

## **Board of Health Meeting February 27, 2020**

### **Summary**

#### **Public Health Modernization**

The Board of Health received the final report on the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit's response to the Ministry of Health Discussion Paper: Public Health Modernization. It includes seven recommendations to respond to the Ministry's concerns about the current public health system in Ontario that build on the current strengths of the system. The report also includes a description of a regional approach that connects health units with each other through a Regional Collaborative Council that is then provincially linked to a Chief Medical Officer of Health Public Health Lead Table. A Provincial Program Advisory Committee led by Public Health Ontario supports evidence-based work across the province. This enhancement to the current public health organizational structure can build capacity, avoid duplication, and assist in public health priority setting - three priorities of the Ministry of Health. The Board of Health emphasized in the report the importance of an appropriate municipal role in governance.

#### **Organization Update**

As part of the Indigenous Engagement Strategy outlined in our Strategic Plan, the Health Unit has organized two opportunities for our employees to experience the "Blanket Exercise" on June 12, 2020. Board members are welcome to attend also. The "Blanket Exercise" is an interactive and participatory history lesson developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers and educators.

<https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/about/>

Much work has been done to create Positive Spaces for all community members participating in our programs and services. "A positive space refers to an agency that is open and welcoming, as well as equitable and accessible to persons of all sexual and gender diversities, both to clients and employees of the agency. The term also refers to an agency in which all staff have been trained to understand the issues around sexual and gender diversity and are familiar with human rights, diversity and resources." Rainbow Health Ontario will be providing a workshop for all employees on June 5, 2020 to expand our work to all of our programs and services.

<https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/>

#### **Program Update**

The Immunization Team has been reviewing the records of students to ensure all are up to date on their immunizations. Parents have been contacted to supply information where it was missing and most have done so. For the remaining students, the family and schools of the student will be given notice that the students will not be allowed to attend school if the health unit does not receive information that the student's immunizations are up-to-date before the suspension date.

Work is progressing well on the development of the Health Unit Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy. We have consulted with Lanark County, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, and Tay Valley Township about their plans. It is clear there is much that we can do with all municipalities to complement each other's work. We will bring our Strategy to the Board for discussion in the spring.

### **Update on COVID-19**

On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) China Country Office was informed of cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology (unknown cause) detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province in China. A novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was identified as the causative virus by Chinese authorities on January 7, 2020. On February 11, 2020, the WHO released the official name for the disease caused by the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) as [COVID-19](https://healthunit.org/coronavirus/). The Health Unit Website provides detailed information about COVID-19. <https://healthunit.org/coronavirus/>

The Health Unit is participating, for Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, in the provincial strategy to contain the spread of COVID-19. The Incident Management Structure (IMS) is working very well for the Health Unit to keep on top of the evolving COVID-19 situation. The Health Unit's local role is to:

- Provide information to health service providers and respond to queries about possible cases,
- Monitor people who have had potential travel exposure and who are self-isolating at home,
- Provide information and advice to school boards and other community partners, and
- Provide general information to the public through the website and social media <https://healthunit.org/>,
- Work with health care partners to develop, and plan for, any change to the current situation.

At this time, the key message to the public is to protect yourself and others from any respiratory disease, including influenza and the common cold, by:

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer,
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth unless you have just washed your hands,
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your arm, not your hand,
- Stay home if you are sick, and keep your children home if they are sick,
- Keep commonly used surfaces clean.