

## 2024 Board of Health Self-Evaluation

**Date:** March 11, 2024

**To:** Board of Health

**From:** Medical Officer of Health

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

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This report contains the results of the self-evaluation of Toronto's Board of Health (the "Board"), conducted in 2024.

The Minister of Health publishes the [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability \(OPHS\)](#) 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.

Overall, the Board's self-evaluation survey findings were positive, indicating that it has strong governance and understanding of roles and responsibilities, uses effective relationships and informed decision-making, and is responsive to the immediate and long-term public health needs of the community.

In addition to the positive findings, opportunities and next steps were identified, including encouraging collaboration between Board members, increasing knowledge of community partners, and exploring community engagement opportunities with community stakeholders.

Toronto Public Health ("TPH") will work with the City Clerk's Office and the Chair of the Board of Health to explore opportunities to address these findings over the course of the current and upcoming terms of the Board.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

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

## 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 meeting of December 6, 2021, the Board of Health adopted Item HL32.5, 2021 Board of Health Self-Evaluation.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.HL32.5>

## 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 protocols and guidelines. Requirements in the Good Governance and Management Practices Domain support best practices in governance and organizational processes. By adhering to these practices, boards of health aim 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. Under the Standards, Boards of health are required to have a self-evaluation process of its governance practices and outcomes to be completed at least every other year.

### **Background: 2021 Self-Evaluation Survey**

A Board of Health self-evaluation survey was last conducted in fall 2021. The positive findings from the 2021 survey are similar to those in the 2024 survey and include: strong governance, effective relationships, evidence-informed decision making, and being responsive to the immediate and long-term needs of Toronto communities.

Feedback from the 2021 self-evaluation survey identified opportunities for improvement. These include pursuing options to strengthen representation and participation by members of communities most impacted by health inequities and increasing public participation in virtual Board of Health meetings. In addition, feedback included the importance of working with Board members to ensure they are comfortable raising issues and clarifying measures of success.

Actions that have addressed this feedback include:

- Improved orientation for Board members. This includes the February 2023 onboarding presentation ([Item HL2.1](#)), one-on-one introduction meetings with the Medical Officer of Health, and a training session on meeting processes ([Item HL5.7](#)). In addition, the 2024 self-evaluation survey was updated to solicit feedback on these improved orientation efforts.
- Further expanding opportunities for community leaders, member of the public, and organizations to participate in decision-making and consultations. For example, through the new [Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee](#), hosting the [Health and Homelessness Advisory Table](#), and the development of the [Our Health, Our City: A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction, and Treatment Strategy for Toronto](#).
- Reviewing and updating TPH's performance measures and service levels ([Item HU1.2](#)).

## **2024 Self-Evaluation Survey**

Toronto Board of Health self-evaluation surveys are completed through an online and anonymous survey developed by TPH staff. Participation is not mandatory, but strongly encouraged. Nine of the 13 Board of Health members participated in the survey. Overall, the Board of Health self-evaluation had positive results and verified that there is strong governance, effective relationships, and informed decision-making at the Board of Health.

The survey uses self-evaluation best practices, including 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 40 questions, including some open-ended questions to encourage Board members to provide additional comments and/or context for their responses.

## **2024 Survey Findings**

The following is a summary of the findings of the Board's self-evaluation. Attachment 1 provides full details of the survey and results.

### **Topic: Roles and responsibilities**

Most Board members who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that they have a strong and common understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the scope, mandate, and authority of the Board. Responses suggest that there is an appropriate structure and procedures to contribute to effective governance and

leadership, and respondents indicated that they are familiar with the legislation, standards, and bylaws that apply to the Board.

**Topic: Information sharing and decision-making**

Most respondents indicated that as Board members they receive adequate and timely information to make informed decisions. They shared that TPH staff are very supportive and that the Chair conducts meetings well and in a way that moves the business forward. Most respondents also stated that they feel that they are adequately supported to interpret, analyze, and assess Board reports, proposals, and financial information. Most agreed or strongly agreed that decisions made are informed by accurate, timely, and scientific information.

**Topic: Relations**

There was general agreement among respondents that the Board of Health uses its meeting time effectively, that the Chair conducts meetings in a way that moves the business of the Board forward, and Board members are comfortable raising issues that may be unpopular. A majority of respondents stated that they "strongly agree" that there is a climate of mutual trust between Board members.

**Topic: Planning**

Most respondents reported that they are familiar with the Medical Officer of Health's annual report and annual performance measures and reporting requirements. Information related to budget information was highlighted as a strength; all respondents agree or strongly agreed that Board members receive adequate and timely budgetary information. The survey also revealed that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Board is responsive to the immediate and long-term health trends and public health needs of the community.

**Topic: Opportunities and general comments**

A detailed list of opportunities and recommendations, along with general comments, can be found in Attachment 1: 2024 Board of Health Self-Evaluation Survey Results. Survey responses on these topics included:

- Hosting training sessions on topics Board members may be less comfortable with (for example, Ontario Public Health Standards, legal liabilities, and procedural bylaws)
- Distributing materials (particularly presentations) further in advance of the Board meeting to allow Board members an opportunity to review
- Seeking out additional opportunities to engage with community stakeholders and clarity on the community partners with which TPH collaborates
- Considering ways for the Board to engage with communities that are historically marginalized to inform the public about the work of the Board

## **Next steps**

The OPHS requires the Board of Health to complete a self-evaluation at least every other year. To align with this requirement, TPH anticipates initiating the next Board of Health self-evaluation in late 2025.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Dr. Eileen de Villa  
Medical Officer of Health

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: 2024 Board of Health Self-Evaluation Survey Results