

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Ottawa Board of Health
Conseil de santé d'Ottawa
17 September 2018 / 17 septembre 2018**

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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2018-OPH-CCE-0001

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AT OTTAWA PUBLIC HEALTH

OBJET: COMMUNICATIONS ET ENGAGEMENT DES INTERVENANTS À SANTÉ PUBLIQUE OTTAWA

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

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

RECOMMANDATION 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

The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) identify the minimum expectations for public health programs and services to be delivered by Ontario's boards of health. Boards of health are accountable for implementing the Standards, including the protocols and guidelines that are referenced therein. Protocols provide direction on how boards of health shall operationalize specific requirement(s) identified within the Standards whereas guidelines provide direction on how boards of health shall approach specific requirement(s) identified within the Standards. Together, these documents outline various requirements with respect to communications and stakeholder relations. The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Health with an overview of Ottawa Public Health's (OPH) work in these areas.

DISCUSSION

The Communications and Community Engagement Branch (CCE) was formed in February 2018, following Ottawa Public Health's fall 2017 corporate realignment. This new branch comprises four working teams:

- Communication, Knowledge Exchange, and Municipal Relations;
- Ottawa Public Health Information Centre;
- Community Engagement; and
- Board Support.

The branch brings these work teams together in order to coordinate and manage emerging issues and communications involving Board Members, Councillors, media, community and client inquiries as well as relationships with key partners and funders.

The Communications and Community Engagement Branch (CCE) provides centralized services that support the implementation of all [Foundational Standards of the Ontario Public Health Standards 2018](#) as well as almost all other standards that have communications requirements. Accordingly, the branch supports the Board of Health's strategic directions and helps OPH meet its communication and partnership engagement requirements pursuant to the OPHS and OPHOS.

The **Communication, Knowledge Exchange, and Municipal Relations** team includes the *Public Information and Health Communication* and *Ottawa Public Health Information Centre* work units, providing the following services:

- Supports planning, quality, and knowledge exchange relating to strategic communications and public engagement;
- Provides inquiry management services by telephone, email, live chat, web, and social media;
- Builds capacity across the health department on effective public information, health communication, and client engagement strategy and tactics;
- Assesses, interprets and provides health information to residents and health care providers to facilitate access to OPH services and messages (including health assessment and counselling, education and information on various health issues, and health promotion);
- Manages, coordinates, implements, and evaluates public engagement services and branding for Ottawa Public Health as the go-to source in Ottawa for public health-related information (internal knowledge base, information centre, live web chat, website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, public events, media relations), Parenting in Ottawa (website, Facebook, Instagram), and The Link Ottawa (website, Facebook, Instagram);
- Produces health graphics and multimedia products for teams across the department;
- Identifies and capitalizes on innovative and promising practices and strategies to reach all segment of the population;
- Collaborates with partners to promote and enhance service delivery and sharing of information;
- Provides on-call emergency management and enhanced response services related to health communications (disease outbreaks, drinking water advisories, heat alerts and frostbite warnings, flooding, special emergency circumstances); and
- Ensures that health communications are based in evidence-informed decision-making, are broadly inclusive and mindful of the health equity framework.

Document 1 highlights some OPH communication metrics and Document 2 provides an overview of the methodology used in developing communication plans and materials.

The **Community Engagement** team provides coordination and oversight of partner,

stakeholder and community relations at OPH.

OPH values its productive working relationships with partners and stakeholders in the fulfilment of its mandate. The Communications and Community Engagement Branch seeks to establish and enhance meaningful relationships across sectors. This includes those at the regional and municipal levels, such as the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), neighbouring health units and City of Ottawa departments. The branch also fosters relationships with upper levels of government, as well as a range of community and stakeholder groups.

The branch supports OPH's policy work with various partners and stakeholders in order to strategically advance population health and healthy public policy, and ensure OPH is moving forward in an integrated and proactive manner. The fostering of relationships also supports early identification and informing of emerging issues within and across the health and community sectors, enabling coordination and action among OPH and other stakeholders. In addition, building relationships with non-traditional partners (i.e. outside of the health sector) helps foster new and innovative approaches for delivering programs and services, and meeting OPH's mandate.

The branch also seeks to further the development of relationships with Indigenous communities in relation to OPH's Reconcili-Action plan, including advocacy within the broader health care and not-for-profit sector.

To support this work, the Community Engagement team is carrying out an organization-wide assessment of current points of engagement with partners and stakeholders across the various OPH service areas and teams. This will support maintaining and strengthening relationships by enabling enhanced, strategic, and organization-wide approaches in advancing OPH's mandate. It will also help identify new and emerging opportunities as OPH's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan is developed.

The **Board of Health Support** unit provides administrative and governance support to the Ottawa Board of Health. As such this unit:

- Coordinates the preparation and distribution of Board of Health meeting materials;
- Provides secretariat services in support of Board meetings;
- Manages formal communications between OPH and the Board of Health, as well as between the Board of Health and its funders;

- Coordinates the preparation of communications materials to be disseminated by the Chair and Members of the Board;
- Facilitates Board of Health Members' participation at public health-related conferences and events;
- Liaises with the Office of the City Clerk and Solicitor on various matters related to Board meetings, governance, legislative requirements, appointments and orientation; and
- Coordinates Board of Health Members' orientation and continuous learning.

OPH is committed to providing current, reliable, accurate and transparent information to the Board of Health and Members of Council as well as to Ottawa residents, community service providers and partners, educational professionals and healthcare practitioners, and to members of the media on health promotion, health protection and emerging public health issues.

OPH's communication efforts are integral in achieving our vision for all Ottawa's communities and people to be healthy, safe and actively engaged in their well-being. Transparent, efficient, responsive and accountable communication promotes confidence and trust in OPH and facilitates us meeting our mandates.

OPH continuously reviews best practices, and seeks to improve and build upon its communication and partner engagement strategies in order to support ongoing quality improvement and to adapt to an increasingly fast-paced world. Accordingly, OPH always welcomes suggestions with respect to communication methods and/or platforms, as well as with respect to stakeholders and/or partnerships.

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 impediments to receiving the information in this report.

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.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 – Communications Performance Metrics

Document 2 – Communications Framework – 12-step process

DISPOSITION

This report is submitted for the information of the Board of Health.