

## Middlesex-London Board of Health External Landscape Review – July 2024

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

#### Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7 amended effective July 1



Effective July 1, amendments to the Health Protection and Promotion Act R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7 were made to a few regulations.

The following amendments were made:

- O. Reg. 135/18: Designation of Diseases were made to remove COVID-19 from the list of diseases identified as being caused by a novel coronavirus while maintaining it as a disease of public health significance (DOPHS). Public health units are required to report a DOPHS under the HPPA
- Regulation 569: Reports to limit the data that specified regulated health professionals are required to report in connection with COVID-19 to public health units pursuant to paragraph 11 of section 5
- Exempt public health units from having to forward a copy of any COVID-19 reports (other than death data and outbreak data in specified institutions and hospitals) to the Ministry of Health and Public Health Ontario pursuant to a new section 6.1
- To remove the requirement in section 5.4 for individuals not otherwise required to report under the HPPA to report positive COVID-19 point-of-care test results to the local public health unit
- Moving forward, public health units are only required to forward reports related to COVID-19 to the Ministry of Health and Public Health Ontario if the report relates to death or outbreaks in specified institutions and hospitals.

To review the changes to the legislation, please visit the [E-Laws website](#).

#### Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Board of Health acknowledges that core legislation for public health units is amended and updated to reflect changing requirements. These changes represent the integration of public health and other health system partners response to COVID-19 into regular operational requirements.

### National, Provincial and Local Public Health Advocacy



**Opioid-Related Toxicity Deaths Within Ontario Shelters:  
Circumstances of Death and Prior Medication &  
Healthcare Use**

On June 18, the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network (ODPRN) at St. Michael's Hospital and Public Health Ontario released a report titled "Opioid-Related Toxicity Deaths Within Ontario Shelters: Circumstances of Death and Prior Medication & Healthcare Use".

Researchers used data from the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario and ICES, and found that there were 210 accidental opioid-related toxicity deaths within shelters between January 2018 to May 2022, with the number of deaths more than tripling during the study period (48 before the pandemic versus 162 during the pandemic).

In summary:

- 210 accidental overdoses in shelters between January 2018 and May 2022
- 48 accidental opioid-related toxicity deaths within shelters between January 1, 2018 and March 16, 2020

- 162 accidental opioid-related toxicity deaths within shelters between March 17, 2020 and May 31, 2022 (3.5 times higher during the pandemic)
- 5% of deaths during the pandemic involved only pharmaceutical opioids, with the majority being stimulants and benzodiazepines
- The public health unit regions with the highest rates (per 100,000 population) of opioid related toxicity deaths were Toronto Public Health, Ottawa Public Health, Hamilton Public Health and Waterloo Region Public Health

To learn more, please read the [media release](#) from Public Health Ontario and review [the full report](#) on the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network website.

### New AMO Advocacy on Homelessness, Opioids, and Water Infrastructure Demonstrate the Critical Need for Social and Economic Prosperity Review



On July 2, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) posted new advocacy materials on the economic and prosperity review, homelessness and opioids. This includes AMO's positions on these matters and resources to guide conversations.

In summary:

#### AMO Continues to Advocate for a Social and Economic Prosperity Review

Earlier this year, AMO and nearly 150 of its members called on the provincial government to commit to a Social and Economic Prosperity Review to fix the broken provincial-municipal fiscal framework. AMO is now calling on the provincial government to commit to this joint review at the 2024 AMO Conference in August.

#### Call for Provincial and Federal Action on Homeless Encampments

While municipalities did not create the homelessness crisis, they are being forced to manage it without the resources or tools to sufficiently respond. Municipalities are often caught balancing the important needs of unsheltered people living in encampments, who deserve to be treated with empathy and respect, and a responsibility to ensure our communities are safe and vibrant places for all residents.

#### Call for Provincial Action on the Opioid Crisis

More than 2500 Ontarians died due to opioids in 2023, in communities big and small across the province. Increasingly, divisive rhetoric is distracting from much needed government action and leadership.

AMO collaborated with key partners from the health, justice, business and social services sectors to develop [The Opioid Crisis: A Municipal Perspective](#). This paper seeks to re-focus attention on evidence-based solutions across the four pillars of prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction.

To review the advocacy resources, please visit [AMO's website](#).

#### **Impact to MLHU Board of Health**

The Board of Health has previously heard information on the opioid crisis currently active in Middlesex-London, Ontario and across Canada in Report No. [37-24](#), [36-24](#) and [58-23](#). Individuals experiencing homelessness are impacted the most by the opioid toxicity crisis, and there is a need for governments to invest in expanded access to harm reduction services, access to healthcare, social care, and treatment programs, and support in these settings. Locally, this is being supported through the [Whole of Community System Response within the City of London](#).



### **E. Michael Perley appointed to the Order of Canada**

On June 27, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada, announced 83 new appointments to the Order of Canada, including one Companion, 16 Officers, two Honorary Officers and 64 Members. Two appointments are promotions within the Order. Established in 1967, the Order of Canada celebrates outstanding achievements and extraordinary contributions. Over the years, its members have been honoured for inspiring innovation, for shaping who we are, and for enriching Canada's fabric.

One of these appointments is E. Michael Perley. Mr. Perley is well known in public health for his tremendous work advocating for stronger tobacco and smoke-free legislation in Ontario. Mr. Perley joined the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco (OCAT) as Director in 1993 to lead the Campaign's efforts to help pass the *Ontario Tobacco Control Act* 1994, which made tobacco sales to minors illegal and banned the sale of tobacco industry products in pharmacies and vending machines. Since the Act's passage, Mr. Perley supported local public health agencies, community smoke-free coalitions, and municipal councils across Ontario in their efforts to develop and implement countless municipal smoke-free bylaws, paving the way for the enactment of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act on May 31, 2006.

The full listing of appointments is affixed as Correspondence D.

To learn more, please read the media release on the [Office of the Governor General of Canada's website](#).

#### **Impact to MLHU Board of Health**

The Board of Health supports the work of the Southwest Tobacco Control Area Network (SWTCAN) and other advocacy organizations/individuals. The Board thanks Mr. Perley for his contributions to public health, specifically within tobacco legislation.