

**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: ACS2014-OPH-IQS-0009**

**SUBJECT: Healthy, Safe and Active Community: Reporting on Board of Health's  
2011-2014 Strategic Plan**

**OBJET: Communauté en santé, en sécurité et active : rapport sur le plan  
stratégique 2011-2014 du Conseil de santé**

#### **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit receive this report for information.**

#### **RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This progress report describes Ottawa Public Health's (OPH) activity since 2011 in implementing its strategic plan and six strategic priorities for the period 2011-2014.

The priorities were identified in 2011 by the newly-established Ottawa Board of Health, through a process that included two focused planning sessions, an assessment of Ottawa's health status and identification of needs, staff input and consultation with over 60 partners and with the community. These priorities, selected for their public health importance and for the high potential of public health programs to positively affect them, are as follows:

- A. Enhance Partnerships
- B. Address Emerging Community Health Needs
- C. Improve Quality of Life for Ottawa's Residents
- D. Respond to Demographic Changes
- E. Improve Community Understanding of the Value of Public Health
- F. Develop a More Sustainable Resource Base

This report describes successful initiatives OPH has undertaken in fulfilment of each of these priorities.

OPH uses comprehensive performance management methods to monitor and track the progress of the strategic plan toward improving health outcomes, reducing health inequities, and fostering collaboration. The OPH strategic plan has been fundamental to guiding decisions and innovation over the past three years.

Building on the momentum generated through implementing the current strategic plan, OPH and the Board of Health will shortly begin to develop a plan and priorities for 2015-2018.

## **RÉSUMÉ**

Ce rapport d'étape décrit les activités de Santé publique Ottawa (SPO) depuis 2011 relativement à la mise en œuvre de son plan stratégique et de ses six priorités stratégiques pour la période 2011-2014.

En 2011, le Conseil de santé d'Ottawa nouvellement créé établissait ces priorités par le biais d'un processus comprenant deux séances de planification ciblées, une évaluation de l'état de santé de la population d'Ottawa et l'identification des besoins, les commentaires du personnel et des consultations auprès de plus de 60 partenaires et des gens de la communauté. Voici ces priorités, choisies en fonction de leur importance pour la santé publique et parce qu'il y a de fortes chances que les programmes de santé publique aient une incidence positive sur elles :

- A. Renforcer les partenariats
- B. Répondre aux nouveaux besoins de la communauté en matière de santé
- C. Améliorer la qualité de vie des résidents d'Ottawa
- D. Répondre aux changements démographiques
- E. Améliorer la compréhension de la valeur de la santé publique dans la communauté
- F. Mettre en place une assise financière plus durable

Ce rapport décrit les initiatives réussies que SPO a prises afin de réaliser chacune de ces priorités.

SPO utilise des méthodes de gestion des performances globales pour surveiller et suivre les progrès du plan stratégique en vue d'améliorer les résultats pour la santé, de réduire les inégalités en matière de santé et de favoriser la collaboration. Le plan stratégique de SPO a joué un rôle fondamental dans l'orientation des décisions et de l'innovation au cours des trois dernières années.

Faisant fond sur les bases jetées lors de la mise en œuvre du plan stratégique actuel, SPO et le Conseil de santé commenceront bientôt à élaborer un plan et des priorités pour 2015-2018.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2011, the Province of Ontario authorized the establishment of a new Board of Health in Ottawa. The Board is responsible for establishing the overall priorities and objectives for Ottawa Public Health (OPH), for ensuring that OPH meets standards for service delivery established by the Province of Ontario, and for providing direction to the Medical Officer of Health and OPH's staff as they develop policies, programs and services to meet Ottawa's unique public health needs.

Provincial standards and best practices require that boards of health establish a strategic plan to address emerging public health trends and issues. In developing its 2011-2014 Strategic Plan, the Board of Health was guided by its vision: “Ottawa is a community where people are healthy, safe and actively engaged in their well-being,” and by its mission: “In partnership with the people and communities of Ottawa, OPH improves and advocates for health and well-being through prevention, promotion and protection”. The development process included two focused planning sessions, an assessment of Ottawa’s health status and identification of needs, staff input and consultation with over 60 partners and with the community.

Through this process, the Board identified six Strategic Priorities and twenty-five Strategic Objectives for 2011 – 2014 (Document 1: *Ottawa Public Health Strategic Priorities 2011 – 2014*). The priorities were selected for their public health importance, and because public health programs have a strong potential to affect them positively. The Board took care to align with the City of Ottawa’s Strategic Priorities, particularly with the *Healthy and Caring Community* priority.

OPH uses comprehensive performance management methods to monitor and track the progress of the strategic plan toward improving health outcomes, reducing health inequities, and fostering collaboration. The OPH strategic plan has been fundamental to guiding decisions and innovation over the past three years. This progress report provides an update on OPH’s activity since 2011 as it seeks to fulfill its mission of improving and advocating for health and well-being through prevention, promotion and protection (Document 2: *Moving Public Health Forward 2011 -2014*).

## **DISCUSSION**

The following section presents highlights of the progress made on OPH’s six strategic priorities over the past four years.

### **Strategic Priority A: Enhance Partnerships**

Improving and advocating for health and well-being requires collaboration with many partners to increase OPH’s reach, improve its understanding of local needs, and reduce the harmful impact of low income and other social determinants of poor health. In fulfilment of this priority, OPH works continuously to foster trust, commitment and integration with other City departments, as well as with government agencies, community agencies, school boards, universities and colleges, work places, hospitals, community health centres and community coalitions, and the private sector.

OPH has leveraged a number of innovative partnerships, among them the following:

- *Long-Term Care Homes (LTCH)*. OPH has strengthened its partnerships with LTCHs in Ottawa to prevent and manage outbreaks through a multi-faceted strategy. This partnership has enhanced infection control best practices and effective management through knowledge exchange activities, such as educational sessions, distribution of customized outbreak management tool kits and utilization of robust communications with LTCH, Community Care Access Centres and local hospitals.
- *Mental Health Services*. OPH has partnered with the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) to expand its Mental Health Walk-In Clinic. OPH has also partnered with Children Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), the YSB, and the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre to implement the Bridges project, which helps teens with complex and persistent mental illness, and their parents, to transition safely from the hospital to the community.
- *Partnership with primary care providers and pharmacists* to provide influenza vaccination. OPH works with physicians and other primary care providers to help extend the reach of its influenza clinics. In 2013, after the Ontario government gave the province's pharmacists the authority to administer influenza vaccines, OPH promoted the availability of influenza vaccinations at over 100 local pharmacies.
- *Good Food Markets*. OPH works with the community-based Poverty and Hunger Working Group, led by the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres, to increase access to healthy, affordable and culturally-appropriate foods. In 2014, the Poverty and Hunger Working Group is hosting 75 Good Food Markets in 11 Ottawa neighbourhoods and launched the Market Mobile grocery bus to reach 4 additional communities.
- *Smoking Cessation Services*. OPH has worked with the construction industry, including company executives, health and safety committees and employees, to provide tobacco cessation services to trades workers.

### **Strategic Priority B: Address Emerging Community Health Needs**

Most Ottawa residents report that their health is good; however, many in the city continue to have major health concerns, and new challenges are continually emerging. In the past four years, OPH has increased its focus on a number of such emerging health needs, including:

- *Physical inactivity among children and youth.* Only a quarter of Ottawa's students are physically active for 60 minutes or more per day as recommended by national guidelines. This increases their risk of developing obesity and serious obesity-related diseases. OPH delivers programs to increase physical activity among children and youth; for example, it has worked with elementary schools to encourage students to walk or cycle to and from school.
- *Access to sexual health services.* Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are an ongoing problem in Ottawa. Rates of both chlamydia and gonorrhea in Ottawa have been at high levels since 2011; chlamydia rates are now at their highest level ever. OPH has been working to improve prevention and treatment of STIs by:
  - opening five satellite clinics in suburban areas, in addition to maintaining its central clinic in the Byward Market;
  - launching the "Sex it Smart campaign" to encourage condom use;
  - launching on-line testing of STIs through the "Get Tested, Why Not?" website, the first of its kind in Canada; and
  - supporting several initiatives, including enhanced communications, workshops and clinical experiences to build capacity of primary care practitioners related to updated new STI guidelines and local trends.
- *Mental Health and Access to Mental Health Services.* Mental health problems affect one in five Canadians, and three quarters of these problems start before the age of 24. To promote mental health among young people, OPH created the "have THAT talk" video campaign to give parents the knowledge and resources to talk with their children about mental health.
- *Harm Reduction.* People who are at risk of infection because of drug use are often marginalized and their needs unrecognized. With the help of a \$25,000 grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, OPH hosted a forum with community partners to share findings of OPH's needs assessment and to explore ways to improve harm reduction health services in Ottawa. Staff involved in this forum were honoured with the City Manager's Award for Excellence in June 2014.
- *Access to Dental Care and Screening.* Good dental care is critical for children's health; however many children in Ottawa do not have any form of dental coverage. OPH provided access to dental care for children from low income families and helped children with urgent dental-care needs to access emergency treatment. OPH

also provides dental screening for nearly 29,000 elementary school children every year.

### **Strategic Priority C: Improve Quality of Life for Ottawa's Residents**

A healthy community supports the well-being of its people through activities such as providing safe roads and play spaces, encouraging stress management and work-life balance, and reducing the disparities in health due to income inequality. Over the past four years, OPH has worked toward improving Ottawa's quality of life by:

- *Increasing smoke-free public spaces.* In 2012, the City implemented a by-law to expand smoke-free spaces in Ottawa to include beaches, parks, bar and restaurant patios, and other outdoor public areas. This measure had widespread support from the public. Ottawa's smoking rate, now down to 12 percent, is among the lowest in Ontario.
- *Ensuring safer esthetic services.* In 2013, OPH implemented a plan to address infection prevention and control practices in personal service settings (PSS). The plan aims to reduce the risk, to both clients and workers, of contracting skin infections or serious diseases such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C. In 2014, OPH began posting inspection results online, developed online training for people who provide personal esthetic services and increased inspections of these facilities. OPH has also advanced an internal quality assurance program for PSS inspections and aimed to increase public awareness of infection prevention and control measures at PSS premises.
- *Increasing awareness of head injury prevention.* In 2012, OPH launched an 'Adopt a Helmet' campaign to increase young people's awareness of head injuries and means to prevent them. The campaign, which included YouTube videos, blogs and a contest, generated 75,000 hits and was recognized by the Brain Injury Association of Canada. Over 25 retailers now offer discounts to increase helmet accessibility. OPH also worked with the City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services to develop a policy requiring novice skaters, and children 10 years and younger, to wear helmets during public skating sessions in City of Ottawa facilities.
- *Advocacy for a Public Health Approach to Gambling.* OPH contributed to City-wide discussions on the health and social impacts of gambling expansion in Ottawa. The Board also advocated to the province to improve access to resources for people with gambling addiction, additional funding to support addiction treatment, and more research in the area of problem gambling.

## **Strategic Priority D: Respond to Demographic Changes**

Ottawa is a diverse and growing city whose population continues to change. OPH develops and implements programs to address the unique health needs of a number of residents, including:

- *Older Adults.* Currently 14% of Ottawa's population is 65 or older, and this is expected to grow to 20% by 2030. OPH implements programs to increase physical activity among older adults and to educate them about the risk of falls. In addition, with funding from the City's Older Adult plan, OPH launched Community Connect, a training and public awareness program to help community members identify seniors in deteriorating circumstances and refer them for assistance and support.
- *Newborns.* OPH expanded the Baby Express drop-in program at local libraries, making support available to mothers seven days a week, and adding 1,000 more consultations per year. OPH also received Baby Friendly Initiative Designation from the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), for protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding.
- *Aboriginal Community.* OPH works with Aboriginal community partners to address Aboriginal health priorities. As a result, OPH has increased its collaborative case management, outreach, and health promotion and disease prevention activities, including workshops on dental health, healthy aging, healthy child development, and chronic disease prevention, for the city's Aboriginal community. In addition, OPH works with Aboriginal partners to ensure that our services are culturally relevant.
- *New Immigrants.* Language proficiency and health literacy affect the health of newcomers and immigrants and may limit their ability to access health services. To help address these issues, OPH, in collaboration with English as Second Language (ESL) partners from local school boards, has developed over 25 ESL online lesson plans on public health topics for adult newcomers. In collaboration with the Ottawa Leadership Immigration Partnership (OLIP), OPH has also designed and implemented the bilingual Health Skills Health Smart training session, which provides people who work with newcomers with the necessary skills and information to help their clients better understand and navigate the health system. Over 120 frontline workers have been trained through this program.
- *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Two-Spirited, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQQ+)* community. OPH has increased its capacity to provide outreach and sexual health testing for men who have sex with men, and continues to provide health promotion

activities, such as smoking cessation and sexual health, for the LGBTTTQQ+ community.

### **Strategic Priority E: Improve Community Understanding of the Value of Public Health**

OPH works consistently to build Ottawa residents awareness of the programs, services and activities it offers. To do this it has undertaken a variety of awareness-raising activities, among them:

- *Use of Social Media.* OPH's Twitter account, launched in 2011, now has over 20,000 followers, making it the most popular public health social media site in Canada. OPH has also used technologies such as Tumblr, Facebook and Pinterest effectively to connect with Ottawa residents and promote awareness of its programs and services.
- *Research and Reports.* OPH regularly releases reports on the state of Ottawa's health; the most recent was in June 2014. It also produces reports on specific issues such as communicable disease incidence, healthy weights, and substance misuse. To further public health research, OPH has partnerships with the University of Ottawa and the Ottawa Hospital Infectious Disease Clinic, and the AIDS Committee of Ottawa, which has resulted in leading-edge research on topics such as providing post-exposure prophylaxis for people exposed to HIV.

### **Strategic Priority F: Develop a more sustainable resource base**

OPH is committed to fostering an organization-wide culture of excellence, and to ensuring the financial stability of its operations. To this end, it has made the following a priority:

- *Staff engagement.* OPH continues to invest in its employees' well-being and their capacity to maintain and improve expertise, through professional development and access to special assignments and advancements. In addition, a comprehensive staff engagement plan and succession planning strategies are now being implemented. Of the OPH staff who responded to the 2011 employee engagement survey, 93 percent indicated they had a good relationship with their co-workers and 79 percent reported a good relationship with their supervisor. Staff also reported that they believe their work makes a difference in the community.
- *Leveraging Volunteers.* Through its Volunteer Program, OPH has increased its reach into the community, while also providing valuable skills to volunteers. Over

700 volunteers have contributed more than 32,000 hours to help OPH deliver its programs and services in the community.

- *Accountability and quality services.* As part of its continuous quality improvement program to ensure that it is meeting client needs, OPH regularly administers client satisfaction surveys. OPH continues to foster public confidence and accountability through monitoring and reporting on the Accountability Agreements with the Ministry, and through quarterly monitoring of performance. Recently, OPH achieved Primer Status with Accreditation Canada, which supports client safety and excellence in service delivery.
- *Funding public health.* OPH receives significant financial support from the Province of Ontario and the City of Ottawa. It has also seen an increase in successful applications for one-time funding to support initiatives such as a new Immunization Centre at the Mary Pitt Centre in Nepean, aggressive efficiency targets and additional gapping for 100% provincially funded programs are required to offset the impact of capped provincial budgets and new provincial requirements.

## **Moving Ahead**

As it plans for the future, OPH faces the ongoing challenge of addressing local community needs while at the same time meeting targets established by provincial accountability agreements. The city's growth and complexity, and the need to respond to issues such as: disease outbreaks, new provincial inspection requirements, immunization uptake, mental health, aging populations and health inequities, represent a significant burden on both human and financial resources.

Taking these challenges into consideration, and building on the momentum generated through implementation of the current plan, OPH and the Board of Health will shortly begin the development of a strategic plan and priorities for 2015-2018.

## **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no rural implications associated with this information report.

## **CONSULTATION**

Over the past four years, OPH has consulted with community partners in the development of strategic initiatives as well as worked with numerous partners on these initiatives, which has contributed to the progress made on OPH's six strategic priorities.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impediments to receiving the information in this report.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with this information report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

There are no accessibility implications associated with this report.

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no technological implications associated with this report.

## **BOARD OF HEALTH PRIORITIES**

The recommendations in this report support the Board of Health Strategic Priority E3: *Measure and report publicly on progress.*

## **TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

The recommendations in this report support the Term of Council Priority: Healthy and Caring Communities Term of Council Priority.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

[Document 1](#): Ottawa Public Health Strategic Priorities 2011 – 2014 / Les Priorités stratégiques de Santé publique Ottawa pour 2011-2014

[Document 2](#): Moving Public Health Forward 2011 -2014 / Faire progresser la santé publique de 2011 à 2014

## **DISPOSITION**

This report is for information.