



OTTAWA PUBLIC HEALTH

2018

ANNUAL REPORT



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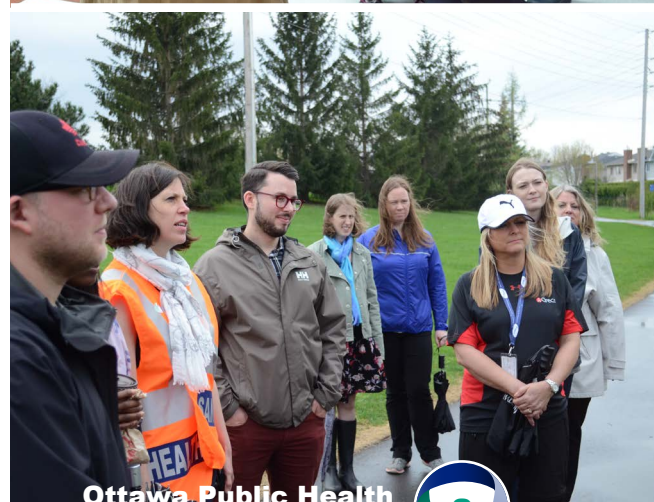
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healthsante@ottawa.ca

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Ottawa Public Health
100 Constellation Drive
Ottawa ON K2G 6J8



Message from the Mayor

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) continues to provide for a vibrant, healthy and safe environment for Ottawa residents and visitors. Through extensive outreach and programming, OPH works to prevent illness and improve health by monitoring, analyzing and assessing such areas as immunization, environmental health, infection prevention, and health promotion.

The role of public health within the City of Ottawa is important to our day-to-day lives. For example, OPH has been a key partner as we build the New Official Plan, reporting on the built environment – transportation, open spaces, street designs, location of schools and jobs – all factors that affect human health, particularly the health of Ottawa’s most vulnerable.

As investments in public health promotion and prevention are a top priority for both the City and OPH, our work together on cannabis has been vital for a smooth transition to cannabis legalization. We continue this work as the roll-out continues on regulatory plans, education and retail distribution of cannabis as well as edibles in the future.



I look forward to seeing these programs and services grow through the leadership of OPH’s new Board of Health. I know that with their leadership and the hard work of the OPH team, anything is possible. I am proud of what has been realized to date and am eager to see what accomplishments and efforts continue to propel us forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Watson".

His Worship, Mayor Jim Watson,
City of Ottawa

Message from the Chair of the Board of Health

As I begin my term as Chair of the Ottawa Board of Health, I see immediately that Public Health has grown considerably since I was last a member of the Board. Today, public health is an evolving sector and one that is increasingly relied upon by Ottawa residents. As I recently toured the OPH offices, I was pleased to see all of the smiles from staff who are clearly so passionate about what they do. I look forward to working with the OPH team and Board of Health members to guide Ottawa to a healthier future.

As I learn more about public health, I am impressed with its vast reach. From transportation, physical activity and immunization, to suicide prevention, mental health and health promotion – public health is a critical community function that protects residents and visitors as well as seeks to enhance quality of life.

The work of OPH in the community is changing, encompassing new challenges and opportunities. Top of mind is cannabis. As the City examines many of the regulatory and licensing elements, OPH has been working with our partners to educate the public on the health impacts, how to use responsibly,



and how cannabis can affect you. This work is ongoing, and will continue this year with the addition of cannabis edibles.

This year's annual report is merely a snapshot of the partnerships and work that OPH has undertaken over the past year to improve the health of Ottawa residents. Together, we will continue to make a difference for our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Egli".

Keith Egli,
Chair of the Board of Health

Message from the Medical Officer of Health

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) fosters partnerships as key to improving health in Ottawa. Partnerships strengthen projects and programs, ensuring greater relevancy, reach and achievement of outcomes. They also enable OPH to address determinants of health beyond the health sector. In 2018, OPH furthered its partnerships, working on opportunities to improve residents' physical and mental health and well-being.

This year's annual report has a new look and feel. It is web-based, with embedded links throughout to direct readers to more information available on OPH's website. I encourage you to explore the links to learn more.

I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a number of professional partners who share my passion for local, community health. I'd like to highlight just a few examples.

As part of our work with community partners, OPH is pleased to coordinate the Ottawa Overdose Prevention and Response Task Force, which collaborates on overdose prevention projects, community Naloxone training, and other harm reduction and treatment initiatives aimed at reducing the health impacts of overdoses in Ottawa. The group also monitors suspected drug overdose-related emergency department (ED) data on a daily basis to be able to appropriately respond should a sharp increase of overdose-related ED visits occur in the community.

OPH led the establishment of the Ottawa Gambling Harm Prevention Network, which includes individuals with lived experience, treatment providers, credit counselors,



academics, and representatives from the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, Hard Rock Ottawa and the Responsible Gaming Corporation. In the short time since its establishment, the Network has collaborated to share evidence-informed practices and expertise to build capacity and implement a population health approach to prevent and reduce the health, social and financial harms of gambling. The Network is aiming to increase awareness of the harms of gambling, promote responsible gambling practices, decrease stigma as a barrier to seeking help, and improve awareness of available community treatment and support services.

I look forward to continuing these and other partnerships that build on OPH's achievements, with the goal of keeping Ottawa residents and visitors healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

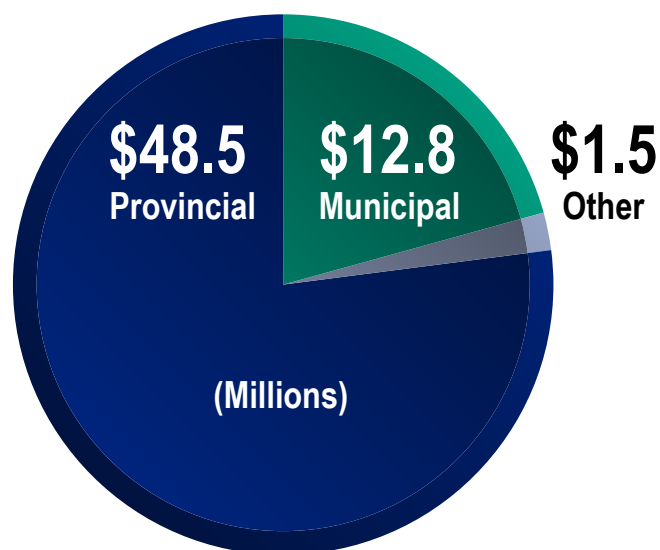
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Etches', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vera Etches,
Medical Officer of Health

2018 Ottawa Public Health Budget

Funding Sources	Amount (in millions)
Provincial	48.5
Municipal	12.8
Own Funds	0.3
Fees and Services	1.2
Total Revenue	62.8

Program Delivery	Amount (in Millions)
Chronic Disease Prevention & Well-Being	6.0
Food Safety	3.9
Healthy Environments	2.0
Healthy Growth & Development	3.6
Immunization	1.8
Infectious & Communicable Diseases	11.5
Safe Water	1.1
School Health	10.8
Substance Use & Injury Prevention	5.7
Foundational Standards and Emergency Management	7.1
Supplementary Programs	
Healthy Babies Healthy Children	4.6
Dental Program	2.4
Miscellaneous Programs	2.5
Gross Expenditure	62.8



Core Work

- Support healthy early growth and development
- Promote health and wellness through all stages of life
- Prevent injuries and chronic disease
- Prevent and control infectious disease
- Prevent food and water-borne illness
- Protect and promote environmental health
- Prepare and respond to emergencies
- Monitor the health of the population to inform system planning
- Assess and report on the health of the population
- Advance healthy public policy



OPH Strategic Priorities

At the end of 2018, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) produced a “**wrap up**” report on its 2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan, which provided the Board of Health and the community with a detailed summary of all 2015-2018 strategic priority-related initiatives and accomplishments.

As we look two, five, even ten years down the road, OPH is assessing what a road to success, progress and change might foresee. Towards that end, Ottawa Public Health is in the process of developing a new Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

This plan will address and align with the key opportunities and challenges facing public health from a local, provincial, federal and international perspective. It will inform our

priorities, guide our strategies and decisions, and help us to further evolve our mission of promoting and protecting the health and well-being of Ottawa’s residents and visitors.

OPH’s new strategic plan will include critical areas of strategic focus, such as: building a community where health and health equity are reflected in decisions; driving prevention across the whole health system; promoting mental health and reducing the health and social harms of substance use; and maximizing the potential in people and resources.

There will be a strong emphasis on being proactive and coordinating with our partners and the community while remaining focussed on outcomes and value for money.



Emergency Response

Consistent with Ottawa Public Health's work on disease prevention, OPH's work often requires planning and intervention in response to human health emergencies such as extreme weather disasters and infectious disease outbreaks. In 2018, our emergency response team provided expedient responses to a number of emergent situations in the community, including the **September tornado and windstorm**, the **Collision at Westboro Station**, a number of large Ottawa fires, and two lapses in infection prevention and control practices.

The OPH team prides itself on building an emergency management program that includes regular reviews and updates to the OPH emergency response and incident

action plans, to meet requirements of the independent, North American Emergency Management Accreditation program.

Through various partnerships with Public Health Ontario and 2-1-1, OPH has increased its distribution of emergency health alerts from 1,500 to 4,000 health and social service practitioners and stakeholders, who then take responsibility to reach out to vulnerable populations.

OPH continues to encourage Ottawa residents to develop their own **emergency preparedness plans**, including an **emergency preparedness kit** to ensure the safety of Ottawa families. Residents can learn more about emergency preparedness, prevention and response on the OPH website.



Status of Mental Health Report

Ottawa Public Health, together with mental health and community experts, developed the first mental health surveillance report in Ottawa's history. **The Status of Mental Health in Ottawa 2018** report describes the mental health and well-being of Ottawa residents using the Public Health Agency of Canada's **Positive Mental Health Surveillance Conceptual Framework**. The report includes indicators that address the burden of mental illness and substance use, as well as a **summary report** developed to highlight the important themes that emerged from the data as factors impacting residents' mental health. These are:

- Resilience
- Family relationships
- Social connectedness
- Health equity and stigma

Following the report's release, Ottawa Public Health engaged with community partners, policy makers, service providers, and individuals and groups with lived and living experience. These consultations provided an opportunity to share and discuss key findings, identify gaps, and identify new opportunities for policies and practices to promote mental health. Findings from the report, combined with feedback from the community, will help inform future program planning and identify next steps for promoting positive mental health at OPH and in the community.



State of Ottawa's Health 2018

In December 2018, the Board of Health received the [State of Ottawa's Health 2018 report](#), which provides a high-level snapshot of the health of Ottawa's population and enables OPH to make informed decisions about health policies, programs and services.

Based on the most reliable and up-to-date information from a variety of sources and databases, this report supports OPH in promoting and protecting health, and provides

OPH with the ability to better assess and analyze the local population's health over time. The information garnered will inform the development of OPH's, as well as partners', future strategic priorities.

The report covers issues such as smoking rates, rates of death, teen pregnancy, binge drinking, sexually transmitted infections, vector-borne diseases, etc.

Immunization

Since 2015, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) has initiated a number of quality improvement initiatives aimed at improving immunization reporting rates by parents, reducing barriers and increasing access to publicly-funded vaccines. Every year, OPH assesses over 150,000 student immunization records. Since 2017 OPH has assessed the immunization records of over 9000 children attending licensed child care centres in Ottawa. Online reporting of immunizations through Connect Ontario (ICON) and CanImmunize applications and individualized consultation with parents, have contributed to a reduction in the number of reminder letters and suspension notices sent to parents annually by more than 50%.

In 2018, OPH focused on reducing barriers for families in accessing publicly-funded immunizations in Ottawa. This included identifying schools with low rates of immunization, and relocating community immunization catch-up clinics in geographic locations to facilitate access. OPH nurses provided classroom visits and hosted immunization information assemblies for students and parents. In some schools this resulted in increased uptake of school immunization vaccines for grade 7 students from 50% to 100%. In addition, OPH provided targeted support to a local high school with over 200 students at risk of suspension. An information assembly with students, an immunization record assessment and immunization clinic were held at the school.



This reduced the number of students at risk of suspension from 200 students down to 8.

OPH also continued its partnership with the Ottawa YMCA shelter, and Centretown Community Health Centre, to provide monthly immunization clinics at the shelter for new families to Canada.

In 2018, OPH initiated research at the YMCA shelter to identify barriers in uptake and access to immunization services. Overall, 75 interviews were completed with recent refugees to Canada residing at the YMCA shelter. This data will be used to work with community partners to tailor services to better meet this population's needs, thus facilitating higher immunization rates.

Official Plan

Ottawa Public Health was invited to participate in the development of the City's New Official Plan, a strategic document that will guide Ottawa's growth and development through a set of directions and policies. This process, which will take place over the coming few years, is an important city-building opportunity that will allow OPH to contribute to the development of healthy built environments.

Promoting healthy built environments is about developing communities where people can be healthy and thrive, through elements such as walkable neighbourhoods and access to safe and convenient active transportation infrastructure. The Official Plan sets a policy framework that shapes the places where we live, work and play well into the future. This includes where growth happens, how natural areas are preserved or accessed, the planning of infrastructure, and design of new communities, as well as the redesign of existing communities that are undergoing change.

To prepare for the launch of the new Official Plan, a series of **discussion papers** were developed in 2018 to highlight issues that will affect how the city grows. One of those papers was led by OPH and discusses "The Building Blocks for a Healthy Ottawa." The paper describes the health implications of the way communities are built by exploring the issues of transportation, housing, food systems,



natural environments and neighbourhood design. It outlines the ways in which communities can be planned, built and used so that people have more opportunities to lead healthy lives.

The New Official Plan can be a policy prescription for health. It can be an important piece of the puzzle in reducing chronic diseases and injuries, promoting mental health, and decreasing exposure to environmental hazards. Having health as one of the City's key engagement issues to inform the new Official Plan will help build public awareness and promote healthy public policy through community design. OPH will continue to contribute to the Official Plan review process by providing a public health perspective on community planning.