

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

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

DESTINATAIRE : Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa

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SUBJECT: **MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH VERBAL REPORT**

OBJET : **RAPPORT VERBAL DU MÉDECIN CHEF EN SANTÉ PUBLIQUE**

*Check upon delivery*

Good evening, Bonsoir,

As you have just mentioned, Mr Chair, over the last month we have been working to wrap up all of the inputs collected over the last year from the community, staff, partners and the previous Board, and to produce - with you - our strategic directions for the future.

From a programmatic perspective, as we move from winter into spring, we have also started to shift some of the operations that are more seasonal in nature.

An example, of course, is our work on influenza in the community and on outbreaks in long-term care facilities and retirement homes. While we work on these issues year round, it does seem that the numbers of respiratory outbreaks is now petering out. These last few months the team has been particularly stretched, as it emerged from a season of a record number of outbreaks.

We have also been challenged by some relatively unusual scenarios. For example, while we often have to deal with situations in which respiratory or gastrointestinal diseases need to be contained, recently we have been called upon, also, to support staff in homes that have had cases of invasive Group A Streptococcal infection.

You will recognise invasive group A strep (iGAS for short, also sometimes known as flesh eating disease) as a potentially very serious infection, and one we follow up on very rapidly, as preventive measures can be taken amongst contacts of cases, to reduce the risk of secondary cases. We have been seeing a slow but definite increase in the number of cases in Ottawa over the last 10 or so years, following a trend across Ontario. We are now seeing about 50 cases a year, almost all of which are sporadic, meaning that there is no identifiable epidemiological link to other cases. Still, we respond quickly to ensure that contacts are treated prophylactically to help prevent additional cases.

As influenza and outbreak season ends though, in the spring and summer our focus in health protection needs to shift. This is when we start our efforts to reduce the probability of things like West Nile virus disease in the community, and to gear up for public health inspections at special events, like summer festivals.

We are also well underway with our enhanced response on immunization. As I mentioned at our last meeting OPH is committed to doing full surveillance on all school children in the coming school year. National Immunization Awareness Week happens to be next week and our key message is to make parents aware of the need to report their children's vaccinations to Ottawa Public Health. We find that immunizations that are given after kindergarten registration tend to be poorly reported.

I am pleased to update you, also, on a very positive launch to our Parenting in Ottawa website, which is a companion product to our Parenting in Ottawa Facebook page. Some of the most popular pages are on healthy snacks for active children, child development and life with a new baby.

I will end my comments by recognizing two opportunities to promote health and to celebrate our teams, which we have had, just recently.

Firstly, April is Oral Health Month. This year OPH focused on promoting oral health for babies. Information packages have been distributed within our community that include factsheets about the signs of early childhood tooth decay.

Oral Health Month is also an opportunity to celebrate the dedication and commitment of our dental assistants, receptionists, clerks, dental hygienists and dentists.

Also in April, OPH celebrated National Volunteer Week.

We have about 300 dedicated volunteers with OPH, who contribute 7000 hours per year to help us deliver programs and services such the breast feeding buddies, client satisfaction surveys, physical activity for seniors and, supporting new parents at Baby Express and Breast Feeding Support Drop-Ins.

That concludes my verbal report. As always, I am happy to answer any questions.