

Ministry of Health

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October 30, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Public Health Agency (LPHA) Board Chairs, Medical Officers of Health, Chief Executive Officers

FROM: Dr. Kieran M. Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario and Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health, Ministry of Health

RE: Strengthening Public Health – Planning Materials and Next Steps

Dear Colleagues:

As you are aware, in August 2023 the government announced the Ministry of Health's (ministry) commitment to working closely with local public health agencies (LPHAs), municipalities, and the broader public health sector on a strategy to strengthen public health, centred on three priorities:

1. Clarifying roles and responsibilities through the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS).
2. Supporting voluntary mergers among LPHAs.
3. Providing stable, sustainable funding to LPHAs.

As one of the foundational components of the strategy, voluntary mergers, particularly among smaller LPHAs, have significant potential to address long-standing challenges in the public health system and present an opportunity to work towards a vision for an optimized and better coordinated public health system.

This vision centers on LPHAs that have the critical mass and capacity, skilled personnel and competencies needed to deliver core public health services and address public health emergencies within a cohesive system that better aligns with local community and system partners.

In recent weeks, the ministry has reviewed past reports and recommendations and engaged with public health, municipal, community and other sector partners to gather input on a set of outcomes, objectives, and considerations to further articulate this future state and develop an approach to voluntary mergers that advances this vision. We are pleased to share the results of this work in the attached slide deck, *Strengthening Public Health: Outcomes and Objectives to Support Voluntary Mergers*.

In the coming days, we will be reaching out directly to LPHAs and Boards of Health to facilitate regional engagement, and support proposal development for LPHAs interested in voluntary mergers. We will be working with the Associate Chief Medical Officers of Health to schedule meetings, leveraging the existing regional engagement structure. LPHAs are also encouraged to engage with local communities and priority populations, including Indigenous and Francophone communities, early in the planning and assessment process.

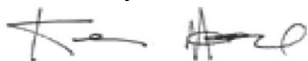
Additional information on the merger proposal submission process (including merger proposal business case template and eligible expenses) will be shared with the 2024 Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission template in early December 2023 with merger proposal business cases due in March 2024.

In the coming weeks, updates will also be provided on the Roles and Responsibilities and Funding workstreams of the Strengthening Public Health Strategy.

Should you have any questions about the process, please don't hesitate to contact the ministry team at StrengtheningPH@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your continued collaboration in the interest of improving public health for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kieran Michael Moore, MD, CCFP(EM), FCFP, MPH, DTM&H, FRCPC, FCAHS
Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health

Attachment

c:

Dr. Catherine Zahn, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health

Elizabeth Walker, Executive Lead, Ministry of Health

Colleen Kiel, Director, Ministry of Health

Brent Feeney, Director, Ministry of Health

Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health

Dr. Daniel Warshafsky, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health

Dr. David McKeown, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health

Dr. Fiona Kouyoumdjian, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health

Dr. Michelle Murti, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health

Dr. Wajid Ahmed, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health

Michael Sherar, Public Health Ontario

LPHA Business Administrators

Colin Best, President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario

Brian Rosborough, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario

Lindsay Jones, Director of Policy, Association of Municipalities of Ontario

Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies