

**MIDDLESEX-LONDON BOARD OF HEALTH**

**REPORT NO. 43-24**

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Board of Health  
**FROM:** Dr. Alexander Summers, Medical Officer of Health  
Emily Williams, Chief Executive Officer  
**DATE:** 2024 June 20

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**MLHU 2024 EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN REVISIONS**

**Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 43-24 re: “MLHU 2024 Emergency Response Plan Revisions” for information.*

**Report Highlights**

- The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) requires that the MLHU prepare for emergencies to ensure 24/7 timely, integrated, safe and effective response to, and recovery from emergencies with public health impacts.
- The previous Board-approved MLHU Emergency Response Plan (ERP) was completed in September 2012.
- As outlined on the 2023-25 Provisional Plan, the MLHU has spent 2023 and 2024 revising the Plan to produce the MLHU 2024 Emergency Response Plan (ERP) ([Appendix A](#)).
- This Plan was approved by the MOH and CEO in March 2024.
- The Plan will continue to be updated with approval from the MOH and CEO, and in consultation with key partners and internal stakeholders.

**Background**

The current Ontario Public Health Standards identify Emergency Management (EM) as a Foundational Standard, which enable public health units to manage emergency situations consistently and effectively. The Emergency Management Guidelines (EMG) (2024), updated in January 2024, provides direction to Boards of Health (BOH) to effectively prepare for emergencies ensuring 24/7, timely, integrated, safe, and effective response to, and recovery from emergencies with public health impacts.

The legal authority for EM in Ontario is defined in the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA) and order in Council 1739/2022, which requires that ministries and municipalities establish emergency management programs that include emergency plans, training and exercise opportunities, and education.

The MLHU's previous ERP was approved by the Board of Health in September 2012. Following the strategic direction as indicated in the 2023-25 Provisional Plan, the MLHU began the process of updating the ERP in early 2023, which was approved by the MOH and CEO in March 2024 (affixed as [Appendix A](#)).

## Revisions to the ERP

The following principles were considered during the 2023 ERP revisions:

- Take an "all hazard" approach applicable to any emergency and in conjunction with other internal and external plans,
- Undertake a collaborative process, where key partners and internal stakeholders can be engaged,
- Ensure the plan is simple, concise, and accessible for utilization in an emergency,
- Maintain up-to-date comprehensive planning processes for the emergency management program,
- Where possible, maintain consistency with terminology and contents to other community plans (City of London and County of Middlesex) to enhance familiarity between partner ERP's. The intent is to increase comprehension and ability to act by all community partners likely to be called on for support, and
- Recognize that the ERP is to be a living document, that will be continuously updated over time.

With these principles in mind, alongside the updates in expectations from the 2024 EMG, noteworthy revisions to the 2024 ERP include:

- Adoption of the disaster risk reduction approach to prevent and mitigate risk,
- Enhanced alignment with the Emergency Management Framework for Ontario,
- Identification of the MLHU Incident Management Team (IMT) and training program,
- Updated description of the IMT governance and IMS structure for effective, scalable, and flexible emergency preparedness and response,
- Additional context for declaring emergencies,
- A continuum approach to emergency response,
- Improved alignment of the MLHU ERP with community partner ERP's, and
- Reference to annual exercising of the ERP.

## Next Steps

The MLHU will continue to operationalize and maintain the 2024 Emergency Response Plan, including:

- Maintaining the ERP as a fluid document, updating as required with approval from the MOH and/or CEO,
- Completing updates from community partner consultations on municipal plans currently in progress,
- Integrating the plan into the MLHU's Administrative Policy Manual,
- Uploading a version of the ERP to the MLHU website (minus personally identifying information) for public access,
- Socializing the updated ERP with key community partners and internal stakeholders, and
- Continuing the development of the ERP appendices and associated plans, such as the Continuity of Operations Plan and specific appendices such as Pandemic and Infrastructure Failure plans.

This report was written by the Strategic Advisor – Emergency Management on the Strategy, Planning and Performance (SPP) Team.



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Chief Executive Officer



**Alexander Summers, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCPC**  
Medical Officer of Health

**This report refers to the following principle(s) set out in Policy G-490, Appendix A:**

- The Emergency Management Foundational standard as outlined in the [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability](#).
- The Emergency Management Civil Protection and Protection Act (EMCPA); and Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA).
- The following goal from the [Middlesex-London Health Unit's Strategic Plan](#): Program Excellence is identified as a priority area within the MLHU 2023-2025 Provisional Plan. An initiative under this priority is to collaborate with health system partners and indigenous leader and service providers, to develop a robust emergency management (EM) plan that facilitates effective and timely response and surge capacity in the event of a public health emergency. Activities and projects to advance the strategic plans related to EM are to (1) refine the Emergency Response Plan, including cross training on public core competencies.

**This topic has been reviewed to be in alignment with goals under the Middlesex-London Health Unit's [Anti-Black Racism Plan](#) and [Taking Action for Reconciliation](#):**

- With support of MLHU's Health Equity and Reconciliation Team (HEART), there is ongoing work on documenting and supporting emergency response as required within the Indigenous communities in our region; and
- Ongoing surveillance of public health hazards and risks that may give rise to a public health emergency, with particular attention to impacts on priority of populations.