

## Middlesex-London Board of Health External Landscape Review – February 2025

The purpose of this briefing note is to inform MLHU Board of Health members about what is happening in the world of public health and impacts to the work of the MLHU and Board. This includes governance and legislative changes, news from other local public units, external reports on important public health matters, learning opportunities and MLHU events. **Please note that items listed on this correspondence are to inform Board members and are not necessarily an endorsement.**

### Local Public Health News

## Ontario

### Ontario approves 18 Additional Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hubs (HART Hubs)

On January 27, the Province of Ontario announced that an additional 18 HART hubs have been approved. The locations were chosen as a result of a provincewide call for proposals last summer. All HART Hubs will have the goal of being operational by

April 1, 2025. Earlier this year, the province announced that 9 safe consumption sites in Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Kitchener, Guelph and Thunder Bay that were required to close due to being located within 200 metres of a school or licensed child-care centre have been approved for transition to a HART Hub. This brings the total number of HART Hubs across the province to 27, 8 more than initially planned. Middlesex-London will have 1 HART Hub, operated through the Canadian Mental Health Association Thames Valley. [On February 4, it was confirmed that the Salvation Army in London will be the HART Hub location.](#)

To read the full news release, please visit the Ontario Government's [newsroom](#).

#### Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The current consumption and treatment site in London (Carepoint) at 446 York Street is not impacted by these changes at this time. The Middlesex-London Health Unit and the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection (operators of Carepoint) continue to support members of the community who use services at Carepoint. The Board of Health will continue to monitor Ministry direction with respect to safe consumption and other harm reduction services.

### National, Provincial and Local Public Health Advocacy



#### Peel Region announces Dr. Hamidah Meghani as Medical Officer of Health

Effective February 18, Peel Region is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Hamidah Meghani as its new Medical Officer of Health.

Dr. Meghani joins Peel Region from Public Health Ontario where she served as Deputy Chief, Medical and Systems Support, providing advice on communicable disease control to local public health units and health care providers across Ontario.

Previously, Dr. Meghani served for nearly a decade as Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health for Halton Region. She has also held the position of Associate Medical Officer of Health for Hamilton Public Health Services and as a part-time faculty member at the University of Toronto and McMaster University.

Dr. Meghani holds a Doctor of Medicine from McMaster University, Master of Public Health from Columbia University and Master of Management (International Masters for Health Leadership Program) from McGill University.

To read the full news release, please visit Peel Region's [newsroom](#).

#### Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Board supports collaboration and connection with other public health units in the province, and encourages the MLHU's Medical Officer of Health to work with other Medical Officers of Health as necessary for advocacy and idea sharing.

## Ontario Investing in Housing to Move Vulnerable People Out of Encampments



On January 27, the Province of Ontario announced that they are providing up to \$75.5 million to communities throughout the province to create more emergency shelter spaces and affordable housing units that will provide vulnerable Ontarians with appropriate short-term and long-term housing alternatives to encampments.

Funding for the projects will flow through municipal service managers and Indigenous program administrators working in communities across the province. The City of London will receive \$75,000 to support this work (the second lowest amount in Ontario).

To read the full news release, please visit the Ontario Government's [newsroom](#).

### Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Board of Health acknowledges that homelessness within Middlesex-London has risen, and was exacerbated by challenges within the COVID-19 pandemic. The Health Unit Executive Leadership continues to participate at community tables such as the Health and Homelessness Strategy & Accountability table led by the City of London.

### Ontario Election to be Held on February 27

On January 28, Premier Doug Ford confirmed that the Honourable Edith Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario has accepted the premier's advice to sign a proclamation dissolving the 43rd Parliament of the Province of Ontario, effective January 28 at 4 p.m.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Election Act, the Lieutenant Governor also called for the issuance of writs for the general election to be issued January 29, 2025, and named February 27, 2025, as the date of Ontario's next general election.

### Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Board of Health, the MOH and CEO looks forward to discussing critical public health matters that concern the provincial government post-election with elected Members of Provincial Parliament. With the dissolution of the Ontario Legislature, some government activities specific to public health have been delayed. This includes delays in the reviews of the Ontario Public Health Standards and the public health unit funding model. Additionally, the More Convenient Care Act did not pass, which means that certain modifications to the Health Protection and Promotion Act have been delayed.