

MEMORANDUM

TO: Community and Health Services Committee

FROM: Adelina Urbanski, Commissioner of Community and Health Services
Dr. Karim Kurji, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: June 16, 2011

RE: **Update on Public Health Organizational Standards and Accountability Agreements**

As part of a renewed focus on accountability, the Province continues to develop and implement a comprehensive public health performance management framework in consultation with the public health sector. Over the past few years, initiatives related to this framework have included the release of the Ontario Public Health Standards and the publication of the Initial Report on Public Health.

The next component of the provincial performance management framework will be Public Health Accountability Agreements

Accountability Agreements are intended to use measurement and monitoring strategies to provide evidence for decision making and continuous quality improvement. They will set out obligations of boards of health and two provincial ministries, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport.

Accountability Agreements are being established pursuant to Section 81.2 (1) of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, which authorizes the Minister to “enter into an agreement with the board of health of any health unit for the purpose of setting out requirements for the accountability of the board of health and the management of the health unit.” The agreement template is based on the government’s standardized Transfer Payment template, and incorporates the current Program-Based Grant Terms & Conditions.

Accountability Agreements will outline performance expectations for specific public health program areas

An initial set of 16 potential performance indicators for Accountability Agreements was developed in consultation with representatives from health units, the Ontario government, and

other related organizations. These indicators do not cover all public health program areas, but were selected because they met specific selection criteria and considerations, including:

- Reflection of government priorities
- Reflection of the core business of public health, or the burden of a health unit's work
- Reflection of a high burden of injury or illness
- Availability of data
- Sensitivity of results to change over the three-year timeframe of the agreements

Potential indicators were sent out to health units in May 2011 for review and comment. The final suite of indicators for Accountability Agreements will be recommended by the Joint Ministries-Boards of Health Committee in the summer of 2011.

Boards of health are expected to sign Accountability Agreements in the summer of 2011

Accountability Agreements will cover the period from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2013. Although the agreements will be back-dated to January 1, 2011, the first year will be a transitional year. Baselines will be established for each indicator, for each board of health, and targets for performance improvement will be negotiated in consultation with each board of health, relative to its baseline level of achievement. There will be no provincial level targets.

In 2012, monitoring and measurement of indicators will begin.

Public Health Organizational Standards will be enabled through Accountability Agreements

The Province has published Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards to complement the Ontario Public Health Standards. While the Ontario Public Health Standards outline expectations for providing public health programs and services, the Organizational Standards outline expectations for effective governance and management. They focus on structural aspects and organizational processes, such as human resources management, administrative policies, and financial management. The two sets of standards are expected to be rolled together when the Ontario Public Health Standards are re-opened for revisions in 2014.

Organizational Standards compile existing obligations and best practices into one set of practices for organizational excellence

The Public Health Organizational Standards are grouped into six categories. Many requirements of the Organizational Standards are already outlined elsewhere, such as in the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and its regulations. Other requirements are based on best practices from a review of relevant resources on good governance. By providing a single compiled set of

practices, the Organizational Standards are intended to help boards of health achieve their objectives and improve operations.

The Province acknowledges that the strategies that boards of health will use to meet specific requirements of the Organizational Standards will vary from board to board, in part due to differences in management structures, and anticipates that mature boards of health will already meet most requirements. A process undertaken by Public Health Branch staff to assess the Organizational Standards in the context of the Region's administrative model confirms that Regional Council and the health unit are in line with most areas of the standards. Staff will report back to Council on any additional mechanisms that could be put in place in individual areas that might require further work.

There will be an opportunity for boards of health to provide their input into the development of the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards measurement strategy in the coming months.

Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner, Community and Health Services

Dr. Karim Kurji
Medical Officer of Health

AU/KK/nd

#3391953