



Ottawa Board of Health

Minutes

Meeting #:	9
Date:	February 12, 2024
Time:	5:00 pm
Location:	Champlain Room, 110 Laurier Avenue West, and by electronic participation
Present:	Chair Catherine Kitts, Vice-Chair Tammy DeGiovanni, Member Elyse Banham, Member Brent Bauer, Member Danielle Brown-Shreves, Member Marty Carr, Member Sabrina Chung, Member Laura Dudas, Member Rawlson King, Member Glen Gower, Member Theresa Kavanagh
Absent:	None

1. Notices and meeting information for meeting participants and the public
Please see the attached document for public notices and meeting information, including: availability of simultaneous interpretation and accessibility accommodations; *in camera* meeting procedures; processes and timelines for

written and oral submissions; personal information disclaimer for correspondents and public speakers; notices regarding minutes; and remote participation details.

2. Roll Call

All members of the Board of Health were present at roll call.

3. Regrets

None.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were filed.

5. Confirmation of Minutes

Moved by Member Laura Dudas

Confirmation of minutes of the meeting of December 4, 2023

Carried

6. Communications

Three communication items have been received (held on file with the Board of Health Secretary).

7. Motion to Introduce Reports

Motion No. BOH 9/1

Moved by Member Laura Dudas

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Confirmation of the Chair and Vice-Chair for 2024, the Chair of the Board of Health Verbal Report, the Medical Officer of Health Verbal Report, the Verbal Report on the Education Session Regarding Voluntary Mergers and the reports titled: Indigenous Health, Rights and Reconciliation: Annual Update and Attendance at the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' (ALPHA) Winter Symposium, be received and considered.

Carried

7.1 Confirmation of the Chair and Vice-Chair for 2024

File ACS2024-OPH-BOH-0001- City-wide

Moved by Member Laura Dudas

THAT the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit:

1. **Confirm the election of Councillor Catherine Kitts as Chair for 2024, to be confirmed at the first meeting of each year of its term as required by the Health Protection and Promotion Act; and**
2. **Confirm the election of Member Tammy DeGiovanni as Vice-Chair for 2024, to be confirmed at the first meeting of each year of its term as required by the Health Protection and Promotion Act.**

Carried

7.2 Chair of the Board of Health Verbal Report

File ACS2023-OPH-BOH-0002 – City-wide

Chair Kitts welcomed members of the Ottawa Board of Health back to session following the holiday break. Chair Kitts reflected on the significance of Black History Month and noted the significant health and social disparities that still exist due to anti-Black racism and how the Board and Ottawa Public Health continue to commit to integration of equity into the fabric of everything we do.

Chair Kitts also provided a recap of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference and discussed funding for routine childhood vaccinations.

The discussion on this item lasted approximately 4 minutes. The report was then received by the Board. The attached memo includes the Chair's Verbal Update.

Moved by Member Laura Dudas

That the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit receive this verbal report for information.

Received

7.3 Medical Officer of Health Verbal Report

File ACS2023-OPH-MOH-001 – City-wide

Dr. Etches discussed working with Indigenous partners to address evolving community needs in addition to acknowledging the efforts from Ottawa Public Health's Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation team. She then provided updates on Children and Youth Immunization Coverage, COVID-19 and Respiratory Illness, Group A Streptococcus, Mental Health and Substance-use Health, and Black History Month.

Discussions on this item lasted approximately 25 minutes. The report was then received by the Board. The attached memo includes the Medical Officer of Health's Verbal Update.

Moved by Member Laura Dudas

That the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit receive this verbal report for information.

Received

7.4 Verbal Report on the Board of Health Education Session Regarding Voluntary Mergers

File ACS2024-OPH-BOH-0003 – City-wide

Chair Kitts discussed the Government of Ontario's announcement of one-time funding for local public health agencies to explore opportunities for voluntary mergers. She noted that while this initiative is primarily aimed at boards in smaller communities and rural regions, the goal of the province is to make better use of existing assets and reinvest any savings from mergers back into improving programs to better serve people. The Chair brought forward merger-related options assessed by OPH staff and encouraged discussion.

The discussion on this item lasted approximately 15 minutes. The report was then carried by the Board. The attached memo includes the Verbal Update.

Moved by Vice-Chair Tammy DeGiovanni

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ottawa Board of Health receive the verbal update regarding the Ottawa Board of Health Education Session, which was held on January 26, 2024 as information;

AND THAT the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Ottawa Board of Health and Medical Officer of Health continue to engage with representatives from the Ministry of Health, neighbouring boards of

health and the Association of Municipalities Ontario with respect to voluntary mergers and explore opportunities for alternative service delivery models with neighbouring health units to strengthen local public health practice;

AND THAT the Chair of the Ottawa Board of Health direct the Medical Officer of Health to provide an update to the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the office of the Minister of Health on the due diligence conducted to explore possible merger scenarios by the deadline of April 2, 2024, reflecting the Board's preferred approach to maintain its existing boundaries and governance structure with the City of Ottawa;

AND THAT the Chair send a letter with a copy of this motion to the offices of the Minister of Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health and copy the Mayor of the City of Ottawa and City Councillors, the City Manager and the Chairs of the Boards of Health of neighboring health units, advising of the Ottawa Board of Health's preferred approach to maintain its existing boundaries and governance structure within the City of Ottawa;

AND FURTHERMORE THAT, the Chair of the Ottawa Board of Health report back to the Board on this matter at future meetings.

Carried

7.5 Indigenous Health, Rights and Reconciliation: Annual Update

File ACS2023-OPH-HED-0001 – City-wide

The Board then received an Indigenous Health, Rights, and Reconciliation annual update recognizing Ottawa Public Health's continuing efforts to become a culturally safe and humble organization, as outlined in the OHP Reconcili-ACTION Plan.

The Board received presentations from representatives from the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition, Minwaashin Lodge, Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team, Innuqatigiit Centre and the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.

Discussion of this item lasted approximately 45 minutes.

Moved by Member Laura Dudas

THAT the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit receive, for information, this update on Ottawa Public Health's continuing efforts to become a culturally safe and humble organization, as outlined in the OPH Reconcili-ACTION Plan.

Carried

7.6 Attendance at the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' (aLPHa) Winter Symposium

File ACS2023-OPH-BOH-0004 – City-wide

Moved by Member Laura Dudas

THAT the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit approve the participation of Chair Kitts, Vice-Chair DeGiovanni and Member Bauer at the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' (aLPHa) Winter Symposium, to be held February 16, 2024.

Carried

8. Motion to Adopt Reports

Moved by Member Laura Dudas

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Confirmation of the Chair and Vice-Chair for 2024, the Chair of the Board of Health Verbal Report, the Medical Officer of Health Verbal Report, the Verbal Report on the Education Session Regarding Voluntary Mergers and the reports titled: Indigenous Health, Rights and Reconciliation: Annual Update and Attendance at the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' (aLPHa) Winter Symposium, be received and adopted.

Carried

9. Motions Requiring Suspension of the Rules of Procedure

10. Notices of Motions (For Consideration at Subsequent Meeting)

11. Confirmation By-law

Moved by Member Laura Dudas

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Confirmation By-law no. 2024-1, a by-law of the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit to confirm the

proceedings of the Ottawa Board of Health at its meeting of February 12, 2024, be read and passed.

Carried

12. Inquiries

13. Adjournment

The Board adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

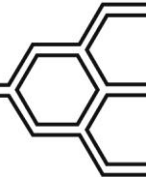
14. Next Meeting

Monday, April 15 - 5:00 PM

Original signed by C. Whiticar, Board
Secretary

Original signed by Councillor C.
Kitts, Board Chair

DRAFT



Chair's Verbal Report

Board of Health Meeting of February 12, 2024

Good evening to all Board Members, Dr. Etches and members of the public. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first Board meeting of 2024.

I would like to begin by recognizing that February is Black History Month. It's an opportunity for all of us to celebrate the past and present accomplishments of Canada's African, Caribbean and Black communities.

It's also a time for thoughtful reflection about the significant health and social disparities that still exist due to anti-Black racism.

On behalf of the Board, I want to take this opportunity to express our continued commitment to integrate equity into the fabric of everything that we do. /Au nom du Conseil, je tiens à profiter de cette occasion pour réaffirmer notre engagement continu d'intégrer l'équité au cœur de tout ce que nous faisons.

Health equity ensures that all members of society have access to the educational opportunities, economic conditions, health and social supports as well as healthy places to thrive.

Achieving these objectives requires all of us to acknowledge the systemic barriers that remain a daily reality for our Black friends and neighbours.

Only then can we work to reduce the disparities in health outcomes that they face.

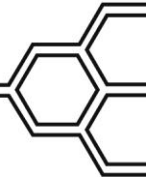
I know this is not only a public-health issue, but also a deeply personal mission for many of us around this table.

As an ally in this cause, I invite all Board members to engage in discussions and participate in events that build understanding as well as appreciation for the experiences of African, Caribbean and Black communities in Canada.

ROMA

Last month, I attended the Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference in Toronto.

It was an excellent opportunity to meet with other leaders from small and rural municipalities and discuss shared priorities. / C'était une excellente occasion de



rencontrer d'autres dirigeants de municipalités rurales et de petite envergure et d'échanger sur nos priorités communes.

I also met with a number of provincial elected officials to convey the Board's positions on key issues that have remained on our agenda over the past year.

They include the need for additional provincial investments to address Ottawa's overdose crisis, as well as increased investments in the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program to respond to the growing number of families who are dealing with increased cost of living, precarious or under housing as well as other aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I also had occasions to engage with members from other boards of health across the province and hear about the exploratory discussions they are having with one another about voluntary mergers of public health units.

I look forward to providing Board members with a more detailed report regarding the voluntary mergers of public health units later in these proceedings.

Funding for routine childhood vaccinations

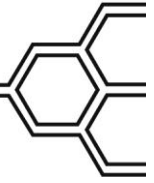
Finally, I'm delighted to share the news of a long-term provincial investment that will enable our city's children and teens to be better protected from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Thanks to additional funding from the Ministry of Health, Ottawa Public Health will be able to maintain its partnership with the Kids Come First Health Team to vaccinate the growing number of under-immunized children who don't have access to a family physician or a nurse practitioner.

This annual funding will provide Ottawa Public Health with the stable, predictable resources needed to maintain its immunization clinics based in schools and the community. /Ce financement annuel offrira à Santé publique Ottawa les ressources stables et prévisibles nécessaires pour maintenir ses cliniques de vaccination basées dans les écoles et dans la communauté.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank the Ontario government for recognizing this ongoing need to ensure the health and well-being of our children and families.

This concludes my verbal report. I would be happy to take any questions.



Board of Health Meeting
Dr. Vera Etches – Verbal report
February 12, 2024

Good evening, Kwey, Unnuksakut (oon-nuk-sak-kut), Taanishi, aanii, Bonjour.

The past year has taught those of us at Ottawa Public Health the importance of agility, innovation and partnerships as our community continues to deal with the aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and other critical public health issues.

Ottawa Public Health continues to work with our Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners to address evolving community needs, including ongoing systemic racism and discrimination, the rise of food insecurity, an alarming shortage of safe and affordable housing, and growing mental-health concerns.

I want to acknowledge the representatives who have joined us tonight from the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition, Minwaashin Lodge, Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team, Innuqatigiit Centre and the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.

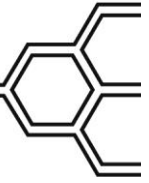
You have my deepest appreciation for sharing your knowledge and wisdom with Ottawa Public Health as we continue to build on our partnership with you based on a recognition of Indigenous rights and self-determination.// Je vous suis très reconnaissant d'avoir partagé vos connaissances et votre sagesse avec Santé publique Ottawa alors que nous continuons à renforcer notre partenariat avec vous fondé sur la reconnaissance des droits et de l'autodétermination des Autochtones.

Thanks also to Kim Trotter who has consistently demonstrated the principles of respect, reflection, reciprocity and relationship. I want to recognize Rob Chief for bringing his expertise also to shape the team's work in a temporary role over the last three (3) years. Rob and Kim are joined on the Indigenous Health, Rights and Reconciliation team by two new OPH team members, Raven Cotnam and Deborah Tagornak. As we embark on a new year, I want to express Ottawa Public Health's renewed commitment to work with all of you to improve the health outcomes of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous peoples.

The Board will receive shortly a report on Ottawa Public Health's continuing efforts to become a culturally safe and humble organization and will hear from some of our partners in this work. In the meantime, I will provide updates on some of our priorities for 2024, which include routine immunization for children and youth, managing the high volume of infectious-disease cases and addressing the ongoing tragedy of lives impacted and lost because of drug overdoses.

Catching Children and Youth up on Routine and School-based Vaccinations

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruption in access to routine vaccinations. The re-emergence of vaccine preventable diseases, such as measles, is



being seen globally and is a cause for concern. OPH is working with community partners, including Kids Come First, to help children and youth access and catch-up on routine vaccinations. OPH is offering routine childhood vaccinations through its Neighbourhood Health and Wellness Hubs strategically located in neighbourhoods where more children and families may be facing additional barriers to vaccination and reporting.

As a result of the Make Kids Count funding recently received from the Ontario Ministry of Health through Kids Come First, OPH will be able to maintain its routine childhood vaccination offerings through its Neighbourhood Health and Wellness Hubs. We are also able to hold targeted clinics at 46 elementary and 26 secondary schools this 2023-24 school year.

For 2024, one of our priorities is to identify ways to overcome barriers to achieving higher levels of vaccination coverage for the Human Papilloma Virus, which prevents against multiple types of cancer. // Pour 2024, l'une de nos priorités est d'identifier des moyens de surmonter les obstacles à l'atteinte de niveaux plus élevés de couverture vaccinale contre le virus du papillome humain, qui prévient plusieurs types de cancer. // I am concerned that youth born in 2007 and in 2008 have not yet caught up to reach the pre-pandemic levels of about 67% immunized and that we still need to reach the goal of over 90% immunized.

More capacity may still be needed.

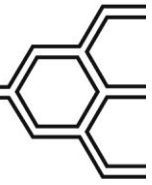
COVID-19 and Respiratory Illness

With the respiratory illness season still months from ending, Ottawa Public Health continues to recommend that people consider their risks – as well as those of their loved ones – and use layers of protection to reduce transmission.

Currently, COVID-19 activity is moderate and wastewater levels are decreasing since last week. Influenza activity is high and RSV activity is moderate – both similar to last week.

Vaccination for COVID-19 and flu remains the best way for residents to protect themselves from severe illness and hospitalization. It's not too late to get your vaccines at your local pharmacy or health-service provider.

Additionally, I encourage people with symptoms to stay home, refrain from visiting loved ones in hospitals, long-term-care homes and retirement homes, wash your hands often, and cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. // De plus, j'encourage les personnes qui présentent des symptômes à rester à la maison, à s'abstenir de rendre visite à leurs proches dans les hôpitaux, les foyers de soins de longue durée et les maisons de retraite, à se laver les mains souvent et à se couvrir la bouche et le nez lorsqu'elles toussent ou éternuent.



Please consider wearing a mask when recovering from illness to reduce the risk of spreading the infection to those around you.

Ottawa Public Health also answered the call to support the Ministry in distributing free COVID-19 rapid antigen tests and masks to the public. To date, staff and volunteers have distributed more than 825 thousand test kits and more than 120 thousand masks through 40 locations across the city.

That work, along with much of our dedicated pandemic response, is winding down at the end of March with the sunsetting of provincial funding for these operations.

With the end of dedicated provincial funding for COVID-19 response, Ottawa Public Health continues to respond to evolving community needs using our base budget funding. As part of our ongoing surveillance, Ottawa Public Health will continue to provide weekly, year-round reporting related to COVID-19 as well as other respiratory, as well as enteric infections.

Since December 2022, OPH has been integrating COVID-19 data into its year-round weekly reporting on respiratory viruses through the Respiratory and Enteric Surveillance Dashboard. By integrating COVID-19 data into the existing Respiratory and Enteric Surveillance Dashboard, OPH has created a unified resource, made visual enhancements, and streamlined data management, while maintaining a clear picture of the current level of risk posed by COVID-19, Influenza and RSV.

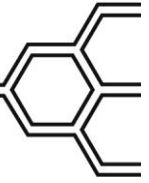
This work is important to guide decision-making about protective actions and measures to be taken by the public and health care settings, including masking in healthcare settings, as COVID-19 continues to cause illness year-round with the fall and winter respiratory season adding pressure.

For the general public, avoiding COVID-19 infections is important, to avoid any complications and to protect others around us who may be more vulnerable. Prevention and mitigation messaging like vaccination, anti-viral medications, and using layers of protection, including masking, continue to be promoted on our website, across our social media channels, and through community partners.

Group A Streptococcus

In terms of infectious disease surveillance, we have seen a sharp rise in the number of people confirmed to have invasive Group A Streptococcus infections. The number more than doubled to 145 in 2023 from a pre-pandemic average of 69 cases annually, and is similar to rises seen provincially, nationally and internationally.

Accordingly, Ottawa Public Health issued an advisory on December 20th to local hospitals and health-service providers, requesting that they be on alert for potential complications from Group A Strep infections and consider Group A Strep as a possible cause of severe illness.



All cases of invasive Group A Strep are reported to Ottawa Public Health for immediate follow up by nurses who identify and notify close contacts. In accordance with provincial guidelines, our nurses also provide advice on symptom management and assess the need for preventive treatment with antibiotics.

In collaboration with health-sector partners, Ottawa Public Health is also sharing relevant data, trends and information with the public, such as when and where to seek care. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates on any new developments.

Mental health and substance-use health

Like many cities across Canada, Ottawa has seen a dramatic increase in the harms caused by fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses.

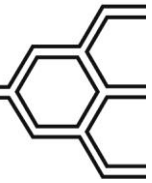
The demand for mental health and substance-use health services, made worse by economic insecurity and other aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, has never been so high.

Existing levels of funding simply do not meet the urgency, scale, and intensity of this unprecedented need, especially with an increasingly toxic and unpredictable drug supply that has forced service providers to focus on reversing overdoses, with limited capacity to move beyond crisis response.

That's why Ottawa Public Health continues to collaborate with community partners who are exploring innovative options across the continuum of care to ensure we maximize the effectiveness and impact of healthcare supports through collaboration and with input from neighbourhood associations.

These options range from increasing the capacity for quickly starting and maintaining people on treatment, to developing alternative points of care, beyond overcrowded emergency departments. The goal is to provide more people with rapid access, not only to crisis-response services, but also timely ways to connect people to a wider range of trauma support and treatment options. I am also connected to the City of Ottawa's work on housing and other interventions that can make a difference.

I want to thank the Chair, who has been informing the Ontario government, on behalf of the Board, about the need to improve access to community-based supports and services to support community wellbeing and address substance use harms for people who use drugs and their neighbours.// Je tiens à remercier le président, qui a informé le gouvernement de l'Ontario, au nom de la Commission, de la nécessité d'améliorer l'accès aux soutiens et aux services communautaires afin de favoriser le bien-être de la collectivité et de lutter contre les méfaits de la consommation de substances pour les personnes qui consomment des drogues et leurs voisins.



Overdose Prevention and Response E-Learning

As part of Ottawa's Overdose Response Strategy, OPH continues to work with a large network of partners to enhance community capacity in preventing and responding to overdoses effectively while promoting substance use health and wellbeing. As you may recall, OPH launched the "Party Safer" e-training in 2023 in response to the demand from our community to focus on safer substance use tips.

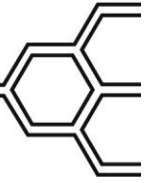
Today, OPH has introduced and launched a new online training focused specifically on "Overdose Prevention and Response". This self-directed, 20-minute training targets service providers such as school staff, business owners, health care professionals, and community centre and social services staff, and provides essential information on overdose prevention, naloxone administration, including five steps to respond to an opioid overdose, and debriefing and supports. The training also includes information on mental health, harm reduction, and substance use health resources. This new online training, as well as resources, services and Overdose data, can be found at www.stopoverdoseottawa.ca

OPH and the Overdose Prevention and Response Task Force are also working to enhance our local drug alert and advisory system. The goal is to increase timely access to information on concerning local trends and the toxicity of drugs circulating in the unregulated supply, similar to the public service announcement that was circulated by OPH and partners on Friday.

Black History Month

Finally, February is Black History Month, which is an opportunity for all of us to learn more, not only about the history and contributions of Black people in Canada, but also about their experience of countering systemic racism that persists to this day. As we celebrate the advancement and achievements of Canada's and Ottawa's African, Caribbean, and Black communities, this month is also an opportunity for all of us at Ottawa Public Health to reaffirm our commitment to become a culturally safe and antiracist organization as we work to improve the health outcomes of the Black population in Ottawa. While Black OPH team members are leading anti-racism work that is shifting expectations and accountabilities internally and exploring how to extend this work with partners, we have individual responsibilities as allies and collective responsibilities to champion this work.

The Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion team in partnership with the learning and development area are offering four learning opportunities during the month for employees to expand their knowledge of Canadian Black history and the ways in which anti-Black racism continues to manifest within our systems and society, as well some ways OPH's Community Engagement Team is currently supporting community participatory research within Ottawa's Black community. These sessions are being facilitated in manner that fosters learning and dialogue between each other to increase understanding and ultimately growth.



I am personally thankful for Black leaders in Ottawa, including in healthcare, like Dr. Brown-Shreves, in academic and community association sectors, who are helping me better understand Black experiences and who are working together to advance a Black Health Plan for Ottawa. OPH is supporting this work and is striving to shape all of our programs with engagement across the diverse Black community in Ottawa. Co-chairing the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition continues to be a valued contribution.

The Community Engagement Team continues to be responsive to community needs, generally, and to the needs of Black community members specifically, including being proactive in seeking solutions and expanding our partnerships with Black leaders in Ottawa. We look forward to building on the collaborations to date in-line with the Board's Strategy. // L'équipe d'engagement communautaire continue de répondre aux besoins de la communauté en général et aux besoins des membres de la communauté noire en particulier, notamment en étant proactive dans la recherche de solutions et en élargissant ses partenariats avec les leaders noirs d'Ottawa. Nous nous réjouissons à l'idée de poursuivre les collaborations à ce jour conformément à la stratégie du Conseil d'administration.

This concludes my verbal report. I would be happy to take any questions. Meegwetch. Merci.

Verbal Report – Education Session

Chair Catherine Kitts

February 12, 2024

During my December verbal update to the board, I discussed the Government of Ontario's announcement of one-time funding for local public health agencies to explore opportunities for voluntary mergers.

Since then, the Vice-Chair and I have been monitoring the conversations that are taking place across the province including the Eastern Region as neighbouring boards of health explore voluntary mergers. In the process, I have reached out to my counterparts at neighbouring boards to understand how they are embarking on these conversations and considering different options.

The Ministry of Health indicated that even boards not considering a voluntary merger should still analyze supplementary options for strengthening the public health system within Ontario.

To that end, the Board gathered for an education session on January 26th to learn more about the conversations that are happening in our region and their implications for us. At my request, staff provided us with an analysis of various options for Ottawa regarding the governance structures and geographical boundaries that could be under consideration by neighbouring boards.

During this session, the Board heard that this initiative is primarily aimed at boards in smaller communities and rural regions. The province has indicated that cost savings is not the intended goal of any voluntary merger. Rather, the goal is to make better use of existing assets and reinvest any savings from mergers back into expanding improving programs to better serve people.

The Board also heard that here in Ottawa, the previous Board of Health took the position that there is a net benefit for Ottawa Public Health to serve its more than one million residents by maintaining its existing boundaries and governance structure with the City of Ottawa.

The Board spent the balance of the education session learning about three potential options for governance structures and geographical boundaries involving Ottawa Public Health. Those options included:

- Amalgamating with one or more adjacent public health units to create a new corporate entity;
- Merging one or more adjacent public health units into the existing corporate entity known as Ottawa Public Health;
- Maintaining the existing governance structure and geographical boundaries so that Ottawa Public Health remains a department of the City of Ottawa with a semi-autonomous Board as its governing body.

The Board heard about the financial, operational and governance implications of the three options. Several considerations were assessed regarding the potential impacts of merger options including: increasing the population served including additional demographic and geographic subgroups; sharing existing capacity and expertise over a larger catchment area; reducing Ottawa's representation on the Board; reduced administrative efficiencies; and, financial risks due to uncertainties for future levels of provincial and municipal funding.

From a cost-effectiveness perspective, it was apparent that the status-quo option provides Ottawa residents with the greatest return on investment and the least financial risk, assuming the cost-shared funding formula between the province and municipalities is maintained.

The Board also discussed the value of working with neighbouring boards to explore alternative service delivery models that could achieve the provincial goal of leveraging existing expertise and assets to serve local populations more effectively and efficiently.

The province has asked all boards considering mergers to put forward their proposals or position in writing by April 2nd.

In the meantime, the Vice-chair and I will continue to engage with the province, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario as well as neighbouring boards and report back to all members on any new developments.

At this time, I would like to invite Vice-Chair DiGiovanni to table the motion for the Board to consider this evening:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ottawa Board of Health receive the verbal update regarding the Ottawa Board of Health Education Session, which was held on January 26, 2024 as information;

AND THAT the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Ottawa Board of Health and Medical Officer of Health continue to engage with representatives from the Ministry of Health, neighbouring boards of health and the Association of Municipalities Ontario with respect to voluntary mergers and explore opportunities for alternative service delivery models with neighbouring health units to strengthen local public health practice;

AND THAT the Chair of the Ottawa Board of Health direct the Medical Officer of Health to provide an update to the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the office of the Minister of Health on the due diligence conducted to explore possible merger scenarios by the deadline of April 2, 2024, reflecting the Board's preferred approach to maintain its existing boundaries and governance structure with the City of Ottawa;

AND THAT the Chair send a letter with a copy of this motion to the offices of the Minister of Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health and copy the Mayor of the City of Ottawa and City Councillors, the City Manager and the Chairs of the Boards of Health of neighboring health units, advising of the Ottawa Board of Health's preferred approach to maintain its existing boundaries and governance structure within the City of Ottawa;

AND FURTHERMORE THAT, the Chair of the Ottawa Board of Health report back to the Board on this matter at future meetings.