

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Ottawa Board of Health
Conseil de santé d'Ottawa
4 December 2023 / 4 décembre 2023**

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**Submitted by
Soumis par:**

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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2023-OPH-KPQ-0006

SUBJECT: Ottawa Public Health's Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 –Strategic Action Plan

OBJET: Plan stratégique 2023-2027 de Santé publique Ottawa – Plan d'action stratégique

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit approve Ottawa Public Health's Strategic Action Plan, as outlined in Document 1.

RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa approuve le Plan d'action stratégique de Santé publique Ottawa, tel qu'il est décrit dans le document 1.

BACKGROUND

[Equity, Prevention, Impact: Ottawa Public Health's \(OPH\) 2023-2027 Strategic Plan](#)

was adopted by the Board of Health in June of 2023. The Strategic Plan provides a framework to collaboratively examine and influence the systemic barriers to health and wellbeing in Ottawa and address key public health challenges over the next four years. The Strategic Plan includes the following strategic goals to drive progress in targeted areas for change:

- **Strategic Goal 1: Equity-Driven:** In working to improve population health outcomes and opportunities, we collaborate to eliminate health inequities, systemic racism, discrimination and oppression.
- **Strategic Goal 2: Create Conditions to Live Well and Thrive:** Influence changes in the built, natural and social environments that promote health and wellbeing, and address the impacts of climate change. Essential to this is the interconnection between health and nature.
- **Strategic Goal 3: Promote Wellbeing and Reduce Harms:** Advance innovative and comprehensive approaches to promote mental health and substance use health while reducing stigma; and decreasing harms associated with substance use and addiction across the lifespan.
- **Strategic Goal 4: Focus on Prevention:** Gather, analyze and share evidence on local health needs and inequities with the healthcare system to strengthen clinical prevention. We will engage with healthcare system partners to help inform decision-making.
- **Strategic Goal 5: Enrich our Workplaces:** Foster a diverse, inclusive, equitable and healthy workforce grounded in a culture of learning and growth. We will support and develop employees and optimize and innovate our processes to better serve the community.

The Strategic Plan was designed with the explicit intention of delivering and executing on the strategy through a focused Action Plan. The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Health with the Action Plan, as detailed in Document 1 – Ottawa Public Health's Strategic Action Plan.

DISCUSSION

Following the Board of Health's adoption of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) initiated a collaborative process to develop the Action Plan. While the Strategic Action Plan outlines focused areas of improvement to advance towards positive health outcomes in the community, it is important to note that OPH delivers a range of mandated core programs and services beyond this plan. The commitments underpinning this strategy are integral to all aspects of our core operations. This focused Strategy Action Plan emphasizes specific enhancements and achievements we are prioritizing at this time, acknowledging that our broader work remains vital and guided by our overarching commitments. Our commitments will also be closely monitored over the next four years. Below is a list of our commitments:

- **Reconciliation:** We are guided by the principles of respect, relationship, reciprocity and reflection as we work in partnership with Urban Indigenous Peoples – including First Nations, Inuit, Métis peoples and communities – to promote social justice and advance Indigenous rights and wellbeing.
- **Health equity:** We identify and address systemic barriers to increase health equity in urban, suburban and rural communities in Ottawa.
- **Healthy and inclusive workplace:** We foster an equitable, diverse, and inclusive workforce in service to the community and promote a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture.
- **Meaningful engagement and relationships:** We build genuine and lasting relationships with partners and residents to collaboratively foster a healthy community.
- **Evidence-informed:** We apply best available evidence, including community voice and local data, to identify issues impacting the community and continuously improve and innovate our work.
- **Impactful:** We aim to strengthen our organizational performance and optimize our resources to better serve the community, while tracking our progress through measurable outcomes.

The Approach

Developing the Action Plan involved forming dedicated Goal Teams for each strategic goal. These teams were responsible for developing and implementing evidence-based

Action Plans and, going forward, they will be responsible for regularly monitoring priorities, challenges, and opportunities, and assessing progress through the evaluation of performance measures.

The Goal Teams are a dynamic blend of diverse, multi-disciplinary members from the Senior Leadership Team, Associate Medical Officers of Health, leaders, content experts, and frontline employees. Insights gleaned from consultations completed at the beginning of 2023 with employees, partners, and the current and previous Board of Health were leveraged to help shape the Action Plan. OPH is committed to meaningful engagement and relationships. As such, Goal Teams are working on strategies to further involve partners and diverse voices from the community, including youth, equity-denied groups, and people with lived and living experience.

The Action Plan is tailored to adapt to the varying levels of maturity, complexity, and timeframes associated with each strategic goal. Because of this, the objectives, outcomes, and performance measures will be achieved, or refined, at different points over the next four years. Some focus areas, like collective efforts to address mental health, addictions and substance use health, have a solid strategic foundation. Conversely, other focus areas are still emerging and require exploration to clearly define what can be achievable within the next four years. These focus areas in the Action Plan are, at times, dependent on multiple factors that require collaboration with community members and partners to achieve success.

To gauge OPH's impact, we will use performance measures that are valid, reliable, and responsive, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative indicators. Including qualitative performance measures provides the opportunity to deliver comprehensive updates on progress and articulate the efforts required to effect change where there are sometimes deeply entrenched challenges. By achieving key milestones outlined in our performance measures, we will gain crucial insights into the systems we aim to change. These milestones pave the way for OPH to better define the next set of success indicators. Moving forward, OPH will seek to enhance the short-term indicators presented in the Action Plan, prioritizing measures that emphasize proactive strategies aimed at preventing issues before they occur. Additionally, OPH is committed to identifying long-term indicators for each strategic goal, with plans to present these to the Board through strategy progress reports.

Action Plan Summary

Below is a summary of the focus areas in the Action Plan. Refer to Document 1 – Ottawa Public Health’s Strategic Action Plan for the detailed objectives, outcomes, and performance measures of each strategic goal.

Goal 1: Equity-Driven

The pandemic further exposed long-standing and underlying social and health inequities in our communities. Systemic racism, oppression, social determinants of health, and barriers to accessing health information and services all contribute to disproportionately negative outcomes for equity-denied groups. OPH is taking action to improve health equity by ensuring all OPH teams have the necessary capacity and tools to advance action in this critical area.

A thorough understanding of health inequities is vital to OPH’s efforts. As such, we will advance responsible collection and use of sociodemographic data (SDD) across the organization. In addition, community voice is an important influence on OPH’s work. OPH will seek to better understand and improve diverse representation in community engagement activities. Informed by community voice and SDD, and building on an analysis of OPH’s current health equity work, OPH will increase internal capacity to address the social determinants of health and advance health equity.

Goal 2: Create Conditions to Live Well and Thrive

OPH will contribute to creating a healthy and thriving city by continuing to collaborate with City of Ottawa partners to support mutual goals through the integration of a health, equity, and wellbeing lens into policies and programs impacting built and social environments. OPH will strengthen capacity internally, as well as among City of Ottawa partners and the community, to respond to local emergencies, mitigate and adapt to the health impacts of climate change, and strengthen community resiliency. Key elements in our approach include special consideration for people at greater risk of climate-sensitive health outcomes and promoting a resilient natural environment.

Goal 3: Promote Wellbeing and Reduce Harms

OPH is advancing efforts aimed at addressing mental health, addictions, and substance use health, including harm reduction, by evolving the Ottawa Community Action Plan and the OPH Mental Health Strategy into three focus areas: reduce stigma; support collective efforts to prevent and address overdoses and suicide; and foster prevention strategies to maximize impact. There is no one initiative that will achieve these strategic objectives. Rather, sustained and measurable improvements require incremental

change achieved through comprehensive and collaborative efforts with people with lived and living experience, partners, the community, and neighbours. OPH is committed to enhancing performance measures to gauge the impact of collaborative efforts in mitigating stigma, reducing instances of overdose and suicide, and preventing new or worsening mental health, addictions, and substance use health concerns in the community.

Goal 4: Focus on Prevention

Improving client outcomes and reducing strain on the healthcare system requires a focus on preventing chronic disease and promoting health equity in healthcare planning and delivery. As the healthcare system evolves, OPH will work to support its partners in accessing evidence for equitable healthcare planning and patient care. Additionally, OPH will actively participate in provincial initiatives to enhance the public health sector's efforts in chronic disease prevention.

Goal 5: Enrich our Workplaces

Workforce health remains a top priority as OPH returns to core public health operations following the intensity of the pandemic. OPH is focused on improving employee psychological safety and wellness while also advancing learning and development in support of employees, and the organization as a whole. The community we serve is diverse and it is important that our workforce represent this diversity. OPH is working to foster and grow a workforce that is more diverse, inclusive, and equitable at all organizational levels, where employees feel safe to be their authentic selves, and equity-denied employees do not face barriers to learning, development and career advancement.

Next Steps

The Board of Health can expect to receive progress reports on the Strategic Plan twice a year. These reports will be based on the performance measures set out for each of the five strategic goals, offering a comprehensive snapshot of the overall status of our progress, and will highlight key accomplishments and challenges.

Over the course of the strategic cycle, OPH will continuously review and adjust the Strategic Plan and Action Plan in response to evolving community needs and changes in our surrounding environments. Adjustments to the Action Plan will also be brought forward as outcomes are achieved and as exploratory components become more clearly defined.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications associated with this report

CONSULTATION

The Ottawa Public Health 2023-2027 Strategic Plan was informed by employees, community partners, clients, City of Ottawa partners, and the current and previous Board of Health.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to approving the recommendation in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Accessibility was considered in the writing of this report and the development of the Strategic Action Plan.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTTAWA PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report outlines the Strategic Action Plan related to the OPH 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: Equity, Prevention, Impact: Ottawa Public Health's Strategic Action Plan 2023-2027

DISPOSITION

Staff will provide updates to the Board of Health twice a year on implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Action Plan.