

## Middlesex-London Board of Health External Landscape Review – June 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



#### **Dr. Eileen de Villa, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, announces resignation**

On May 14, 2024, Dr. Eileen de Villa, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, announced her resignation. Dr. de Villa will continue in the role until December 31, 2024.

Dr. de Villa has served as Toronto's Medical Officer of Health since 2017, leading Canada's largest local public health unit through a period of significant change and public health challenges. During her tenure, Dr. de Villa has overseen multiple critical public health initiatives including:

- Guiding Toronto's COVID-19 pandemic response and the largest vaccination campaign in the city's history.
- Addressing the ongoing drug toxicity crisis.
- Championing public health initiatives focused on addressing health inequities.

To learn more, please read the media release on the [City of Toronto's website](#).

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

The Board of Health supports collaboration between Boards of Health and supports the networking between Medical Officers of Health. The Board of Health wishes Dr. de Villa all the best in her next endeavours and thanks her for her service to the City of Toronto.

### National, Provincial and Local Public Health Advocacy

#### **Ontario Expanding the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages Starting this Summer**

On May 24, the Ontario Government announced that consumers will be able to purchase new products like coolers and other ready-to-drink beverages alongside more pack sizes at grocery stores that currently sell wine or beer, followed by new retailers being able to sell an increased selection of local, domestic and international alcohol products. By the end of October 2024, every convenience, grocery and big-box store in Ontario will be able to sell beer, cider, wine and ready-to-drink alcoholic beverages if they choose to do so.



The phased expansion and rollout will begin later this summer and will include the following milestones:

- On August 1, 2024, the up to 450 grocery stores that are currently licensed to sell beer, cider or wine will also be able to sell ready-to-drink beverages. These grocery stores will also be able to start offering consumers large-pack sizes.
- After September 5, 2024, all eligible convenience stores will be able to sell beer, cider, wine and ready-to-drink alcoholic beverages.
- After October 31, 2024, all eligible grocery and big-box stores will be able to sell beer, cider, wine and ready-to-drink beverages, including in large pack sizes.

To learn more, please read the [media release](#) from the Ontario Government newsroom.

### Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Board of Health will be hearing at the July Board of Health meeting about the impacts that this policy will have on the community. By expanding the sale of alcohol in the marketplace, it can further negatively impact the health of the community. The Board previously heard concerns about alcohol on the community in [Report No. 36-24](#) and [Report No. 42-23](#).



### 2024 Association of Local Public Health Agencies – Annual General Meeting and Conference

From June 5-7, public health units from across Ontario met in Toronto at the Association of Local Public Health Agencies – Annual General Meeting and Conference. Representing the MLHU was Dr. Alex Summers, Dr. Joanne Kearon, Emily Williams, Board Chair Matt Newton-Reid and Vice-Chair Mike Steele.

Topics discussed included:

- Strengthening Public Health
- Proposed Voluntary Public Health Unit Mergers
- Updates from Queen's Park

### Impact to MLHU Board of Health

Delegates at the 2024 alPHA Annual General Meeting and Conference (including those from MLHU) supported resolutions which coincide with the Ontario Public Health Standards and program obligations under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Resolutions that were discussed also included new trends in public health.

### New Provincial Cabinet

On June 6, Premier Ford announced additional ministries and a cabinet shuffle. The Ontario Legislature will be back in session on October 21, 2024.



Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario

The following changes have been made:

- Stan Cho becomes Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, with responsibility for OLG
- Rob Flack becomes Minister of Farming, Agriculture and Agribusiness
- Mike Harris becomes Minister of Red Tape Reduction
- Natalia Kusendova-Bashta becomes Minister of Long-Term Care
- Stephen Lecce becomes Minister of Energy and Electrification
- Neil Lumsden becomes Minister of Sport
- Todd McCarthy becomes Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement, with responsibility for Supply Ontario
- Greg Rickford becomes Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation and remains Minister of Northern Development
- Todd Smith becomes Minister of Education
- Graydon Smith becomes Minister of Natural Resources
- Lisa Thompson becomes Minister of Rural Affairs
- Stephen Crawford becomes Associate Minister of Mines as part of the Ministry of Mines
- Trevor Jones becomes Associate Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response as part of Treasury Board Secretariat
- Sam Oosterhoff becomes Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries as part of the Ministry of Energy and Electrification
- Nolan Quinn becomes Associate Minister of Forestry as part of the Ministry of Natural Resources
- Vijay Thanigasalam becomes Associate Minister of Housing as part of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Steve Clark has been appointed Government House Leader.

To read the full media release and see the full list of changes, please visit the [Ontario Government newsroom](#).

**Impact to MLHU Board of Health**

MPP Rob Flack (Elgin-Middlesex-London) is now Minister of Farming, Agriculture and Agribusiness. Minister Flack was previously the Associate Minister of Housing. There were no changes to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. This is now the largest cabinet the Ontario government has had to date.

**Learning and Networking Opportunities****Public Health Ontario launches new course: Health Promotion Essentials**

Public Health Ontario (PHO) has a variety of Health Promotion education resources designed for different health professionals available on their website. In order to better support those seeking education on Health Promotion, PHO is pleased to announce the release of a new Health Promotion Essentials online course.

This course is free and intended for those working in Health Promotion, but beneficial for all that wish to learn. After completing Health Promotion Essentials, individuals will have a greater knowledge and understanding of:

- health promotion foundational concepts
- the value of health promotion
- how health promotion can contribute to the health of people in Ontario

To take the course or learn more information, please visit [Public Health Ontario's website](#).

**Impact to MLHU Board of Health**

The Board of Health acknowledges learning and development as a vital part of effective governance. Public health board members can benefit from learning more about the promotion of public health and the contribution it has for the local community.