The Board of Health direct that this report be forwarded to the Budget Committee for consideration during the 2024 Budget process.

3. The Board of Health request the Province on Ontario to provide \$300.0 thousand for the new vaccine distribution services.

4. The Board of Health request the Province of Ontario to:

- a. index current funding for Toronto Public Health's Supervised Injection Services to inflation starting in 2024; and
- b. increase its investment by \$3,450.0 thousand starting in 2024 to address the worsening opioid poisoning crisis in Toronto.

5. The Board of Health direct that this report be forwarded to the Ministry of Health.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Toronto Public Health's 2024 Operating Budget Submission totals \$280,596.8 thousand gross, \$78,679.1 thousand net and 1,898.0 positions. This submission is \$91,859.6 thousand gross, \$81,326.3 thousand net and 409.0 positions lower than the 2023 Approved Operating Budget.

The decrease in TPH's year-over-year budget is predominately attributed to the winddown of programs and services put in place between 2020 to 2022 to response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Interim Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been advised of the financial impacts associated with this report to be considered along with other priorities as part of the annual budget process.

DECISION HISTORY

On September 11, 2023, the Board of Health committed to (1) writing Health Canada to request permanent funding, adjusted for inflation, for the Injectable Opioid Agonist Treatment program beginning in 2024-2025, and (2) writing to Health Canada and the Provincial Government to request they provide sufficient and ongoing funding, adjusted for inflation, for the Toronto Drug Checking Service
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.HL6.2>

COMMENTS

Toronto Public Health's 2023 Approved Operating Budget is \$372,456.4 thousand gross and \$212,451.0 thousand net and 2,307.0 positions.

Toronto Public Health's 2024 Operating Budget Submission totals \$280,596.8 thousand gross, \$78,679.1 thousand net and 1,898.0 positions. This submission is \$91,859.6 thousand gross, \$81,326.3 thousand net and 409.0 positions lower than the 2023 Approved Operating Budget. Table 1 below provides a summary of the changes between the TPH 2023 Approved Operating Budget and the 2024 Operating Budget Submission.

Additional information about items in Table 1 is provided in the body of this report.

Table 1 - Overview of the TPH 2024 Operating Budget Submission

	Gross Expense	Revenue	Net Expense	Positions
(\$ in thousands)	\$	\$	\$	#
2023 CITY APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET (February 15, 2023)	368,966.8	209,893.8	159,073.0	2,300.0
2023 IN-YEAR APPROVALS AND TECHNICAL ADJUSTMENTS:				
f Increased Revenue from the Ministry of Health	0.0	995.3	(995.3)	0.0
a Injectable Opioid Agonist Treatment Program	1,557.9	1,557.9	0.0	7.0
h Salaries and Benefits	1,931.7	0.0	1,931.7	0.0
2023 APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET	372,456.4	212,447.0	160,009.4	2,307.0
2024 INCREMENTAL BUDGET CHANGES:				
a Injectable Opioid Agonist Treatment Program	(2,382.9)	(2,382.9)	0.0	(7.0)
COVID-19 Programs and Services:				
b Toronto Voluntary Isolation Centre	(3,570.7)	(3,570.7)	0.0	0.0
c COVID-19 School-Focused Nurses Initiative	(5,950.0)	(5,950.0)	0.0	0.0
d COVID-19 General Response	(49,122.9)	1,320.4	(50,443.3)	(386.0)
e COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign	(36,978.3)	0.0	(36,978.3)	0.0
f Increased Revenue from the Ministry of Health	0.0	1,351.0	(1,351.0)	0.0
g Student Nutrition Program Cost of Food Increase	1,495.9	0.0	1,495.9	0.0
h Salaries and Benefits	6,026.0	0.0	6,026.0	0.0
i 2024 Administrative and Technical Adjustments	(1,376.7)	(1,297.1)	(79.6)	(16.0)
2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET SUBMISSION	280,596.8	201,917.7	78,679.1	1,898.0
INCREASE (DECREASE) OVER 2023 APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET	(91,859.6)	(10,529.3)	(81,330.3)	(409.0)

Table 2 provides an alternate view of the TPH's 2024 Operating Budget Submission to capture what the year-over-year increase is without programs and services that specifically addressed the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 2 - Year over Year Change to TPH 2024 Operating Budget Submission without COVID-19 Programs and Services

(\$ in thousands)	Gross Expense \$	Revenue \$	Net Expense \$	Positions #
2023 CITY APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET (February 15, 2023)	368,966.8	209,893.8	159,073.0	2,300.0
2023 IN-YEAR APPROVALS, TECHNICAL ADJUSTMENTS, and REVERSAL OF COVID-19 PROGRAMS:				
f Increased Revenue from the Ministry of Health	0.0	995.3	(995.3)	0.0
a Injectable Opioid Agonist Treatment Program	1,557.9	1,557.9	0.0	7.0
h Salaries and Benefits	1,931.7	0.0	1,931.7	0.0
COVID-19 Programs and Services:				
b Toronto Voluntary Isolation Centre	(3,570.7)	(3,570.7)	0.0	0.0
c COVID-19 School-Focused Nurses Initiative	(5,950.0)	(5,950.0)	0.0	0.0
d COVID-19 Response	(49,122.9)	1,320.4	(50,443.3)	(386.0)
e COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign	(36,978.3)	0.0	(36,978.3)	0.0
RESTATED 2023 APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET	276,834.5	204,246.7	72,587.8	1,921.0
2024 INCREMENTAL BUDGET CHANGES:				
a Injectable Opioid Agonist Treatment Program	(2,382.9)	(2,382.9)	0.0	(7.0)
f Increased Revenue from the Ministry of Health	0.0	1,351.0	(1,351.0)	0.0
g Student Nutrition Program Cost of Food Increase	1,495.9	0.0	1,495.9	0.0
h Salaries and Benefits	6,026.0	0.0	6,026.0	0.0
i 2024 Administrative and Technical Adjustments	(1,376.7)	(1,297.1)	(79.6)	(16.0)
2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET SUBMISSION	280,596.8	201,917.7	78,679.1	1,898.0
INCREASE (DECREASE) OVER RESTATED 2023 APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET	3,762.3	(2,329.0)	6,091.3	(23.0)
Per Cent (%) INCREASE OVER RESTATED 2023 APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET			8.4%	

Injectable Opioid Agonist Treatment (iOAT) Program

In April 2021, Health Canada announced its plan to increase access to safer drug supply in Toronto. Toronto Public Health received \$2,305.8 thousand for an Injectable Opioid Agonist Therapy (iOAT) program as part of the announcement.

The iOAT program was the first safer supply project in Toronto that offered injectable hydromorphone. The goal of the program is to provide another, much needed, intervention to assist people who use drugs who are at a higher risk of overdose. Other goals of the program include helping clients access and remain connected with health, housing, income, and community programs.

Funding for this program was supposed to end in March 2023; however, the contract with Health Canada was extended which allows Toronto Public Health to deliver this program to March 2024. The reduction in Toronto Public Health's 2024 Operating Budget Submission reflects the end of the contract and funding from Health Canada in March 2024.

In recognition of the program's effectiveness as an important treatment option during the current drug toxicity crisis in Toronto, on September 11, 2023, the Board of Health committed to writing to Health Canada to request permanent funding, adjusted for inflation, for the Injectable Opioid Agonist Treatment program. The request was for \$2,500.0 thousand per year beginning in 2024-2025.

COVID-19 Programs and Services

The COVID-19 pandemic was a unique public health emergency requiring significant resources. From 2020 to 2022, TPH initiated several programs and services aimed at preventing loss of life, preserving the capacity of the healthcare system, and minimizing the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. Funding for these COVID-19 response programs and services came from the provincial and federal governments.

In 2023, the availability and uptake of vaccines and treatment options for COVID-19 were increasingly reflected in local COVID-19 indicators. In response to this and the ending of funding for various programs, in 2023, TPH started to wind-down its COVID-19 response. The 2024 Operating Budget Submission reflects the end of funding as of December 31, 2023, or sooner from the provincial and federal governments for programs and services specifically launched in response to the pandemic.

1. Toronto Voluntary Isolation Centre

In 2020, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) approved funding for a voluntary isolation centre for people to self-isolate because of COVID-19 if they could not self-isolate in their own home. The Centre ceased operations on March 31, 2023, in keeping with the end of the contract between PHAC and Toronto Public Health.

2. COVID-19 School-Focused Nurses Initiative

This 100% provincially funded initiative provided rapid-response support to school boards and schools, childcare, and camps in facilitating public health preventative measures during the pandemic. The 2024 Operating Budget reflects the winddown of this 100% provincially funded program on June 30, 2023.

The health and well-being of school-aged children and youth continues to be a priority for TPH. On September 11, 2023, TPH reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the health needs of school-aged children and youth, and key priorities and actions for the future in its "[Update on actions to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health of school-aged children and youth in Toronto](#)" report.

As noted in the report, TPH will focus on six health promotion and prevention topic areas based on need and impact, as determined through data analysis, surveillance, and consultations with school boards. These topics include:

- mental health and well-being,
- preventing infectious diseases,
- nutrition,
- physical activity,
- sexual health, and
- substance misuse prevention.

Through our ongoing partnerships with school boards, schools, and community agencies, TPH will respond to the public health needs of the school-aged population. In addition, TPH will continue discussions with the other orders of government about the ongoing need for resources that will allow school aged children and youth to recover and thrive after the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. COVID-19 General Response and Vaccination Campaign

In the spring of 2020, it became clear that public health units would require significant resources, well beyond that in their base budgets, to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the Ministry of Health established a process by which public health units could seek reimbursement for extra-ordinary costs incurred in responding to COVID-19; administering a vaccination campaign, including running mass immunization clinics; and foregoing revenues that would have been generated from various programs in order to support the deployment of those program's employees to the pandemic response.

Toronto Public Health considers itself fortunate to have been in the position to respond to and support Torontonians during one of the world's most significant public health emergencies. At the height of the COVID-19 response, TPH grew from approximately 1,600 to over 3,400 active employees who deliver programs and services such as

- case and contract management,
- investigating institutional outbreaks,
- providing infection prevention and control advice and instructions,
- educating individuals on how best to protect themselves and their loved ones, and
- operating fixed site and mobile immunization clinics, that during the busiest immunization week in 2021, administered approximately 340,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccines.

On May 5, 2023, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 an established and ongoing health issue which no longer constituted a public health emergency of international concern. This announcement, coupled with the epidemiology of COVID-19 in Toronto, triggered a winddown and re-integration of various aspects of the COVID-19

response into TPH's pre-pandemic routine program and services throughout 2023. The 2024 Operating Budget Submission reflects the expected end of the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 reimbursement program and the final integration of COVID-19 into programs and services for responding to outbreaks and emergencies for diseases of public health significance and the vaccine preventable disease program.

Toronto Public Health will continue to monitor the transmission and impact of COVID-19 on Torontonians as part of our epidemiological surveillance program. Toronto Public Health will also continue to engage with the Ministry of Health to ensure Torontonians are protected against any negative affects of COVID-19.

Funding from the Ministry of Health for Mandatory Programs

On August 22, 2023, the Ontario Government announced their plan for [investing in a stronger public health sector](#). The announcement contained commitments to restoring \$47 million in funding to public health units effective January 1, 2024, and a provide one per cent (1%) increase in funding for three years starting in 2024. In a letter dated August 22, 2023, the Ministry of Health confirmed \$14,621.7 thousand would be restored to the annual budget provided by the province to fulfill the Board's obligations under the Ontario Public Health Standard and the Ministry of Health Public Health Funding and Accountability Agreement dated January 1, 2014, as amended. The August 22 letter also confirmed a one per cent (1%) increase to TPH's 2023 budget in the amount of \$995.3 thousand. An additional \$1,351.0 thousand expected from the province has been added to 2024 Operating Budget Submission to reflect the one per cent (1%) increase for 2024. The additional funding from the provincial government is welcome; however, it only represents thirty-nine (39) per cent of the year-over-year increase for salaries and benefits. An additional \$2,173.2 thousand would be required from the province to maintain the 75% provincial and 25% municipal funding model.

Student Nutrition Program

In 2012, City Council requested that the Medical Officer of Health report to the Board of Health on a plan to consider, as part of the annual operating budget process, an annual increase to the City's investment in Student Nutrition Programs equal to the annual amount of food inflation reported by the Nutritious Food Basket survey.

A Nutritious Food Basket survey was completed in 2023. The methodology used to complete the survey was different than that used in previous year; as such, a year-over-year comparator for the increase in the cost of food is not available. The requested increase is 8.5 per cent which is the year-over-year increase for food in Ontario from July 2022 to July 2023 as reported by Statistics Canada. Toronto Public Health is recommending an increase to the Student Nutrition Program in the amount of \$1,495.9 thousand gross and net, bringing the total program budget in 2024 to \$19,164.3 thousand gross and net.

2023 Administrative and Technical Adjustments

The 2024 administrative and technical adjustments are for changes in interdivisional costs and revenues, savings achieved from vacating leased space, additional revenues from the Ministry of Health for one-time initiatives, additional revenue from the AIDS Bureau, increase in utility costs, and the impact of the capital plan on the operating budget as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 - 2024 Administrative and Technical Adjustments

(\$ in thousands)	Gross Expense \$	Revenue \$	Net Expense \$	Positions
Change in interdivisional costs and revenues	118.5	0.0	118.5	0.0
ModernTO lease savings	(512.2)	0.0	(512.2)	0.0
Revenue from the Ministry of Health for one-time initiatives (vaccine refrigerator, needle syringe program and public health inspector practicum program)	0.0	89.2	(89.2)	0.0
Revenue from AIDS Bureau to support The Works	0.0	2.1	(2.1)	0.0
Utility expenses due to Inflation	11.4	0.0	(11.4)	0.0
Operating impacts of changes to the Capital Plan	(994.4)	(1,388.4)	394.0	(17.0)
Complement rebalancing	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
TOTAL	(1,376.7)	(1,297.1)	(79.6)	(16.0)

Vaccine Distribution Services

In 2023, the Ministry of Health directed TPH to take on the responsibility to manage inventory, logistics and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to Toronto health care providers, hospitals, long-term care homes, and other health settings. Until September 15, 2023, the role of managing COVID-19 vaccine inventory, logistics and distribution in Toronto was delivered by the provincial government, which is the case for all other vaccines.

Toronto Public Health does not have the necessary infrastructure to assume this new responsibility. As such, as part of TPH's annual budget submission to the Ministry of Health, TPH will request funding in the amount of \$240.0 thousand to deliver this new program. The budget will be used to contract with a service provider to provide the inventory and logistics services and to hire staff to oversee vaccine ordering by providers and manage the service provider contract.

Toronto's Drug Toxicity Crisis

A comprehensive multi-pronged approach is necessary to address the ongoing drug toxicity crisis. This approach includes the expansion of the continuum of high-quality, evidence-based, and client-centred mental health, substance use, harm reduction and

addictions treatment services, as well as public policy that ensures that mental health and substance use are addressed as health issues rather than criminal issues.

In the [2022 Budget Process](#), the Board of Health asked the Medical Officer of Health to advocate to the Ontario Ministry of Health for funding to address the opioid poisoning crisis in Toronto.. This request was made as the crisis intensified over the COVID-19 pandemic and Toronto was experiencing a rapid increase in the number of opioid toxicity deaths. Per the [Toronto Overdose Information System](#), the number of opioid toxicity deaths jumped from just under 300 in 2019 to slightly under 550 in 2020 and continues to remain in the 500s in 2022.

The impact of the crisis is manifesting in an increase in demand for services provided by TPH's The Works program, including the supervised injection services (SIS). The SIS's objective is to improve the health status of people who use drugs by responding to overdoses; connecting clients to other health and social services, including mental health services; and providing supplies to reduce the spread of infectious diseases.

The SIS is a one hundred (100) per cent provincially funded program that has not received additional funding to address inflationary pressures since the inception of the service in 2017 or an increase in funding to support the increasing demand for services.

As part of the Toronto Public Health's annual budget submission to the Ministry of Health, TPH will be putting forward a request to provide funding in the amount of \$61.0 thousand to support inflationary increases from 2023 to 2024. In addition, TPH will be putting forward a request for \$3,450.0 thousand to support the over two hundred (200) client visits per day at the service. Toronto Public Health will use the increase in investment to hire additional counsellors, support assistances, public health nurses and clinic supervisors; honorarium for peer works/people with lived experience working alongside TPH employees; and health and safety equipment, including security services.

CONTACT

Althea Hutchinson, Director, Finance and Administration, Toronto Public Health,
416-338-7840, Althea.Hutchinson@toronto.ca.

SIGNATURE

Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health