

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Ottawa Board of Health
Conseil de santé d'Ottawa
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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2016-OPH-EHP-0001

**SUBJECT: SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS – OTTAWA PUBLIC HEALTH
IMPLICATIONS**

**OBJET: CÉLÉBRATIONS DU CENT CINQUANTIÈME ANNIVERSAIRE –
RÉPERCUSSIONS POUR SANTÉ PUBLIQUE OTTAWA**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 1. Receive for information this report, which provides an overview of additional pressures and potential implications related to the sesquicentennial celebrations planned for 2017; and**
- 2. Direct staff to explore alternative funding opportunities to offset added operational costs due to the sesquicentennial celebrations planned for 2017 and report back to the Board as appropriate.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la Ville d'Ottawa :

- 1. prenne connaissance du présent rapport, qui donne un aperçu des pressions supplémentaires attribuables aux célébrations prévues pour le cent cinquantième anniversaire de la Confédération, en 2017, et de leurs répercussions éventuelles; et**
- 2. demande au personnel d'examiner différentes possibilités de financement visant à compenser les coûts de fonctionnement accrus attribuables aux célébrations prévues pour le cent cinquantième anniversaire de la Confédération, en 2017, et de faire rapport au Conseil au besoin.**

BACKGROUND

Ottawa Public Health's (OPH) work supports a wide variety of events and celebrations in Ottawa, including events such as the planned activities for *Ottawa 2017* - Ottawa's celebration of Canada's 150th birthday, through both health protection requirements and health promotion initiatives.

The City of Ottawa hosts more than 400 special events yearly, including but not limited to, marathons, competitions, fairs, and festivals. Many events involve the sale and consumption of food and alcohol. Some of OPH's public health interventions at special events include food safety risk assessments and inspections, and OPH messaging related to safe alcohol consumption.

Since 2014, the City of Ottawa has experienced a 5% increase in special events per year. In 2015 alone, OPH conducted 1,200 food safety inspections at more than 100 events. With the sesquicentennial celebrations planned for 2017 in Ottawa, OPH will see an unusually large increase in the number and size of events. *Ottawa 2017* alone has announced several large signature events such as: New Years Eve 2016; Red Bull Crashed Ice; La Machine; Canada Day; Grey Cup and YOW concert. In addition to the *Ottawa 2017* events that have been identified as priority, OPH is anticipating an increase in the number of people gathering for more frequent "routine" special events in order to recognize and celebrate this milestone anniversary, especially those hosted in the communities surrounding the downtown core (e.g., community Canada Day celebrations).

Looking forward to the sesquicentennial events and celebrations planned for 2017, OPH does not anticipate that risks to the public's health would be of a different nature than

what OPH deals with ordinarily. However, OPH does anticipate that the volume of responses—both preventive and reactive—will increase significantly. Such an increased response volume will impact OPH’s human resource requirements and deployment, OPH’s budget, as well as OPH’s ability to meet some of its 2017 Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC)’s Accountability Agreement targets. For example, Public Health Inspectors may have to be preferentially diverted from routine inspection duties to event-related inspections and responses.

OPH has developed a planning framework that coordinates the public health response to mass gatherings and links it with the City of Ottawa’s celebration preparations. By developing and implementing this planning strategy, OPH is seeking to increase efficiencies and reduce duplication as connections are made with City and external partners to promote healthy events and protect the public.

DISCUSSION

In many respects, sesquicentennial events will be typical of any large gathering, allowing OPH to draw on prior experiences--and those of other health units--to anticipate and plan operations. However, unlike many mass gatherings, sesquicentennial celebrations will span the entire year and will attract large numbers of people, including visitors, and will require substantial investment and capacity building in order to mitigate potential public health risks.

Risk Assessment

In Q2 2016, OPH conducted a risk assessment and literature review regarding addressing public health implications of mass gatherings. All issues and recommendations identified in the risk assessment process have been classified into four broad themes: Health Hazard & Food Safety Inspections and Investigations, Communicable Disease Surveillance & Management, Injury Prevention & Health Promotion, and Emergency Planning and Preparedness.

Health Hazard & Food Safety Inspections and Investigations

Under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA) and associated Regulations, OPH must “inspect or cause the inspection ...for the purpose of preventing or eliminating and decreasing the effects of health hazards...”¹ In addition, OPH’s Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) are tasked with enforcing *Ontario Regulation 562* (food premises) to minimize the risks of food borne illness to the public emanating from

¹ Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.H.7, Section 10.

commercial food premises at special events hosted in Ottawa. Therefore, special event organizers are required to provide OPH advanced notification whenever they plan to hold a special event and must provide information, as requested by PHIs, related to food vendors, animal exhibits/petting zoos, drinking water, etc.

OPH coordinates with Event Central and the City's Special Events Advisory Team (SEAT) to work with event organizers to help ensure special events are successful and contribute positively to the community. OPH has been involved in discussions with the SEAT over the past year with respect to preparations for the 2017 celebrations. The City's special event process is governed by the [Special Events on Public and Private Property By-law No. 2013-232](#) and the [City Right-of-Way By-law No. 2001-260](#). If the event has an expected attendance of at least 500 persons at any one time or is taking place on a city street/sidewalk, the [Application for Special Events](#) must be completed. Through this application process, OPH conducts a public health risk assessment and carries out inspections, as appropriate. The most common sources of food safety risks from special events in Ottawa are deficiencies related to hand-washing (73%), hot and cold holding (48% and 32%, respectively), and food storage (14%)².

It is expected that OPH will be required to conduct approximately 1,500 to 1,800 special event inspections in 2017, which represents a 25% to 50% increase from 2015. Further, OPH expects that the scope (e.g. attendance numbers) and complexity (e.g., number of special event vendors) of 2017 events will require supplementary inspections, re-inspections and complaint response in order to ensure public safety.

With current work volumes, OPH's PHIs are challenged in meeting all inspection targets set by the province, as reported in the [October 2016 report](#) to the Board (ACS2016-OPH-IQS-0008). In anticipation of the increased demand for inspection in 2017, OPH has investigated operational efficiencies and the reallocation of staffing resources. Nevertheless, routine inspections of lower risk premises may need to be deferred to ensure food safety at events. Further, given that events often occur on evenings and weekends, it is anticipated that overtime costs will also put pressure on the OPH budget.

Communicable Disease Surveillance & Management

Under the authority of the *HPPA*, the MOHLTC mandates boards of health to prevent and manage infectious diseases of public health significance. To meet this mandate, OPH is responsible for "fulfilling minimum, common operational roles and

² OPH reviewed 85 special events inspected between 2015 and 2016 to identify the most common deficiencies.

responsibilities for interpreting, communicating and acting upon surveillance information and findings to reduce the burden of infectious diseases of public health importance in our community”.³

Monitoring and surveillance of communicable disease risk in 2017 will be included in routine operations. However, should a large-scale outbreak occur, costs may mount due to enhanced operations involving re-deployment of operational staff for case management, providing immunizations, and over-time to ensure a timely response. Beyond the cost implication, the re-deployment of staff impacts the pursuit of other operational objectives across the organization, including health promotion initiatives.

Injury Prevention & Health Promotion

The special events in 2017 will be seen as an opportunity to raise awareness of OPH messaging related to the health and well-being of Ottawa citizens through prevention, promotion, and protection via OPH channels (e.g., social media and staff booths at events) and through collaboration strategies with internal City partners to ensure buy-in and consistency.

Emergency Planning & Preparedness

OPH is integrated into the City of Ottawa emergency management program to ensure the public health dimensions of any community emergency or a specific public health emergency, such as an infectious disease outbreak, is managed effectively and efficiently with city and community partners. OPH has experience using the Incident Management System (IMS) to address situations that call for a public health response exceeding usual operational capacity. The OPH IMS structure will be activated during the large signature events in 2017 and for any additional events identified as high risk to ensure coordinated communications and response internally, in support of the City’s emergency management system and in collaboration with the health care sector.

In conclusion, OPH has reviewed the potential impacts of planned and potential “pop-up” sesquicentennial celebrations and remains concerned that demand for a public health response, such as increased food safety inspections, response to complaints, or an outbreak associated with a mass gathering, may divert resources from ongoing operational requirements. Additional funds have not been identified for the added work of 2017, but opportunities may arise to access special funding related to 2017

³ Ontario. Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Infectious Diseases Protocol, 2016. Toronto. ON: Queen’s Printer for Ontario; 2016, page 2.

celebrations. OPH is seeking approval to pursue such funding sources and report back to the Board of Health should they arise.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

CONSULTATION

In preparing this report, OPH consulted with staff in 2017 Ops and Special Events and in Bylaw & Regulatory Services.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to receiving the information referred to in Recommendation 1 and no legal impediments to implementing Recommendation 2 of this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Ottawa's sesquicentennial celebrations has the potential to significantly stretch OPH's ability to commit resources to ensuring the maintenance of all core operations, due to the increased presence of staff required at events and especially if events lead to the need for an enhanced response to a major communicable disease outbreak. Therefore, OPH may have limited ability to meet all requirements set out in the Public Health Funding and Accountability Agreement for 2017. More specifically, during peak special event periods (Q2 and Q3), OPH is anticipating that accountability agreements related to outdoor pools, spas, and low risk food safety may not be met.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As indicated in the body of the report, OPH has investigated operational efficiencies and the reallocation of staffing resources. Notwithstanding this, it is anticipated that overtime costs will represent an added pressure for the OPH 2017 Budget.

Staff will pursue all potential funding opportunities to offset such costs, including the submission of a funding request to the MOHLTC for extraordinary one-time events.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Accessibility impacts were considered in the writing of this report.

DISPOSITION

OPH staff will continue to work with municipal partners and external stakeholders to gather more definitive information about the number, size and scope of events to be held in 2017 in order to better assess the implications for OPH resources needs and potential impacts on accountability agreement targets. OPH will also continue to explore funding opportunities to offset additional operating costs and report back to the Board as appropriate.