

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

Bonsoir, good evening,

I want to start, tonight, by touching on the Chair's comments regarding our efforts to foster mental health in Ottawa. In addition to increased access to *safeTalk* and the screenings of *Inside Out*, Ottawa Public Health (OPH), along with Member Leikin, recently submitted an article to the Canadian Psychological Association's flagship publication, *Psynopsis*. The article details initiatives around workplace mental health promotion and the suicide awareness initiatives undertaken with City of Ottawa

employees. Submissions like these allow us to raise the profile as to how this Board is advancing healthy public policy, and allow others to learn from our experiences.

I will touch briefly tonight on three items that have been taking my attention in recent months. Firstly, an important provincial update regarding our public health standards and our budget, secondly information about flu season, and lastly some updates on the *Making Healthier Choices Act* that was passed by the legislature earlier this year.

With regards, first, to our budget – this Board has advocated, in recent years, for a review of the provincial funding formula for Public Health Units, and for enhanced funding for Ottawa that is more in keeping with funding levels in comparable health units. Further to correspondence with the Minister of Health last year, I have remained in contact with local members of the provincial legislature on this matter, and I do want to acknowledge the interest of Minister Naqvi - in particular - and Minister Meilleur, as well as Parliamentary Secretary Fraser, all of whom have been consistently accessible and supportive of our ongoing efforts to improve health in this community.

Last month, the Ministry released a report that detailed a new funding formula for all 36 health units in Ontario. Under the new funding formula, OPH has received, for the current fiscal year, a 6.4 percent increase from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for cost shared programs related to public health services in the community. This is most welcome, as it will allow us to balance the budget more easily, and will help with the additional expenses of the immunization program. The Ministry funding also supports the establishment of a new dental clinic at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health. Additional information regarding the budget is outlined in the quarterly financial report, and it is clearly good news that the concerns of this Board were noted by the province.

Standards

The Province has been very active in other areas of interest too. Several amendments to the Ontario Public Health Standards and protocols have been made recently, including – specifically - protocols regarding public disclosure of infection prevention and control lapses, which were amended just last week.

Our management team routinely reviews these revisions. Plans to incorporate the changes are developed, prioritized and implemented as soon as possible while being careful not to disrupt ongoing operations. All new Standards are posted on the Ministry's website too, and if any of you is eager to review these please let me know and we can share the links.

Also, it is important that you are aware that the province has initiated what it is referring to as a modernization exercise to review all of the Ontario Public Health Standards, as well as a major review of the Universal Influenza Immunization Program. These are substantial undertakings that will occur over at least the next year, but I expect that they will result, ultimately, in significant changes to board accountabilities. I will, of course, keep you updated as information becomes available.

Flu

In the meantime, flu season is upon us and, as usual, OPH is working with pharmacies and primary care physicians to ensure accessibility of the vaccine to all residents. Again this year, OPH has seen a large number of pharmacies applying to administer the vaccine. Over 170 pharmacies will be offering the vaccine in Ottawa, along with over 300 physician's offices. We are very grateful to these partners. To address gaps where community vaccination providers are not readily available, OPH will offer 12 community clinics and clinics for children under the age of five, beginning next week. In addition, OPH will be reaching out to vulnerable residents by providing flu vaccination at group homes, shelters and Aging in Place buildings.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care also announced just last week that it will be introducing nasal spray vaccine for children, as an alternative to an injection. Inventory and logistics allowing, the nasal spray formulation will be available in Ottawa for those aged two to 17.

Making Healthier Choices Act, 2015

Finally, at our last meeting, we discussed Ontario's Bill 45, *Making Healthier Choices Act*, 2015. Specifically, we were asked to report on whether substances other than tobacco are subject to this legislation. To this effect there is a memo, listed under items previously distributed, in tonight's agenda. Also, the ministry is now conducting a consultation regarding the implementation of the *Making Healthier Choices Act*, 2015, and our staff is participating actively in the consultation.

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

Merci pour votre attention.