

Toronto Public Health 2025 Risk Management Report

Date: April 17, 2025

To: Board of Health

From: Acting Medical Officer of Health

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides the Board of Health with an update on the risk management reporting that is part of the Ontario Public Health Standards Accountability Framework. It outlines risks and challenges facing Toronto Public Health in 2025, which include talent availability, resource capacity to address evolving and emerging public health issues, challenges in public confidence in public health advice, and changes to the Ontario Public Health Standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting 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

At its meeting on July 8, 2024, the Board of Health considered and adopted the Toronto Public Health 2024 Risk Management Report as required by the Ontario Public Health Accountability Framework.

[Agenda Item History - 2024.HL14.3](#)

COMMENTS

The Ministry of Health's Public Health Accountability Framework, which came into effect in January 2018, outlines the requirements to which Boards of Health are held accountable. One requirement is for public health units to have a formal risk management framework. To satisfy this requirement and keep the Board of Health informed, Toronto Public Health submits a risk management report to the Board of Health annually.

Toronto Public Health's risk management framework is based on the Ministry of Health's risk prioritization matrix of impact and likelihood (Table 1). High risks are considered those with a score of 15 or higher, medium risks those with a score of 10 to 14, and low risks those with a score of 9 or lower. A risk score is calculated by multiplying the potential impact values with the likelihood of occurrence.

Table 1: Ministry of Health Risk Matrix

Potential Impact	Threatens the success of the objective (5)	5	10	15	20	25
	Substantial impact on time, cost or quality (4)	4	8	12	16	20
	Notable impact on time, cost or quality (3)	3	6	9	12	15
	Minor impact on time, cost or quality (2)	2	4	6	8	10
	Negligible impact (1)	1	2	3	4	5
		Unlikely to occur (1)	May occur occasionally (2)	Is as likely to occur as not to occur (3)	Is likely to occur (4)	Is almost certain to occur (5)
		Likelihood of Occurrence				

For 2025, four significant organizational risks have been identified based on the likelihood of occurrence and potential impact on Toronto Public Health's ability to

achieve its mission of protecting and improving health at a population level while reducing health inequities.

1. Talent Availability

This is a human resources risk with a score of 16: 4 impact and 4 likelihood. Talent availability was also identified as a risk in both 2023 and 2024.

Toronto Public Health's most valuable resource is the talent that is attracted and retained across the organization. Toronto Public Health, like many organizations, is experiencing an increase in retirements and, at the same time, staff are exiting for other employment opportunities. The departure of staff also reflects: employee fatigue given the extreme demands of the pandemic; increased service demands to respond to emergencies such as communicable disease outbreaks, the drug toxicity epidemic, and emerging issues like those related to climate change such as air quality and extreme heat. Remote work also offers new employment opportunities beyond traditional geographic boundaries, and other organizations and sectors may provide more lucrative work opportunities.

Toronto Public Health has taken action to address this risk. For example, leadership development initiatives have expanded and include Bi-Monthly Leadership Talks. Toronto Public Health dedicates resources to grow the employee Wellness Program through increased communications, wellness events, and tools for People Leaders.

Additional strategies to further mitigate this risk include: succession planning initiatives; employee development and training; new recruitment strategies; and partnerships with educational institutions for cross-developmental opportunities.

2. Resource Capacity to Address Evolving and Emerging Public Health Issues

This is an operational/service delivery risk with a score of 12: 4 impact and 3 likelihood. This was also identified as a risk in 2024.

During the pandemic, Toronto Public Health dealt with several emerging issues, including outbreaks of mpox and invasive meningococcal disease, and a worsening drug toxicity epidemic. The resource capacity needed to address the pandemic and other issues challenged Toronto Public Health's ability to address issues outside of the pandemic and outbreaks. The organization is rebuilding its capacity for timely and comprehensive identification and response to evolving public health issues.

Strategies to mitigate this risk include: population risk based prioritization of public health incidents with corresponding adjustment of staffing levels in routine programs and services; enhancement of relationships with provincial, national and international jurisdictions for communicable disease surveillance; partnership with educational institutions and other healthcare organizations for situational awareness and response coordination; and leveraging of the new TPH organizational structure to address complex issues.

3. Challenges in Public Confidence in Public Health Advice

This is a stakeholder/public perception risk with a score of 12: 3 impact and 4 likelihood. This was also identified as a risk in 2024.

Misinformation, disinformation, and exhaustion from the pandemic can decrease public confidence in public health advice. This increases the need for meaningful population engagement to maintain public trust.

Strategies to mitigate this risk include: monitoring the public's expressions of concerns to address them through strategic communications; positioning of Toronto Public Health as a trusted and reliable source of health information; enhancing the toronto.ca website to promote valuable, reliable, inclusive and accessible information; collaboration and partnership with trusted community leaders and organizations on public health initiatives; and continued deployment of evidence-based public health interventions and programs.

4. Changes to the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS)

This is an operational/service delivery risk with a score of 12: 3 impact and 4 likelihood.

In late 2023, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario (OCMOH) communicated plans to implement a sector-driven strategy to strengthen public health in Ontario. One of these strategies, planned for 2024 and 2025, is a review of the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) in order to refine, stop or re-level roles and responsibilities of Local Public Health Agencies (LPHA).

The Ministry of Health is utilizing both new and existing discussion Tables, with representation from LPHAs to help inform updates to the OPHS. Discussion Tables began meeting in early 2024 and are continuing into 2025. TPH will monitor forthcoming changes to the OPHS and report to the Board of Health on changes and their impact.

Strategies to mitigate this risk include: TPH participation in the provincial tables to provide feedback and potential recommendations on the potential regulatory changes, and organizational analysis of the updated OPHS when they are released to determine the impact on public health programs and services.

Toronto Public Health Strategic Impact

Managing the risks in this report will enable Toronto Public Health to advance the priorities and objectives outlined in Toronto Public Health's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, primarily in the following areas:

Priority 1: Strengthen health protection, disease prevention, and emergency preparedness

Priority 2: Promote health and well-being across the lifespan

Priority 5: Nurturing a positive workplace culture

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SIGNATURE

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