

Board of Health Meeting November 21, 2019

Summary

Budget

The Board of Health passed the Public Health Programs and Services budget at the Board meeting on November 21, 2019. The approved cost shared 2020 budget for public health programs and services (\$12,163,443) is less than the approved cost-shared budget for 2019 (\$12,255,538). This is due to a decrease in revenue from externally funded projects and is compensated for by decreasing staff development and salaries and benefits. The 2020 budget also includes \$835,700 for the 100% provincially funded Seniors Dental Program.

The municipal levy for 2020 reflects the change in the provincial/municipal public health funding ratio to 70/30 as outlined by Minister Elliott for 2020 with a one year transition grant to ease the levy increase. Recognizing the increased cost to the municipality because of the change in the funding ratio, the public health budget has been reviewed carefully to avoid any additional costs to municipalities.

Public Health Modernization

Minister Elliott announced at the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa) Conference on November 6, 2019 that there is a “re-set: in the work to “modernize public health”. All ideas are being welcomed through the consultation process which began with a Ministry Webinar on November 18th and the release of the Discussion Paper: Public Health Modernization. The only thing off the table is “status quo”. They expect the consultation process will continue through the winter and conclude around April.

The Discussion Paper: Public Health Modernization includes four areas that the ministry thinks require improvement:

- Insufficient capacity in all health units
- Misalignment of health, social services and other services
- Duplication of effort
- Inconsistent priority setting

Jim Pine, Special Advisor to the Minister, will be leading a consultation process to respond to the questions raised in the report in each of the above areas. It will include regional meetings and an opportunity to provide input into the consultation questions through a ministry survey which will be open until February 6, 2020. Board members are invited to participate in the Health Unit consultation process.

Ontario Health Teams

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit has been participating in the development of the Ontario Health Team proposals for the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville area designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the health system at the local level. We are an Allied Partner committed to bringing the following perspective to the discussions. There is strong interest in also having municipalities involved in this initiative.

- Focus on Health Promotion and Prevention;
- Population Management of Chronic Health Conditions;
- Address Socio-Economic Determinants of Health;
- Ensure Health Equity in access to health care services;
- Collaboration with Municipalities;
- Collaboration with Community Organizations ;
- Ensure Interconnectedness among Ontario Health Teams.

Program Update

Vaping involves inhaling from an electronic cigarette a product that contains nicotine and other components. Since 2017 there has been a dramatic increase in the number of youth who are now vaping, including non-smokers. New high tech vape products, the addition of flavours that appeal to youth, its marketing as being safe, as well as high levels of nicotine leading to addiction are all contributing to this increase. Nicotine affects the growth and development of the brain among youth, and the other chemicals present are not regulated. Interactive workshops for youth are being provided by public health staff in schools along with resources available on the health unit website. The Board of Health will be writing a letter to Minister Elliott requesting additional measures to protect youth from vaping.

The new Ministry of Health Seniors Dental Program is now officially launched, and seniors can start applying for the program that funds dental prevention and treatment services for low income seniors. Information about the program and application forms is available on our website <https://healthunit.org/health-information/oral-health/ontario-seniors-dental-care-program/>.

Each year, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit conducts [Nutritious Food Basket costing](#). The results show that individuals and households living with a low income struggle to buy enough nutritious food after paying rent, bills, and other living expenses. From the 2017 Canadian Community Health Survey, 9.4% or 6449 households in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark reported some level of food insecurity. Food insecurity is not having enough income to buy healthy food. When money is tight there is less money for healthy food. This leads to poor mental, physical and oral health and a greater risk of chronic disease and less healthy growth and development for children.