

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

Information previously distributed / Information distribué auparavant

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

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

**FROM: Dr. Isra Levy,
Ottawa Public Health**

Contact :
Esther Moghadam,
Deputy Director and Chief Nursing
Officer
ext. 23789
esther.moghadam@ottawa.ca

**EXPÉDITEUR : D^r Isra Levy,
Santé publique Ottawa**

Personne ressource :
Esther Moghadam,
directrice adjointe et infirmière-chef
poste 23789
esther.moghadam@ottawa.ca

DATE: February 2, 2017

2 février 2017

FILE NUMBER: ACS2017-OPH-IQS-0001-IPD

**SUBJECT: AUDIT OF THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE FOR
HEALTH SERVICES - OPERATIONAL REVIEW**

**OBJET : VÉRIFICATION DE LA PRÉPARATION AUX SITUATIONS D'URGENCE ET
DES INTERVENTIONS D'URGENCE DES SERVICES DE SANTÉ – EXAMEN
OPÉRATIONNEL**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to inform the Ottawa Board of Health about an audit by the City of Ottawa's Auditor General.

BACKGROUND

Audit Timelines and Scope

At its meeting of December 9, 2015, Ottawa City Council approved a report titled [Office of the Auditor General \(OAG\) 2016 Audit Work Plan](#), which included the following proposed audit:

- Audit of the Emergency Preparedness and Response for Health Services - Operational review

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) staff have participated in an “Audit Kick-off meeting”, the purpose of which was to introduce the audit team, explain the purpose and approach of the audit, establish communication protocols and communicate target timelines for the project. The Office of the Auditor General has requested the following documents:

- The Service specific policies and procedures in place for elements in the City of Ottawa’s Emergency Management Plan which refer to Ottawa Public Health.
- Integrated response plans established with other organizations such as hospitals, police and fire, to assist in understanding OPH’s role in coordinating efforts with other entities and other levels of government.
- Documentation related to the planning, operation and lessons learned from emergency preparedness training exercises that OPH has recently initiated, managed or participated in.
- External reviews or certifications of OPH’s preparedness.

OPH has provided a total of 107 documents to the Office of the Auditor General in response to the aforementioned request.

Governance Structure and Authority

Under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, the Ottawa Board of Health is responsible for fulfilling the requirements for fundamental public health programs and services established by the *Ontario Public Health Standards and Protocols*. In addition to expectations, responsibilities and accountabilities outlined in the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, other legislation and the *Ontario Public Health Standards*, the Board of Health can provide a policy framework within which Ottawa Public Health (OPH) staff can define the health needs of the community and design programs, services and policies to meet these needs. The Ottawa Board of Health is also responsible for

advising City Council on other issues related to health matters within its jurisdiction, upon Council's request.

The Board of Health was formally established on April 28, 2011. At its inaugural meeting, the Board approved a report from the City Clerk and Solicitor titled [Foundation Policies and By-laws for Ottawa Board of Health Governance](#), which stated as follows:

"With respect to audit requirements, the amendments to the City of Ottawa Act, 1999 respecting the Board of Health provide that the City will continue to appoint the auditor for the Board of Health. The City has currently appointed Ernst and Young LLP as its external auditor. Internally, the Board may request the City's Auditor General to perform financial, compliance and performance audits of the Ottawa Board of Health."

DISCUSSION

Under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA), the Medical Officer of Health has a statutory duty to respond to health hazards/communicable diseases during an emergency and, as per Section 7 of the HPPA, OPH emergency operations are required to meet the requirements under the [Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2015](#). Many of those same functions are reflected in the rubric of the City's obligations under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA). The Office of Emergency Management has a coordinating role and various City Department/Services are critical stakeholders in providing support for tasks under the City of Ottawa Emergency Management Plan.

The purpose of this memo is to inform the Ottawa Board of Health about the audit. Given the City role in respect of emergency management described in the preceding paragraph and the fact the City provides the Board of Health with all public health employees that are employees of the City as per Section 12(5) of the *City of Ottawa Act, 1999*, OPH staff welcomes this audit and believes that the Board of Health need not invite or approve the OPH component of this audit.

While the 2016 Accreditation Canada process concluded that OPH met all criteria related to planning for and managing emergencies, disasters, or other aspects of public safety, this is an additional opportunity to validate current policies, processes and procedures and to find opportunities for improvement.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will apprise the Board on developments and findings with respect to this audit.

'Original signed by'

Dr./ D^r Isra Levy

Medical Officer of Health/ Médecin chef en santé publique

Ottawa Public Health/ Santé publique Ottawa