

## **Board of Health Meeting May 21, 2020**

### **Summary**

#### **Board of Health Appointments**

Candace Kaine, former Board Vice Chair, was presented a certificate of appreciation for her term on the Board of Health as a provincial representative.

In the absence of a Board Vice Chair two interim Vice Chairs were appointed to the Board of Health until December 31, 2020:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair – Anne Warren
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair – Peter McKenna

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

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark (LGL) region has had many days within the last week or so with no community cases. A phenomenal job was done with the testing of long-term care homes (over 3000 tests done in 12 days) and our Public Health Inspectors have completed infection control audits in all long-term care and retirement homes.

Within the health unit we are planning for the next phase and have established good process maps, guidelines and procedures along with cross training of outbreak staff to prepare us in the event of a second wave. Shani Gates is leading planning with the managers and directors about what this will look like for us going forward and we are actively looking at what we could pick up.

The Ministry of Health has stated that the role of public health is in case and contact management, and the testing of community members is to be done by the hospital sponsored Assessment Centres. Public Health supports the Assessment Centre by providing communication to the public about the hours of opening, location and how to access the centre. In addition, public health nurses provide information, either in person or through handouts, on the need to self-isolate or to self-monitor until results come back, as part of our case and contact role.

#### **COVID-19 LGL Data**

COVID-19 surveillance reports are available on our website and updated every weekday at 4:00 pm under the COVID-19 tab under the section called surveillance reporting.

- Since mid-March ER visits for respiratory disease have seen a drastic drop in day to day visits locally and across the province as well.
- Our day to day ER visits for respiratory symptoms are down two-thirds from what we would normally see this time of year.
- Lab confirmed positive people with COVID-19 saw a peak in April, and now is on the decline. There have been no new lab confirmed cases between today and yesterday – quieted down locally. We will track to see if there is an increase when social distancing requirements are relaxed.
- Currently there are 336 lab confirmed cases in LGL and 49 deaths. The majority of cases are located in long-term care and retirement homes.
- 90% of community and healthcare workers have recovered.

## **Program Updates**

### **Quality, Information, and People Services**

From an administrative point of view, the systems and supports we have put in place to support the COVID-19 response are going well; supporting COVID-19 work has become the new norm for how we are functioning.

- Our workforce remains healthy (COVID-19 free);
  - the majority of our staff are working to deliver and support COVID-19 activities or other essential services;
  - we are still operating 7-days week for priority COVID-19 activities, although staffing needs for the weekend has decreased slightly;
  - continue to build our human resource capacity in priority COVID-19 response areas, either through re-deployment or recruitment of new staff to fill gaps (i.e. infection control, epidemiology).
- We continue to build our IT infrastructure to support COVID-19 activities. About 40 people are working from home (27%); currently installing more fax lines to receive test results from labs more efficiently; supporting case contact management database.
- Regarding communications, the number of followers on our Facebook and Twitter accounts continues to grow and we have a daily presence in local media, either through published media releases or interviews.
- The Multi-Workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee continues to meet biweekly. The controls that we have put in place are working well and being continuously reviewed and improved. We continue to implement daily staff self-assessment, physical distancing, hand washing and cleaning of frequently touched surfaces twice daily. We have been able to procure sufficient supplies and PPE, with help from partners, with some minor delays.

### **Planning for the next phase:**

- We are planning for the priority COVID-19 activities that will be required (enhanced or reduced) for the next phase; and will be basing this on an evaluation of the initial phase and what worked well and what needs improvement.
- As far as essential services, we are developing criteria for the re-introduction of other services that have been suspended during the initial phase (demand, risk, HR capacity, IT capacity). As part of this process, we will discuss the re-opening of our offices to the walk-in public.

### **Healthy Living and Development Department**

- Calls have been with community partners to provide guidance regarding how to safely manage face to face client service.
- There is a new database platform for case and contact tracing which will support staff to more efficiently manage their workload.
- Public calls have decreased over time.
- Public Health Inspectors continue to support the emergency childcare centres.

### **Community Health Protection Department**

- Continuing on with essential services in CHP as well as COVID-19 response. Staff have been involved in COVID-19 response for 116 days.
- Beginning seasonal programs i.e. West Nile Virus.
- There are 500 small drinking water systems starting up.
- Have had 200 animal bites up until yesterday – heading for more animal bites than we routinely have and part of that is attributable to people at home with their pets.
- Following up other reportable diseases, and infection prevention and control issues.
- Proactive public health inspector assessment visits in LTC and retirement homes without an outbreak to look at infection prevention and control measures.
- Have had 1101 calls to duty desk as of May 20 when a typical year has 1400 – 807 of the calls have been COVID-19 related.
- Developed wonderful partnerships with the police and OPP in Lanark and Leeds and Grenville.
- Land control will likely have a very busy season – already have many permits.
- Developed public health guidance for business in LGL. This has been sent out to all clerks in LGL to pass on to decision makers in each municipality. Other resources will be provided to municipal partners as well.
- Supporting Farmers' Markets to open with either curbside and open market options.