

Middlesex-London Board of Health External Landscape Review – October 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 in this correspondence are to inform Board members and are not necessarily an endorsement.**

Local Public Health News



'Continuously re-evaluating what is feasible and realistic': Northumberland still waiting on province on health unit merger

Dr. Natalie Bocking, Medical Officer of Health/Chief Executive Officer for Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge (HKPR) District Health Unit provided an update on the proposed merger between HKPR and Peterborough Public Health, while delivering a [public health update](#) at a Northumberland County Council committee meeting on October 1.

In February 2024, both Boards of Health voted in favour of a merger with the intent to submit a business case to the Province of Ontario. If accepted, the merger would be effective on January 1, 2025. At this time, the province has not approved any public health merger applications.

To read the full article, please visit Go Northumberland's [website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

On August 22, 2023, the Ontario Ministry of Health (through Minister Sylvia Jones) announced their plan to invest in a stronger public health sector. One of the avenues was to provide financial incentives to public health unit wishing to begin a voluntary merger process. The Middlesex-London Board of Health has not applied for a merger application.

Budget stress

On October 2, the Hastings Prince Edward (HPEPH) Board of Health [held their regular meeting](#), where budgetary pressures were emphasized.



At this meeting, the Board of Health approved moving \$700,000 from its operating reserve account and \$260,000 from its building reserves to hopefully balance the 2025 budget while keeping current staffing levels. At the same time, the Board is also waiting to hear about the result of the merger application with Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington and Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Units.

Medical Officer of Health Dr. Ethan Toumishey says staff and the board are working on two budgets for next year – one depending on whether amalgamation is approved and another if the health unit has to continue as is.

To read the full article, please visit Quinte News' [website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

Public health units throughout Ontario are feeling budgetary pressures due to provincial funding not keeping up with inflation, increases in public health workload, and other financial pressures. Budget planning is also underway at the MLHU, and reserve funding may be required to address budget pressures in the coming year.



Region of Waterloo

New Public Health clinic will increase access to health services

On October 2, Region of Waterloo Public Health opened a new clinic in the Region of Waterloo building at 20 Weber Street, Kitchener. Vaccines and sexual health services will be available by appointment. Dental screening and baby feeding appointments will be offered in the future. This is the third public health location in the Region of Waterloo. A grand opening will occur in January 2025. The new space features six accessible clinic rooms and is located on the second floor of the building. The clinic is located close to the light-rail line and multiple bus routes.

“This central location is ideal for a Public Health clinic that provides easy access to important health services,” says Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Medical Officer of Health for the Region of Waterloo. “The addition of this clinic in downtown Kitchener brings Public Health supports closer to where residents need them.”

To read the full media release, please visit the Region of Waterloo’s [newsroom](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The MLHU Board of Health supports fellow public health units when opening new locations to provide more services to the communities that they serve.

National, Provincial and Local Public Health Advocacy

Statement from the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health on the Overdose Crisis



Health Canada Santé Canada

On September 13, the Honourable Ya'ara Saks, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions provided a statement after data was [released](#) by the Special Advisory Committee on Toxic Drug Poisonings, noting that that the number of opioid-related deaths, hospitalizations and emergency service (EMS) responses in the first quarter of 2024 was lower than the same period in 2023, however the rates remain at critically high levels. From January to March 2024, there were 1,906 deaths, representing 21 deaths per day.

For more information and to read the statement, please visit the Health Canada Newsroom [website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Board of Health has previously heard about the impacts of the opioid crisis in the Middlesex-London community. An updated report will be presented to the Board in November.



Canadian Mental Health Association
Thames Valley
Addiction and Mental Health Services

CMHA TVAMHS Submits Letter of Intent to Lead Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub in London

The Canadian Mental Health Association Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services (CMHA TVAMHS) submitted a letter of intent to the Province of Ontario to propose a Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub in London. CMHA TVAMHS expects to submit London’s proposal to the province by October 18.

The [HART](#) (Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment) Hub was announced on August 20, along with the closure of ten (1) consumption and treatment sites in Ontario. Health Minister Sylvia Jones has said the HART Hubs will offer multiple forms of support, such as supportive housing, employment help and addiction care. She has also said communities can design their facilities to suit their needs

To learn more, please visit CMHA Thames Valley’s [website](#).

Impact to MLHU Board of Health

The Middlesex-London Health Unit and the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection’s Carepoint site is located on York Street, and was not the subject of closures by the Province due to it being further than 200 meters away from a school or daycare. More information about the connections between HART hubs and the existing Carepoint site are unknown at this time.