

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Ottawa Board of Health
Conseil de santé d'Ottawa
13 January 2025 / 13 janvier 2025**

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**Submitted by
Soumis par:**

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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2025-OPH-BOH-0001

SUBJECT: Selection of a Hiring Panel for the Recruitment of a Medical Officer of Health

OBJET: Sélection d'un comité de recrutement pour le recrutement d'un médecin hygiéniste en chef.

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That, the Ottawa Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit establish a Selection Panel for the hiring of a Medical Officer of Health;
2. And That, the selection panel shall include representation from the Chair, the Vice-Chair, one citizen member and one Councillor member of the Board of Health;
3. And That, the selection panel be authorized to collaborate with the City of Ottawa's Human Resources Department to secure the services of an external executive search firm, leveraging their expertise for a thorough and effective recruitment process.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

1. Que le Conseil de santé d'Ottawa pour le Bureau de santé de la Ville d'Ottawa établisse un comité de sélection pour l'embauche d'un médecin-hygiéniste ;
2. Et que, le comité de sélection comprendra des représentants du président, du vice-président, d'un membre citoyen et d'un membre conseiller du Conseil de santé ;
3. Et que le comité de sélection soit autorisé à collaborer avec le Service des ressources humaines de la Ville d'Ottawa pour obtenir les services d'une firme externe de recrutement de cadres, en tirant parti de son expertise pour un processus de recrutement rigoureux et efficace.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Board of Health to establish a hiring panel composed of Board Members and to secure an executive search firm to commence the recruitment process for the role of Medical Officer of Health at Ottawa Public Health.

On December 4, 2024, Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Vera Etches, provided notice of her resignation from the City of Ottawa Health Unit, effective January 31, 2025.

The Ottawa Board of Health is bound by the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the *City of Ottawa Act, 1999* with respect to the hiring of a Medical Officer of Health and is responsible for recommending an appropriate successor to City Council as well as

the Ministry of Health. Subsection 62(2) of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* requires that the Board of Health and the Minister, acting in concert work expeditiously towards filling a vacant position of Medical Officer of Health. Subsection 12(6) of the *City of Ottawa Act, 1999* provides that despite the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, the City has the functions that the Board of Health would otherwise have in respect of the appointment, reappointment and dismissal of its Medical Officer of Health, its Associate Medical Officers of Health and its auditor.

DISCUSSION

The Ottawa Board of Health holds the critical responsibility with respect to recommending the appointment of a Medical Officer of Health, subject to City Council and Minister of Health approval. This role is essential for ensuring the health and well-being of the community, as well as ensuring overall functioning of the organization.

Selection Panel for the Hiring of a Chief Medical Officer of Health

By establishing a hiring selection panel, the Ottawa Board of Health can ensure a robust, fair, and effective process for hiring a Medical Officer of Health. Additionally, this approach is essential to ensure a transparent, efficient, and effective recruitment process that aligns with the Board's commitment to good governance.

Composition of the Hiring Panel

The formation of a hiring panel is a fundamental step in the Board's recruitment strategy. The panel will be composed of the following four members:

- The Chair of the Board of Health
- The Vice-Chair of the Board of Health
- One citizen member of the Board of Health
- One Councillor member of the Board of Health

This composition ensures a balanced representation of our community and governance structure with the inclusion of diverse perspectives from both elected officials and citizen members which will enhance the decision-making process, promoting transparency and accountability.

Executive Search Firm

In recent years, public health issues have become increasingly prominent. In Ontario, there is a shortage of Medical Officers of Health, as evidenced by several other Ontario public health units facing recruitment challenges for these essential positions.

The recruitment process for a Medical Officer of Health is complex given the need for specialized skills and experience in public health, as well as the rigorous vetting and assessment required to ensure candidates meet the high standards necessary for the position. The competitive job market and the overall strain on the healthcare system may further exacerbate the difficulty in filling these positions.

With the initial support of the City of Ottawa's Human Resources team, the hiring panel can secure an executive search firm, to promote access to a broad, qualified pool of candidates given recruitment firms' extensive networks and industry expertise.

Presently, the City of Ottawa has a list of qualified firms on the City's standing offer list for the hiring panel to engage and assess. Some recruiting firms specialize in healthcare recruitment and can tailor their search strategies to meet the Board's specific needs, ensuring a thorough and efficient process.

The firm would lead recruitment efforts including outreach, screening of candidates and provide the Board with a comprehensive assessment of candidates. This will ensure that only the most suitable candidates are considered and ultimately lead to the selection of a qualified Medical Officer of Health.

Furthermore, the involvement of an external firm ensures an unbiased and objective approach to candidate selection, further enhancing integrity and transparency.

Once engaged, the expectation of the search firm is to consult with all interested members of the Board to prepare the job profile for posting.

Once the position is posted, Chair Kitts will provide regular updates to the Board. As the hiring process unfolds, any significant developments or updates will be shared with the Board of Health through the Chair's Verbal Updates, or *in camera* as necessary, during regularly occurring Board of Health Meetings.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate Rural Implications in establishing a hiring selection panel or retaining an executive search firm for the purposes of hiring a Medical Officer of Health.

CONSULTATION

The Chair of the Board of Health proactively consulted with City Human Resources staff and representatives from neighboring and peer municipalities to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges involved in hiring a Medical Officer of Health. This collaborative approach allowed the Chair to gather valuable insights into the complexities of the recruitment process, including the current shortage of qualified candidates, competitive job market conditions, and specific needs of rural and urban communities.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to the implementation of the recommendations in this report. As stated in the discussion section of this report the *City of Ottawa Act, 1999* and *Health Protection and Promotion Act* outline the process for appointment of a Medical Officer of Health including the role of City Council in appointing a Medical Officer of Health and the Minister of Health in approving the appointment.

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

There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

DISPOSITION

The Chair will provide regular updates to the Board on the hiring process for the Medical Officer of Health.

Additionally, a formal report will be presented to the Board later in 2025 with a recommendation for the appointment of a Medical Officer of Health. Following the Board adopting the recommendations of that subsequent report, the Board Secretary will prepare a transmittal report for City Council's approval and collaborate with the successful candidate to ensure all necessary documentation is submitted to the Ministry of Health to confirm the appointment.