

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Ottawa Board of Health
Conseil de santé d'Ottawa
3 April 2017 / 3 avril 2017**

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**Submitted by
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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2017-OPH-IQS-0004

**SUBJECT: OTTAWA PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND
RESPONSE**

**OBJET: INTERVENTION ET PLANIFICATION DES MESURES D'URGENCE DE
SANTÉ PUBLIQUE OTTAWA**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que le Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa prenne
connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information.**

BACKGROUND

Legislative Foundation – Emergency Preparedness and Response

The authority for the Board of Health to deliver services related to emergency preparedness and response is derived from several sources.

Boards of Health in Ontario are responsible for delivery of health programs and services in accordance with the Ontario Public Health Standards. The [Emergency Preparedness Program Standard](#) and [Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol](#) specifically address the requirements for health units in the area of public health emergency preparedness. The goal of this standard is to enable and ensure a consistent and effective response to public health emergencies, and emergencies with public health impacts. The Ottawa Public Health (OPH) Emergency Plan and related programs are based on these provincial authorities and requirements. The implementation of the plan and its related programs and measures is delegated to the Medical Officer of Health.

It is noted that the OPH Emergency Plan complies with numerous applicable federal and provincial laws, including the *Clean Water Act, 2006*, the *Day Nurseries Act*, and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, among others, and meets the requirements of the Canadian Standards Association. The plan also meets Accreditation Canada and Emergency Management Accreditation Program requirements.

Finally, the OPH Emergency Management Program meets the Ontario Emergency Preparedness Program Standard requirements, and complies with and complements the City of Ottawa Emergency Management Program, which in turn derives its legislative authority from the Ontario *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

Education Requirement

The Emergency Preparedness Program Standard specifically requires that education and training on emergency preparedness and response be provided to Board of Health members annually. This report is provided to the Board of Health in fulfillment of the above-noted education-related requirements.

The OPH Emergency Management Program

The OPH Emergency Management Program is in place to ensure OPH is prepared for, responds to, and recovers from emergency situations through routine operations, the OPH on-call team, and the ability to increase the number of employees to respond to managing an event from within the organization. OPH is integrated with the City of

Ottawa Emergency Management Program, including links to provincial, federal and international responses.

OPH responsibilities within the OPH Emergency Plan include identification and assessment of vulnerable populations, management of communicable diseases and infectious disease outbreaks, immunization and prophylaxis, population health surveillance and safe water, including issuing Drinking Water Advisories.

Using established OPH escalation criteria, the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) determines when the organization needs to enter Enhanced Operations to support a municipal response or a specific public health threat. In Enhanced Operations the Incident Management System is activated to provide a scalable response. Systems are in place for staff notification and mobilization, and employees are supported with procedures, training & exercises, technology, delegated authority such as emergency spending and regulatory instruments such as orders.

OPH ensures ongoing communication and collaboration through established emergency preparedness networks such as the Hospital Emergency Preparedness Committee of Ottawa, Ottawa Interagency Influenza Planning Committee, and Ottawa Infection Prevention and Control Coordinating Committee.

During emergencies, OPH has a Continuity of Operations Plan (CoOP) to ensure we can resource our response while maintaining delivery of core critical public health services. For example, during the 2016 hepatitis A and measles responses, the CoOP provided guidance on which services could be temporarily suspended in order to deploy nurses to staff the enhanced response phone line and immunization clinics.

Supporting plans such as the OPH Drinking Water Advisory, Ottawa Interagency Influenza Pandemic Plan, OPH Anthrax Response Protocol and others address risks identified through the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment process.

DISCUSSION

2016 Activities

In 2016, OPH programs and staff provided twelve enhanced or activated responses which dealt with public health issues. Examples of responses included supporting vulnerable residents who were evacuated to City Emergency Reception and Lodging sites, ensuring water quality during the “sinkhole” occurrence, and supporting the public health needs of Syrian Refugees arriving in Ottawa with immunization requirements and dental health issues. OPH was also activated for an enhanced response to conduct

contact tracing and assessment of all contacts exposed to cases of measles and cases of hepatitis A. To minimize the risk of spreading measles in the community, over 500 individuals were assessed by OPH and 80 referrals made to other health units. To minimize the risk of hepatitis A spreading in the community over 700 people were contacted, of whom 580 were given vaccine prophylaxis. For a full listing of the responses, refer to Document 2: OPH Enhanced and City Activated Responses in 2016.

OPH also released 32 communications using the Emergency Response Management System (ERMS) to key stakeholders to ensure timely information about emerging public health issues of immediate concern. For example, updates on the Zika virus, a food recall, an illicit fentanyl warning, infectious diseases outbreaks in the community, and extreme weather advisories/warnings were also included. For the full listing of communications, refer to Document 3: ERMS Communications to OPH Key Stakeholders.

On an annual basis, OPH conducts a Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA). The 2017 HIRA identified risks for future preparedness including infectious disease outbreaks (local/epidemic/pandemic), food-borne illness, opioid overdose cluster, extreme heat, cold or air quality events, and drinking water advisories.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

CONSULTATION

The purpose of this report is administrative in nature and therefore no public consultation is required.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

An annual Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) is undertaken to identify emerging and potential risks for OPH to be prepared for.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility implications to receiving this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: Ottawa Public Health Emergency Plan

Document 2: OPH Enhanced and City Activated Responses in 2016

Document 3: Emergency Response Management System (ERMS) Communications to OPH Stakeholders in 2016

DISPOSITION

This report is provided for information.