



The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie
Council Correspondence

May 17, 2024

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SSMRCA Regular Board Meeting

Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority

May 21, 2024, at 4:45 PM EDT

1100 Fifth Line East / ZOOM

Agenda

I. Call to Order

II. Declaration of a Conflict of Interest

III. Adoption of Agenda

RECOMMENDED:

THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

IV. Delegations

There are no requests for delegations received for this meeting.

V. Public Input (3 minutes per speaker)

VI. Finance and Administration

A. Adoption of Regular Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2024

RECOMMENDED:

THAT the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2024, be adopted.

B. Accounts Payable

RECOMMENDED:

THAT the list of accounts payable be received as information, be approved.

C. Health and Safety Meeting Minutes

RECOMMENDED:

THAT the Health and Safety Meeting Minutes be received as information, be approved.

VII. Water and Related Land Management

A. Application Approvals: Ontario Regulation 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits, and the *Conservation Authorities Act*, Part VI

RECOMMENDED:

THAT the summary of the site reports approved by staff pursuant to Ontario Regulation 41/24 and the *CA Act*, be received as information, be approved.

VIII. Correspondence

There is no correspondence received for this meeting.

IX. New Business and Other

A. General Manager's Report

RECOMMENDED:

THAT the General Manager's Report of May 21, 2024, be received as information, be approved.

B. Agreement to Grant Utility Easement and Permission for Immediate Entry – City, PUC and SSMRCA

RECOMMENDED:

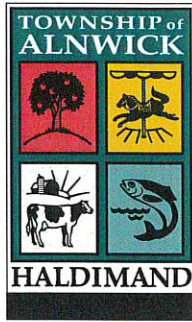
THAT the Board authorize the execution of the Agreement to Grant Utility Easement and Permission for Immediate Entry between the City of SSM, PUC, and SSMRCA with respect to the installation of a watermain on City property covered under a pre-existing easement in Instrument LT132579, be approved.

X. Closed Session

There is no closed session scheduled for this meeting.

XI. Adjournment

For members of the public interested in attending this meeting, please contact the General Manager, Corrina Barrett, at cbarrett@ssmrca.ca to make arrangements. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.



May 3, 2024

Honourable David Piccini, MPP
Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
117 Peter Street
Port Hope, ON L1A 1C5
david.piccini@pc.ola.org

Dear Sir:

RE: Resolution of Support – Expand Life Span of Fire Apparatus

At its Regular Council meeting of February 13, 2024, the Council of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand passed the following resolution:

RES:20240213-18

Moved by Councillor Greg Booth, seconded by Councillor Mike Ainsworth;

"Whereas the Council of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand considered the Resolution from the County of Prince Edward regarding support to request the Province to expand the life span of fire apparatus, specifically pertaining to the replacement of fire trucks, due to insurance requirements;

Be it resolved that Council hereby provides its support; and

Further be it resolved that Council direct the Deputy Clerk to send a copy of this Resolution to: MPP David Piccini - Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and all Ontario municipalities."

CARRIED.

Please find attached the resolution from the County of Prince Edward as supporting documentation.

We respectfully submit the resolution and supporting documentation for your consideration.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yolanda Melburn', with a stylized, flowing script.

Yolanda Melburn
Deputy Clerk

Encl.

Cc: Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister for Municipal Affairs and Housing
All Ontario Municipalities

January 22, 2024

Please be advised that during the regular Council meeting of January 16, 2024 the following motion regarding support for the Province to expand the life span of fire apparatus, specifically pertaining to the replacement of fire trucks due to insurance requirements was carried:

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-46

DATE: January 16, 2024

MOVED BY: Councillor Nieman

SECONDED BY: Councillor Branderhorst

WHEREAS By-Law 3256-2013, being a By-Law to Establish, Maintain, and Operate a Fire Department established service level standards for the Corporation of the County of Prince Edward Fire Department;

AND WHEREAS apparatus and equipment are directly tied to the delivery of fire protection services authorized by Council in By-Law 3256-2013, and a safe, reliable and diverse fleet is required to serve operational needs;

AND WHEREAS fire Apparatus is governed by industry best practices, the application of law and recognized industry partners, including the Ontario Fire Service Section 21 Guidance Notes, National Fire Protection Association Standards, The Occupational Health and Safety Act, and Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS);

AND WHEREAS Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) is a provider of data, underwriting, risk management and legal/regulatory services focusing on community fire-protection and fire prevention systems in Canada, establishing apparatus replacement schedules based on safety and risk mitigation practices;

AND WHEREAS on November 16, 2023, Council, received report FD-06-2023 regarding asset Management - Fire Apparatus Fleet Report and noted the budgetary pressures of meeting FUS replacement schedules;

AND WHEREAS no provincial funding is available for new fire trucks, yet, small and rural municipalities must meet the same standards set by FUS as larger municipalities for fire equipment, including additional pressure to move fire trucks out when they reach a specific age, even though they can still meet the safety regulations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of Prince Edward County direct the Mayor to draft a letter to MPP Minister Todd Smith requesting a meeting to discuss the life span of fire apparatus, specifically pertaining to the replacement of fire trucks due to insurance requirements; and

THAT the Mayor draft a letter to FUS requesting the creation of a new community fire-protection and fire prevention insurance system that does not put all municipalities under the same umbrella, with distinct categories for rural and urban municipalities;

THAT this resolution be sent to Premier Doug Ford, the Honourable David Piccini, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting a response on this matter within 30 days of receipt; and

THAT this resolution be shared with all 444 municipalities in Ontario, The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), The Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO), and The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC).

CARRIED

Yours truly,



Catalina Blumenberg, **CLERK**

cc: Mayor Steve Ferguson, Councillor Nieman, Councillor Branderhorst, Marcia Wallace, CAO and Fire Chief Chad Brown



**TOWNSHIP OF
BRUDENELL, LYNDOCH AND RAGLAN**

42 Burnt Bridge Road, PO Box 40
Palmer Rapids, Ontario K0J 2E0
TEL: (613) 758-2061 · FAX: (613) 758-2235

May 1, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Mr. Ford,

**Re: Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan – Supporting the Town of
Bracebridge “Request to the Province of Ontario for New Provincial-
Municipal Fiscal Framework”**

Please be advised that at their last regular meeting of Council on Wednesday May 1st, 2024, the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan supported the following resolution:

Resolution # 2024-05-01-08

Moved By: Councillor Banks

Seconded by: Councillor Kauffeldt

“Be it resolved that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan hereby supports the Town of Bracebridge letter dated March 14th 2024, regarding the request to the Province of Ontario for New Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Framework.

And further that Council directs staff to provide a copy of this resolution to the Premier of Ontario; the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Minister of Finance; the Local Member of Provincial Parliament; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Association of Municipal Managers; Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMTCO); and all Ontario Municipalities.”

CARRIED.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tammy Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tammy" and last name "Thompson" clearly distinguishable.

Tammy Thompson
Deputy Clerk

Cc: Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
John Yakabuski, Local Member of Provincial Parliament
Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario
(AMTCO)
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
All Ontario Municipalities

March 14, 2024

Re: Item for Discussion – Resolution of Support Regarding Request to the Province of Ontario for New Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Framework

At its meeting of March 13, 2024, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Bracebridge ratified motion #24-GC-053, regarding Resolution of Support Regarding Request to the Province of Ontario for New Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Framework, as follows:

"WHEREAS the current provincial-municipal fiscal arrangements are undermining Ontario's economic prosperity and quality of life;

AND WHEREAS nearly a third of municipal spending in Ontario is for services in areas of provincial responsibility and expenditures are outpacing provincial contributions by nearly \$4 billion a year;

AND WHEREAS municipal revenues, such as property taxes, do not grow with the economy or inflation;

AND WHEREAS unprecedented population and housing growth will require significant investments in municipal infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS municipalities are being asked to take on complex health and social challenges – like homelessness, supporting asylum seekers and addressing the mental health and addictions crises;

AND WHEREAS inflation, rising interest rates, and provincial policy decisions are sharply constraining municipal fiscal capacity;

AND WHEREAS property taxpayers – including people on fixed incomes and small businesses – can't afford to subsidize income re-distribution programs for those most in need;

AND WHEREAS the province can, and should, invest more in the prosperity of communities;

AND WHEREAS municipalities and the provincial government have a strong history of collaboration;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of Bracebridge calls on the Province of Ontario commit to undertaking, with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, a comprehensive social and economic prosperity review to promote the stability and sustainability of municipal finances across Ontario;

1000 Taylor Court
Bracebridge, ON
P1L 1R6 Canada

telephone: (705) 645-5264
corporate services and finance fax: (705) 645-1262
public works fax: (705) 645-7525
planning & development fax: (705) 645-4209

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this motion be sent to the Premier of Ontario; the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Minister of Finance; the Local Member of Provincial Parliament; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO); the Muskoka and Area Indigenous Leadership Table (MAILT); and all Ontario Municipalities."

In accordance with Council's direction, I am forwarding you a copy of the resolution for your reference.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional clarification in this regard.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lori McDonald', written in a cursive style.

Lori McDonald
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk

MULTI-MUNICIPAL ENERGY WORKING GROUP
TOM ALLWOOD, COUNCILLOR, GREY HIGHLANDS, CHAIR
JIM HANNA, DEPUTY MAYOR, HURON-KINLOSS, VICE-CHAIR
1925 BRUCE ROAD 10, BOX 70, CHESLEY, ON NOG 1L0
[519-363-3039](tel:519-363-3039) FAX: [519-363-2203](tel:519-363-2203)
jhamilton@arran-elderslie.ca

May 1, 2024

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

The Multi-Municipal Energy Working Group (MMEWG) continues to actively follow the procurement processes the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) is undertaking to procure additional capacity to meet projected future energy needs. Details released regarding the Long-Term 2 Request for Proposals (LT2 RFP) plus subsequent LT RFPs has raised many concerns.

The IESO RFPs call for 5 TWh of new energy generation, and proposes that this be mostly derived from 2000 MW of new energy generation produced by mostly wind and solar by 2030. It further proposes that a portion of this generation could be derived by repowering on the current footprint of existing wind turbines that will reach their end of contract life between 2026 and 2034.

Since existence, the now Multi-Municipal Energy Working Group, formerly known as the Multi-Municipal Wind Turbine Working Group, has continued to advocate for stronger safety measures and best practices related to wind turbine installations across the province. To date, many of the concerns raised have not been addressed with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks confirmed in a recent IESO engagement session that no changes to the existing setbacks are planned.

Severe health effects to many residents living within the vicinity of project sites have been identified and continue to jeopardized the health and well-being of many residents. The current setbacks from other activities are not sufficient to protect against the full range of noise emissions from wind turbines. The MMEWG will be making a presentation on this topic to the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit in the March in an effort to bring these concerns to the forefront in advance of the repowering of current projects.

Public safety continues to remain a paramount concern of the MMEWG. Setbacks for tower collapse remain insufficient. The current blade length plus 10 metres requirement not a strong enough protective measure for existing projects let alone repowered turbines on existing footprints. Setbacks for ice throw are also insufficient, as the blade

length plus 10 metre setback is less than the ice throw distance witnessed in Ontario. Ontario has witnessed turbine fire and flaming debris on the ground at 200 metres, while setback was 50 metres. A Ministry review failed to recommend industry standard protective barriers for fire suppression in spite of examples of fires in similar turbines.

In 2013, 115 municipalities declared themselves "Unwilling Hosts" for wind turbine projects. With the expected surge in proposals given the ambitious procurement efforts being undertaken by the IESO, and little change in the regulations, the MMEWG strongly recommends that municipalities reaffirm their unwillingness to host projects until the appropriate ministries address the concerns and make stronger rules and regulations to ensure that, as municipal leaders, provide measures necessary for the health, safety and well-being of citizens within our jurisdiction, as mandated by the *Municipal Act, 2001, as amended*. Over the past month, the municipalities of Arran-Elderslie, Chatsworth and East Zorra-Tavistock have taken this step.

For consideration, a DRAFT declaration has been attached. Should your municipality declare its intention, please let us and we will continue to keep you apprised of any advancements in the industry and regulations.

Warm Regards,



p.p.

Tom Allwood,
Chair, Multi-Municipal Energy Working Group
Councillor, Municipality of Grey Highlands

DRAFT

Independent Electrical System Operator
By email: engagement@ieso.ca

Re: Municipality/Township of _____ – Wind Turbine Projects

Please be advised at the Municipality/Township of _____ Council meeting held on _____, the following resolution was approved:

WHEREAS the Independent Electrical System Operator (the IESO) has proposed to move forward with three RFPs where new wind turbine projects can receive a contract from the IESO; and

WHEREAS people living near existing wind turbines report considerable impact on their lives due to noise and other emissions from the wind turbines; and

WHEREAS there are gaps in the enforcement of key terms of the Renewable Energy Approvals governing existing projects relative to noise standards and resolution of complaints; and

WHEREAS municipal approval is required to locate one of these projects in the Municipality/Township of _____; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council does not support the establishment of any new wind turbine projects within the municipality; and

THAT the IESO be directed to advise potential applicants of this resolution.

Sincerely,

Clerk, Municipality/Township of _____

c:

The Hon. Todd Smith - Minister of Energy - MinisterEnergy@ontario.ca

David Donovan, Chief of Staff, david.donovan@ontario.ca

Association of Municipalities of Ontario - policy@amo.on.ca

Local MPP

Multi-Municipal Energy Working Group – jhamilton@arran-elderslie.ca



**TOWNSHIP OF
BRUDENELL, LYNDOKH AND RAGLAN**

42 Burnt Bridge Road, PO Box 40
Palmer Rapids, Ontario K0J 2E0
TEL: (613) 758-2061 · FAX: (613) 758-2235

May 1, 2024

Hon. Paul Calandra
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Email: PaulmCalandra@pc.ola.org

Dear Mr. Calandra,

Re: Operational Budget Funding

Please be advised that at their last regular meeting of Council on Wednesday May 1st, 2024, the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan supported the following resolution:

Resolution # 2024-05-01-10
Moved By: Councillor Banks
Seconded by: Councillor Kauffeldt

“Be it resolved that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan hereby supports the request of the Township of Amareth calling upon the Province of Ontario to treat all municipalities fairly and provide equivalent representative operational budget funding amount to all Ontario municipalities.

And further that Council directs staff to provide a copy of this resolution to the Premier of Ontario; the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Local Member of Provincial Parliament; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); and all Ontario Municipalities.”

CARRIED.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tammy Thompson".

Tammy Thompson
Deputy Clerk

Cc: Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
John Yakabuski, Local Member of Provincial Parliament
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
All Ontario Municipalities



374028 6TH LINE • AMARANTH ON • L9W 0M6

March 12, 2024

Hon. Paul Calandra
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Sent by email to: Paul.Calandra@pc.ola.org

Re: Operational Budget Funding

At its regular meeting of Council held on March 6, 2024, the Township of Amaranth Council passed the following resolution.

Resolution #: 4

Moved by: G Little

Seconded by: A. Stirk

Whereas all Ontario municipalities are prohibited from running budget deficits for operating purposes, and;

Whereas all Ontario municipalities have similar pressures with respect to aging infrastructure and operating costs for policing, and;

Whereas the City of Toronto has recently received Provincial funding to cover a \$1.2 billion dollar operating shortfall and approximately \$12 million in Federal and Provincial funding for their Police operating budget, and;

Whereas the City of Toronto has the lowest tax rates in the Province, approximately 40% less than the average Dufferin rural municipal tax rate.

Be It Resolved That the Township of Amaranth call on the Province of Ontario to treat all municipalities fairly and provide equivalent representative operational budget funding amounts to all Ontario municipalities.

CARRIED

Please do not hesitate to contact the office if you require any further information on this matter.

Yours truly,

Nicole Martin, Dipl. M.A.

CAO/Clerk

C: Premier of Ontario; AMO; Ontario Municipalities



Hon. Paul Calandra
Ministry of Municipal
Affairs and Housing

VIA EMAIL:

Paul.Calandra@pc.ola.org

Warden Andy Lennox
Mayor, Township of
Wellington North

VIA EMAIL:

andyl@wellington.ca

Township of Puslinch
7404 Wellington Road 34
Puslinch, ON N0B 2J0
www.puslinch.ca

May 9, 2024

RE: Resolution No. 2024-124 regarding 6.14 Township of Amaranth Resolution regarding Operational Budget Funding

Please be advised that Township of Puslinch Council, at its meeting held on April 10, 2024 considered the aforementioned topic and subsequent to discussion, the following was resolved:

Resolution No. 2024-124:

Moved by Councillor Sepulis and
Seconded by Councillor Hurst

That the Consent Agenda item 6.14 be received for information; and

Whereas Council supports the resolution from the Township of Amaranth regarding Operational Budget Funding;

That Council direct staff to forward a support resolution accordingly; and further

That the resolution be forwarded to the County Warden Lennox for information.

CARRIED

As per the above resolution, please accept a copy of this correspondence for your information and consideration.

Sincerely,

Justine Brotherston
Municipal Clerk

CC: Premier of Ontario, AMO , Ontario Municipalities



374028 6TH LINE • AMARANTH ON • L9W 0M6

March 12, 2024

Hon. Paul Calandra
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Sent by email to: Paul.Calandra@pc.ola.org

Re: Operational Budget Funding

At its regular meeting of Council held on March 6, 2024, the Township of Amaranth Council passed the following resolution.

Resolution #: 4

Moved by: G Little

Seconded by: A. Stirk

Whereas all Ontario municipalities are prohibited from running budget deficits for operating purposes, and;

Whereas all Ontario municipalities have similar pressures with respect to aging infrastructure and operating costs for policing, and;

Whereas the City of Toronto has recently received Provincial funding to cover a \$1.2 billion dollar operating shortfall and approximately \$12 million in Federal and Provincial funding for their Police operating budget, and;

Whereas the City of Toronto has the lowest tax rates in the Province, approximately 40% less than the average Dufferin rural municipal tax rate.

Be it Resolved That the Township of Amaranth call on the Province of Ontario to treat all municipalities fairly and provide equivalent representative operational budget funding amounts to all Ontario municipalities.

CARRIED

Please do not hesitate to contact the office if you require any further information on this matter.

Yours truly,

Nicole Martin, Dipl. M.A.
CAO/Clerk
C: Premier of Ontario; AMO; Ontario Municipalities



**TOWNSHIP OF
BRUDENELL, LYNDOKH AND RAGLAN**

42 Burnt Bridge Road, PO Box 40
Palmer Rapids, Ontario K0J 2E0
TEL: (613) 758-2061 · FAX: (613) 758-2235

May 1, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Mr. Ford,

Re: Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan – Supporting the Town of Aurora's Request for Amenity Sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with School Boards for Evening/Weekend Gymnasium Use"

Please be advised that at their last regular meeting of Council on Wednesday May 1st, 2024, the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan supported the following resolution:

Resolution # 2024-05-01-09

Moved By: Councillor Keller

Seconded by: Councillor Quade

"Be it resolved that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan hereby supports the Town of Aurora's Request for Amenity Sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with School Boards for Evening/Weekend Gymnasium Use.

And further that Council directs staff to provide a copy of this resolution to the Premier of Ontario; the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Minister of Education; the Local Member of Provincial Parliament; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); and all Ontario Municipalities."

CARRIED.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tammy Thompson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

**Tammy Thompson
Deputy Clerk**

**Cc: Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
John Yakabuski. Local Member of Provincial Parliament
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
All Ontario Municipalities**

March 6, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office, Room 281
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Delivered by email
premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford:

**Re: Town of Aurora Council Resolution of February 27, 2024
Member Motion 8.2.7 - Mayor Mrakas; Re: Request for Amenity Sharing
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with School Boards for Evening/Weekend
Gymnasium Use**

Please be advised that this matter was considered by Council at its meeting held on February 27, 2024, and in this regard, Council adopted the following resolution:

Whereas the Town of Aurora recognizes the importance of fostering community engagement and providing recreational opportunities; and

Whereas schools are funded by local taxpayers; and

Whereas school gymnasiums serve as valuable amenities that can enhance recreational activities for residents; and

Whereas existing school board policies/procedures do not prioritize municipal residency within their allocation of the use of space; and

Whereas the school board charges a premium rate to use the schools on weekends causing a barrier for the Town or local organizations to afford;

- 1. Now Therefore Be It Hereby Resolved That this Council requests the Province and the Minister of Education to assist in making school board facilities available to local municipalities on a priority, at a cost recovery rate; and**
- 2. Be It Further Resolved That Council requests the School Boards within the jurisdiction of the Town of Aurora to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Town for the shared use of school gymnasiums on evenings and weekends; and**
- 3. Be It Further Resolved That a copy of this request be sent to the relevant School Boards, expressing the Town's interest in establishing a collaborative agreement for evening and weekend gymnasium access; and**

4. **Be It Further Resolved That the Town staff is directed to collaborate with the School Boards in drafting the terms and conditions of the MOU, ensuring clarity and fairness in the shared use of these facilities; and**
5. **Be It Further Resolved That upon reaching an agreement, the MOU shall be presented to Council for review and approval; and**
6. **Be It Further Resolved That a copy of this Motion be sent to The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, Marit Stiles, Leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, Bonnie Crombie, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, and all MPPs in the Province of Ontario; and**
7. **Be It Further Resolved That a copy of this Motion be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and all Ontario municipalities for their consideration of support.**

The above is for your consideration and any attention deemed necessary.

Sincerely,



Michael de Rond

Town Clerk

The Corporation of the Town of Aurora

MdR/lb

Attachment (Council meeting extract)

Copy: York Region District School Board
York Catholic District School Board
Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir
Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
Marit Stiles, Leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party
Bonnie Crombie, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party
All Ontario Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs)
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
All Ontario municipalities



8. Standing Committee Reports

Moved by Councillor Thompson

Seconded by Councillor Gaertner

That the Standing Committee Reports, items 8.1 and 8.2, be received and the recommendations carried by the Committee approved, with the exception of sub-items 8.1.7, 8.1.8, 8.2.1, 8.2.4, 8.2.6, and 8.2.8, which were discussed and voted on separately as recorded below.

Yeas (6): Mayor Mrakas, Councillor Weese, Councillor Gilliland, Councillor Gaertner, Councillor Thompson, and Councillor Gallo

Absent (1): Councillor Kim

Carried (6 to 0)

8.2 General Committee Meeting Report of February 20, 2024

8.2.7 Member Motion - Mayor Mrakas; Re: Request for Amenity Sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with School Boards for Evening/Weekend Gymnasium Use

Whereas the Town of Aurora recognizes the importance of fostering community engagement and providing recreational opportunities; and

Whereas schools are funded by local taxpayers; and

Whereas school gymnasiums serve as valuable amenities that can enhance recreational activities for residents; and

Whereas existing school board policies/procedures do not prioritize municipal residency within their allocation of the use of space; and

Whereas the school board charges a premium rate to use the schools on weekends causing a barrier for the Town or local organizations to afford;

- 1. Now Therefore Be It Hereby Resolved That this Council requests the Province and the Minister of Education to assist in making**

school board facilities available to local municipalities on a priority, at a cost recovery rate; and

2. Be It Further Resolved That Council requests the School Boards within the jurisdiction of the Town of Aurora to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Town for the shared use of school gymnasiums on evenings and weekends; and
3. Be It Further Resolved That a copy of this request be sent to the relevant School Boards, expressing the Town's interest in establishing a collaborative agreement for evening and weekend gymnasium access; and
4. Be It Further Resolved That the Town staff is directed to collaborate with the School Boards in drafting the terms and conditions of the MOU, ensuring clarity and fairness in the shared use of these facilities; and
5. Be It Further Resolved That upon reaching an agreement, the MOU shall be presented to Council for review and approval; and
6. Be It Further Resolved That a copy of this Motion be sent to The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, Marit Stiles, Leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, Bonnie Crombie, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, and all MPPs in the Province of Ontario; and
7. Be It Further Resolved That a copy of this Motion be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and all Ontario municipalities for their consideration of support.

Carried

May 06, 2024

SENT VIA E-MAIL

Andrea Fisher, Clerk
The Town of Goderich
57 West Street
Goderich, Ontario
N7A 2K5

Dear Clerk Fisher,

RE: Township of Manitouwadge Resolution – Review of the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program Financial Assistance Rates

Please be advised that at its regular meeting held on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Manitouwadge passed and endorsed the attached resolution concerning the Town of Goderich's resolution regarding a review of the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program financial assistance rates.

Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks,



Joleen Keough
Clerk/Deputy CAO
The Township of Manitouwadge

CC: Premier Doug Ford
Hon. Paul Calandra
MPP Lisa Thompson, Huron–Bruce
Hon. Sylvia Jones
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Ontario Municipal Social Services Association
Ontario Municipalities

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANITOUWADGE

May 01, 2024

Session No. 2024- 122

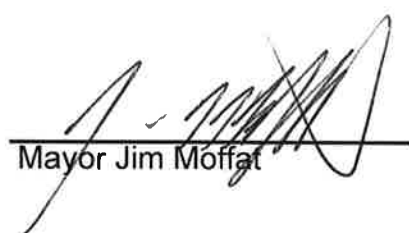
Moved by: TK

Seconded by: Bhays

RESOLVED THAT: The Town of Goderich's resolution regarding a review of the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program financial assistance rates be received and endorsed.

Recorded Vote	FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Kathy Hudson		
Councillor Coady Keough		
Councillor Braden Kotyk		
Councillor Tonilynn Ruff		
Mayor Jim Moffat		

CARRIED ☒ DEFEATED ☐



Mayor Jim Moffat



**The Corporation of the Town of Grimsby
Administration**

Office of the Town Clerk

160 Livingston Avenue, Grimsby, ON L3M 0J5

Phone: 905-945-9634 Ext. 2171 | **Fax:** 905-945-5010

Email: vs Steele@grimsby.ca

April 23, 2024

SENT VIA E-MAIL

Andrea Fisher, Clerk
The Town of Goderich
57 West Street
Goderich, Ontario
N7A 2K5

Dear: Clerk Fisher,

**RE: Town of Goderich Resolution – Review of the Ontario Works and Ontario
Disability Support Program Financial Assistance Rates**

Please be advised that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Grimsby at its meeting held on April 15, 2024, passed, and endorsed the following resolution:

Moved: Councillor Korstanje

Seconded: Councillor DiFlavio

Resolved that the Town of Goderich's resolution regarding a review of the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program financial assistance rates be received and endorsed.

If you require any additional information, please let me know.

Regards,

Victoria Steele
Town Clerk

CC: Premier Doug Ford
Hon. Paul Calandra
MPP Lisa Thompson, Huron–Bruce
Hon. Sylvia Jones
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Ontario Municipal Social Services Association
Ontario Municipalities

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Catalina Blumenberg
Clerk
Prince Edward County
332 Picton Main Street
Picton, Ontario
K0K 2T0

SENT VIA EMAIL: clerks@pecounty.on.ca

RE: Town of Goderich Resolution – Review of the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program Financial Assistance Rates

Dear C. Blumenberg,

Please be advised of the following motion passed at the Monday, March 18, 2024, Goderich Town Council Meeting:

Moved By: Councillor Segeren

Seconded By: Councillor Kelly

WHEREAS poverty is taking a devastating toll on communities, undermining a healthy and prosperous Ontario, with people in receipt of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program being disproportionately impacted;

WHEREAS the cost of food, housing, medicine, and other essential items have outpaced the highest inflation rates seen in a generation;

WHEREAS people in need of social assistance have been legislated into poverty, housing insecurity, hunger, poorer health, their motives questioned, and their dignity undermined;

WHEREAS Ontario Works (OW) Financial Assistance rates have been frozen since 2018 (\$733 per month);

WHEREAS Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefit rates have been increased by 6.5 percent as of July 2023 to keep up with inflation, however even with the increase, ODSP rates still fall below their value in 2018 (\$1,376 when adjusted for inflation) and significantly below the disability-adjusted poverty line (\$3,091 per month);

WHEREAS OW and ODSP rates do not provide sufficient income for a basic standard of living and, as a result, hundreds of thousands of people across Ontario who rely on these programs live in poverty;

WHEREAS designated Service Managers are doing their part, but do not have the resources, capacity, or tools to provide the necessary income and health-related supports to people experiencing poverty; and

WHEREAS leadership and urgent action is needed from the Provincial Government to immediately develop, resource, and implement a comprehensive plan to address the rising levels of poverty in Ontario, in particular for those on Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Programs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of Goderich requests the Provincial Government to urgently:

1. At least double Ontario Works and ODSP rates and index rates to inflation, answering calls already made by “Raise the Rates” campaign and the “Income Security Advocacy Centre”;
2. Commit to ongoing cost of living increases above and beyond the rate of inflation to make up for the years they were frozen;
3. Commit to jointly working between the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services and the Ministry of Health on the best methods of assessing client needs and then matching those in need to the services they require;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to the Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, Huron County Social and Property Services, the Western Ontario Wardens Caucus, and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 519-524-8344 ext. 210 or afisher@goderich.ca.

Yours truly,



Andrea Fisher

Director of Legislative Services/Clerk
/ar

cc. Premier Doug Ford premier@ontario.ca
Hon. Paul Calandra Paul.Calandra@pc.ola.org
MPP Lisa Thompson, Huron–Bruce lisa.thompsonco@pc.ola.org
Hon. Sylvia Jones Sylvia.Jones@pc.ola.org
Association of Municipalities of Ontario resolutions@amo.on.ca
Ontario Municipal Social Services Association dball@omssa.com
Huron County Social and Property Services
Western Ontario Wardens Caucus
Ontario Municipalities



Municipality of Killarney

May 15, 2024

Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Email Only: justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Main Office:

32 Commissioner Street
Killarney, Ontario
P0M 2A0

Tel: 705-287-2424
Fax: 705-287-2660

E-mail:
inquiries@municipalityofkillarney.ca

Public Works Department:

1096 Hwy 637
Killarney, Ontario
P0M 2A0

Tel: 705-287-1040
Fax: 705-287-1141

website:
www.municipalityofkillarney.ca

Dear Sir:

Re: Intimate Partner Violence and Coercive Control

Attached hereto is Resolution #24-159 that was passed by the Council of the Municipality of Killarney at their Regular Meeting held May 8th, 2024 which support the resolution passed by the City of Sault Ste. Marie on April 8th, 2024, expressing its support for Bill C-332 as well as call on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-332 and enact the necessary amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada to include coercive control of an intimate partner.

We look forward to your favorable reply regarding this request.

Sincerely,
THE MUNICIPALITY OF KILLARNEY

(Mrs.) Angie Nuziale
Administrative Assistant

cc: City of Sault Ste. Marie
Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety
Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services
Honourable Mak Holland, Minister of Health
Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women & Gender Equality & Youth
Honourable Jenna Suds, Minister of Families, Children & Social Development
Honourable Arif Virani, Minister of Justice
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities
Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Word: Letters-Soo-Intimate Partner Violence-15-05-2024



*The Corporation of the Municipality of Killarney
32 Commissioner Street
Killarney, Ontario
P0M 2A0*

MOVED BY: Mary Bradbury
SECONDED BY: Nikola Grubic

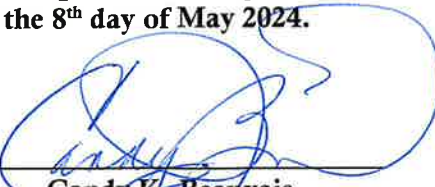
RESOLUTION NO. 24-159

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Municipality of Killarney support the resolution passed by the City of Sault Ste. Marie on April 8th, 2024, expressing its support for Bill C-332 as well as call on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-332 and enact the necessary amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada to include coercive control of an intimate partner;

FURTHER THAT this resolution be forwarded to all those noted in the resolution passed by the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

Resolution Result	Recorded Vote		
	Council Members	YES	NO
☒ CARRIED	Mary Bradbury		
☐ DEFEATED	Robert Campbell		
☐ TABLED	Dave Froats		
☐ RECORDED VOTE (SEE RIGHT)	Nikola Grubic		
☐ PECUNIARY INTEREST DECLARED	Michael Reider		
☐ WITHDRAWN	Peggy Roque		

I, Candy K. Beauvais, Clerk-Treasurer of the Municipality of Killarney do certify the foregoing to be a true copy of Resolution #24-159 passed in a Regular Council Meeting of The Corporation of the Municipality of Killarney on the 8th day of May 2024.


Candy K. Beauvais
Clerk Treasurer

**The Corporation of the
City of Sault Ste. Marie**



Clerk's Department

Rachel Tyczinski
City Clerk

April 11, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2

Dear Sir:

Re: Intimate Partner Violence and Coercive Control

Please be advised that at its April 8, 2024 City Council meeting, Sault Ste. Marie City Council passed the following resolution:

Whereas the jury that heard the Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam inquest (The Renfrew County Inquest) issued 86 recommendations to prevent future deaths and delivered those recommendations to the Province of Ontario; and

Whereas recommendation #85 of the inquest is to include "coercive control", as defined in the *Divorce Act*, as a criminal offence or as a type of assault under section 265 of the *Criminal Code*; and

Whereas according to experts, a perpetrator has privileged access to information about the target by virtue of the closeness of an intimate relationship and, as such, is able to identify unique vulnerabilities that can be exploited for coercive control; and

Whereas Coordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence cites scholars and advocates in the field have consistently described intimate partner violence as both an expression of, and an attempt to maintain, power and control over intimate partners; and

Whereas in 2019, according to the Government of Canada, of the 107,810 people aged 15 and over who experienced intimate partner violence 79% were women. 55% of women who experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence feared a partner at some point. Being afraid of a partner can indicate intimate partner violence that is more coercive, more severe, and more likely to reflect a pattern of abusive behaviours; and

Whereas between 2014 and 2019 in Canada, there were 497 victims of intimate partner homicide, and 80% (400 victims) were women; and

99 Foster Drive, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5X6
saultstemarie.ca 705.759.5391 | r.tyczinski@cityssm.on.ca

Whereas while Indigenous women account for about 5% of all women in Canada, they accounted for 21% of women killed by an intimate partner between 2014 and 2019 (83 victims). In 2021, the rate of gender-related homicide of Indigenous women and girls was more than triple that of gender-related homicides of women and girls overall (1.72 versus 0.54 per 100,000 women and girls); and

Whereas the Government of Canada names coercive control as one of the acts included in intimate partner violence, but does not include coercive control as an offence contained within the *Criminal Code* of Canada* and

Whereas Bill C332, a private member's bill to amend the Criminal Code to create an offence of exercising coercive control of an intimate partner by engaging in a pattern of conduct that consists of any combination, or any repeated instances, of any of the following acts: using, attempting to use or threatening to use violence against certain persons, coercing or attempting to coerce the intimate partner to engage in sexual activity or engaging in other conduct that could reasonably be expected to cause the intimate partner to believe that their safety, or the safety of a person known to them, is threatened**

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Sault Ste. Marie City Council express its support for Bill C-332 as well as call on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-332 and enact the necessary amendments to the *Criminal Code* of Canada to include coercive control of an intimate partner; and

Further it be resolved that a copy of this motion be circulated to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services, the Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health, the Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, the Honourable Jenna Sudds, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Honourable Arif Virani, Minister of Justice, City of Sault Ste Marie MP Terry Sheehan, MP Laurel Collins, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and all Ontario municipalities.

- * <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence/intimate-partner-violence.html>
- ** <https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/bill/C-332/second-reading>
- <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2023001/article/00003-eng.htm>

Sincerely



Rachel Tyczinski
City Clerk



64 McIntyre Street • Nairn Centre, Ontario • P0M 2L0 ☎ 705-869-4232 📠 705-869-5248

May 16, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

Re: Support Resolution

Please be advised our Council adopted the following support resolution at their meeting of May 6, 2024:

SUPPORT RESOLUTION RE: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND COERCIVE CONTROL
RESOLUTION # 2024-6-137

MOVED BY: Rod MacDonald

SECONDED BY: Wayne Austin

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Corporation of the Township of Nairn and Hyman endorse and supports the resolution of the City of Sault Ste. Marie calling on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-332 and enact the necessary amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada to include coercive control of an intimate partner;

AND FURTHER THAT this resolution be forwarded to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services, the Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health, the Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, and the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

CARRIED

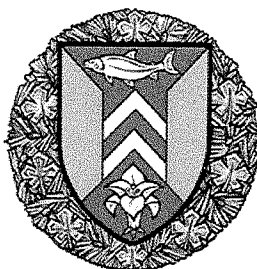
Sincerely Yours,

Melanie Bilodeau
Deputy Clerk - Treasurer

cc: Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety
Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services
Hon. Mark Holland, Minister of Health
Hon. Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth
AMO
FONOM
City of Sault Ste. Marie

9a)

The Corporation of the
City of Sault Ste. Marie



Clerk's Department

Rachel Tyczinski
City Clerk

April 11, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2

Dear Sir:

Re: Intimate Partner Violence and Coercive Control

Please be advised that at its April 8, 2024 City Council meeting, Sault Ste. Marie City Council passed the following resolution:

Whereas the jury that heard the Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam inquest (The Renfrew County Inquest) issued 86 recommendations to prevent future deaths and delivered those recommendations to the Province of Ontario; and

Whereas recommendation #85 of the inquest is to include "coercive control", as defined in the *Divorce Act*, as a criminal offence or as a type of assault under section 265 of the *Criminal Code*; and

Whereas according to experts, a perpetrator has privileged access to information about the target by virtue of the closeness of an intimate relationship and, as such, is able to identify unique vulnerabilities that can be exploited for coercive control; and

Whereas Coordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence cites scholars and advocates in the field have consistently described intimate partner violence as both an expression of, and an attempt to maintain, power and control over intimate partners; and

Whereas in 2019, according to the Government of Canada, of the 107,810 people aged 15 and over who experienced intimate partner violence 79% were women. 55% of women who experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence feared a partner at some point. Being afraid of a partner can indicate intimate partner violence that is more coercive, more severe, and more likely to reflect a pattern of abusive behaviours; and

Whereas between 2014 and 2019 in Canada, there were 497 victims of intimate partner homicide, and 80% (400 victims) were women; and

99 Foster Drive, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5X6
saultstemarie.ca 705.759.5391 | r.tyczinski@cityssm.on.ca

Whereas while Indigenous women account for about 5% of all women in Canada, they accounted for 21% of women killed by an intimate partner between 2014 and 2019 (83 victims). In 2021, the rate of gender-related homicide of Indigenous women and girls was more than triple that of gender-related homicides of women and girls overall (1.72 versus 0.54 per 100,000 women and girls); and

Whereas the Government of Canada names coercive control as one of the acts included in intimate partner violence, but does not include coercive control as an offence contained within the *Criminal Code* of Canada* and

Whereas Bill C332, a private member's bill to amend the Criminal Code to create an offence of exercising coercive control of an intimate partner by engaging in a pattern of conduct that consists of any combination, or any repeated instances, of any of the following acts: using, attempting to use or threatening to use violence against certain persons, coercing or attempting to coerce the intimate partner to engage in sexual activity or engaging in other conduct that could reasonably be expected to cause the intimate partner to believe that their safety, or the safety of a person known to them, is threatened**

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Sault Ste. Marie City Council express its support for Bill C-332 as well as call on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-332 and enact the necessary amendments to the *Criminal Code* of Canada to include coercive control of an intimate partner; and

Further it be resolved that a copy of this motion be circulated to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services, the Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health, the Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, the Honourable Jenna Sudds, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Honourable Arif Virani, Minister of Justice, City of Sault Ste Marie MP Terry Sheehan, MP Laurel Collins, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and all Ontario municipalities.

- * <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence/intimate-partner-violence.html>
- ** <https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/bill/C-332/second-reading>
- <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2023001/article/00003-eng.htm>

Sincerely



Rachel Tyczinski
City Clerk



RESOLUTION NO. 24-87

Moved by: Marc Dupuis
Seconded by: Sophie Gagnon

WHEREAS Bill C-332 is a private member's bill to amend the Criminal Code to create an offence of exercising coercive control of an intimate partner, by engaging in a pattern of conduct that consists of any combination, or any repeated instances, of any of the following acts: using, attempting to use or threatening to use violence against certain persons, coercing or attempting to coerce the intimate partner to engage in sexual activity or engaging in other conduct that could reasonably be expected to cause the intimate partner to believe that their safety, or the safety of a person known to them, is threatened;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Municipality of Mattice – Val Côté support the resolution made by Council for the City of Sault Ste. Marie on April 8th, 2024, expressing its support for Bill C-332 and calling on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-332 and to enact the necessary amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada to include coercive control of an intimate partner, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the City of Sault Ste. Marie and to our local parliament representatives, MPP Guy Bourgouin and MP Carol Hughes.

- CARRIED -

I, Guylaine Coulombe, CAO/Clerk of the Municipality of Mattice – Val Côté, do hereby certify this to be a true and complete copy of Resolution 24-87, passed by the Council of the Municipality of Mattice – Val Côté at its meeting held the 1st day of May 2024.

DATED at Mattice, Ontario
This 9th day of May 2024


Guylaine Coulombe
Page 42 of 198



City of Stratford, Corporate Services Department

Clerk's Office

City Hall, P. O. Box 818, Stratford, Ontario N5A 6W1

Tel: 519-271-0250, extension 5237

Email: clerks@stratford.ca

Website: www.stratford.ca

April 25, 2024

Sent via email to: r.tyczinski@cityssm.on.ca

Rachel Tyczinski,

City Clerk

City of Sault Ste. Marie

Re: Resolution - Intimate Partner Violence- Coercive Control

We acknowledge receipt of your correspondence dated April 11, 2024, regarding the above-mentioned matter.

The said correspondence was provided to Stratford City Council for their information as part of the April 22, 2024, Council meeting Consent Agenda (CA-2024-066). At the meeting, Council adopted the following resolution:

THAT CA-2024-066, being a resolution from the City of Sault Ste. Marie declaring its support for Bill C-332 as well as calling on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-332 and enact the necessary amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada to include coercive control of an intimate partner, be endorsed.

Sincerely,

T. Dafoe

Tatiana Dafoe, Clerk

/mf

cc: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau Prime Minister of Canada
John Nater, MP Perth-Wellington
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
All Ontario municipalities



April 11, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2

Dear Sir:

Re: Intimate Partner Violence and Coercive Control

Please be advised that at its April 8, 2024 City Council meeting, Sault Ste. Marie City Council passed the following resolution:

Whereas the jury that heard the Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam inquest (The Renfrew County Inquest) issued 86 recommendations to prevent future deaths and delivered those recommendations to the Province of Ontario; and

Whereas recommendation #85 of the inquest is to include "coercive control", as defined in the *Divorce Act*, as a criminal offence or as a type of assault under section 265 of the *Criminal Code*; and

Whereas according to experts, a perpetrator has privileged access to information about the target by virtue of the closeness of an intimate relationship and, as such, is able to identify unique vulnerabilities that can be exploited for coercive control; and

Whereas Coordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence cites scholars and advocates in the field have consistently described intimate partner violence as both an expression of, and an attempt to maintain, power and control over intimate partners; and

Whereas in 2019, according to the Government of Canada, of the 107,810 people aged 15 and over who experienced intimate partner violence 79% were women. 55% of women who experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence feared a partner at some point. Being afraid of a partner can indicate intimate partner violence that is more coercive, more severe, and more likely to reflect a pattern of abusive behaviours; and

Whereas between 2014 and 2019 in Canada, there were 497 victims of intimate partner homicide, and 80% (400 victims) were women; and

Whereas while Indigenous women account for about 5% of all women in Canada, they accounted for 21% of women killed by an intimate partner between 2014 and 2019 (83 victims). In 2021, the rate of gender-related homicide of Indigenous women and girls was more than triple that of gender-related homicides of women and girls overall (1.72 versus 0.54 per 100,000 women and girls); and

Whereas the Government of Canada names coercive control as one of the acts included in intimate partner violence, but does not include coercive control as an offence contained within the *Criminal Code* of Canada* and

Whereas Bill C332, a private member's bill to amend the Criminal Code to create an offence of exercising coercive control of an intimate partner by engaging in a pattern of conduct that consists of any combination, or any repeated instances, of any of the following acts: using, attempting to use or threatening to use violence against certain persons, coercing or attempting to coerce the intimate partner to engage in sexual activity or engaging in other conduct that could reasonably be expected to cause the intimate partner to believe that their safety, or the safety of a person known to them, is threatened**

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Sault Ste. Marie City Council express its support for Bill C-332 as well as call on the Government of Canada to support Bill C-332 and enact the necessary amendments to the *Criminal Code* of Canada to include coercive control of an intimate partner; and

Further it be resolved that a copy of this motion be circulated to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services, the Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health, the Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, the Honourable Jenna Sudds, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Honourable Arif Virani, Minister of Justice, City of Sault Ste Marie MP Terry Sheehan, MP Laurel Collins, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and all Ontario municipalities.

- * <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence/intimate-partner-violence.html>
- ** <https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/bill/C-332/second-reading>
- <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2023001/article/00003-eng.htm>

Sincerely



Rachel Tyczinski
City Clerk



**TOWNSHIP OF
BRUDENELL, LYNDOCH AND RAGLAN**

42 Burnt Bridge Road, PO Box 40
Palmer Rapids, Ontario K0J 2E0
TEL: (613) 758-2061 · FAX: (613) 758-2235

May 1, 2024

Re: Mental Health Services of Renfrew County (MHSRC) Hoarding Program

Please be advised that at their last regular meeting of Council on Wednesday May 1st, 2024, the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan supported the following resolution:

Resolution # 2024-05-01-11
Moved By: Councillor Quade
Seconded by: Councillor Keller

“Be it resolved that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan hereby supports the resolution from the Town of Arnprior and their support for the Mental Health Services of Renfrew County (MHSRC) Hoarding Program and its benefits to all residents within the County of Renfrew.

And further that Council directs staff to provide a copy of this resolution to the Pembroke Regional Hospital, all local municipalities and the County of Renfrew in support of the MHSRC Hoarding Program.”

CARRIED.

Sincerely,

Tammy Thompson
Deputy Clerk

**Cc: Pembroke Regional Hospital
All Local Municipalities
County of Renfrew**



2529 Stirling-Marmora Road
Box 40
Stirling, ON K0K 3E0
Phone: 613-395-3380 Fax: 613-395-0864

May 8, 2024

Cathy Bradley
County of Hastings
Postal Bag 4400
Belleville, ON K8N 3A9

Dear Ms. Bradley,

Re: Sustainable Infrastructure Funding for Small Rural Municipalities

At their meeting held on May 6, 2024, Council of the Township of Stirling-Rawdon passed the following resolution:

Moved by Councillor Graff

Seconded by Councillor Stewart

That the correspondence from Hastings County calling on the Provincial and Federal Governments to implement sustainable infrastructure funding for small rural municipalities be received; and further

That Council of the Township of Stirling-Rawdon supports the establishment of an intergovernmental working group which would include a member of the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus, to develop a plan on how to deal with the impending debt dilemma facing small rural municipalities; and

That this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Housing Infrastructure and Communities of Canada, the Acting President and CEO of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Premier, the Minister of Infrastructure, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, MP Shelby Kramp-Neuman, MPP Ric Bresee, AMO, ROMA, EOWC and all municipalities in Ontario.

Carried.

Thank you for bringing this important matter to the attention of Council.

Sincerely,

Sydney Dodson
Deputy-Clerk

/sd

cc: Prime Minister, Minister of Housing Infrastructure and Communities of Canada, Acting President and CEO of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Premier, Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, MP Shelby Kramp-Neuman, MPP Ric Bresee, AMO, ROMA, EOWC, all municipalities in Ontario

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

HELD
May 14th, 2024

2024-104

**Moved by Deputy Mayor Rooyakkers
Seconded by Councillor Champagne**

THAT Council for the Municipality of East Ferris support the resolution from Hastings County calling on the Ontario and Federal Government to implement sustainable infrastructure funding for small rural municipalities;

AND FURTHER THAT small rural municipalities are not overlooked and disregarded on future applications for funding;

AND FURTHER THAT both the Federal and Ontario Governments begin by acknowledging that there is an insurmountable debt facing small rural municipalities;

AND FURTHER THAT AND FINALLY THAT this resolution be forwarded to The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities of Canada; Michel Tremblay Acting President and CEO, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; The Honourable Kinga Surma, Ontario Minister of Infrastructure; The Honourable Paul Calandra, Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; MP Anthony Rota, MPP Vic Fedeli, AMO, ROMA, FCM, Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, Good Roads and all Municipalities in Ontario.

Carried Mayor Rochefort

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of
Resolution No. 2024-104 passed by the
Council of the Municipality of East Ferris
on the 14th day of May, 2024.



Kari Hanselman, Dipl. M.A.
Clerk



The Township of Georgian Bay **Resolutions** **Council - 13 May 2024**

Item 12.(a)

Date: May 13, 2024

C-2024-165

Moved by Councillor Stephen Jarvis

Seconded by Councillor Peter Cooper

WHEREAS Ontario's small rural municipalities face insurmountable challenges to fund both upfront investments and ongoing maintenance of their capital assets including roads and bridges and water wastewater and municipally owned buildings including recreational facilities and libraries;

WHEREAS in 2018, the Ontario government mandated all Ontario municipalities to develop capital asset management plans with the stipulation that they be considered in the development of the annual budget;

WHEREAS small rural municipalities (of 10,000 people or less) are facing monumental infrastructure deficits that cannot be adequately addressed through property tax revenue alone;

WHEREAS the only application approved through the recently awarded Housing Accelerator Fund to a small rural municipality was to Marathon Ontario, who received an allocation of \$1.9 million dollars while over \$1.369 billion going to Ontario's large urban centres, resulting in a 0.2% investment in rural Ontario;

WHEREAS the Ontario Government has committed \$9.1 billion to Toronto alone to assist with operating deficits and the repatriation of the Don Valley and Gardner Expressway;

WHEREAS small rural Ontario cannot keep pace with the capital investments required over the next 20 years unless both the Provincial and Federal Governments come forward with new sustainable infrastructure funding;

WHEREAS it is apparent that both the Federal and Ontario Governments have neglected to recognize the needs of small rural Ontario;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Township of Georgian Bay call on the Ontario and Federal Government to implement sustainable infrastructure funding for small rural municipalities;

AND THAT small rural municipalities are not overlooked and disregarded on future applications for funding;

AND THAT both the Federal and Ontario Governments begin by acknowledging that there is an insurmountable debt facing small rural municipalities;

AND THAT both the Federal and Ontario Governments immediately commission a Working Group that includes a member of the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus, to develop a plan on how to deal with the impending debt dilemma;

AND FINALLY THAT this resolution be forwarded to The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities of Canada; Michel Tremblay Acting President and CEO, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; The Honourable Kinga Surma, Ontario Minister of Infrastructure; The Honourable Paul Calandra, Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; MP Shelby Kramp-Neuman, Hastings-Lennox Addington; MPP Ric Bresee Hastings-Lennox Addington, AMO, ROMA, FCM, Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus and all Municipalities in Ontario.

☒ Carried ☐ Defeated ☐ Recorded Vote ☐ Referred ☐ Deferred

Recorded Vote:

	For	Against	Absent
Councillor Brian Bocek			
Councillor Peter Cooper			
Councillor Kristian Graziano			
Councillor Allan Hazelton			
Councillor Stephen Jarvis			
Councillor Steven Predko			
Mayor Peter Koetsier			

Peter Koetsier, Mayor



Corporation of the Municipality of Calvin

Council Resolution

Date: January 30, 2024

Resolution Number: 2024-31

Moved By: Councillor Moreton

Seconded By: Councillor Manson

Background: Before Calvin township became a township, it was burned by numerous forest fires. This was before the time of fire towers, water bombers, and municipal fire departments. A 1881 report from Lawrence Tallan, Provincial Land surveyor, states: *"The township of Calvin has been traversed by repeated and severe fires – so well have the flames done their work that with the exception of an insignificant portion, scarcely a vestige of the original timber remains."*

History has a way of repeating itself, and now rural municipalities and remote areas need more than ever to be prepared to respond to forest fires. Invasive pests like the emerald ash borer and the spruce bud worm are killing large numbers of trees, leaving copious amounts of dry kindling in our forests just waiting for a careless human or a lightning strike. Our forests are choked with deadfall and forest fires are becoming increasingly difficult to control. Add to this the effects of rising temperatures and drier seasons, or climate change, and we could be facing increasingly disastrous forest fires. This is not the time to be caught short with limited forest fire-fighting resources.

Jordan Omstead of the Canadian Press recently wrote: "But as Canada's water bombers age – and wildfire seasons are expected to intensify – some wildland

firefighters and emergency preparedness experts say the country needs to prop up its fleet of firefighting aircraft, even though several provinces are playing down concerns about capacity.” He quotes Eric Davidson, president of the Ontario Professional Association of Wildland Firefighters, “We’re really starting to see the effect of the aging fleet.”

The article further states the John Gradek, lecturer at McGill University estimates that almost half of the larger water bombers used to fight Canadian forest fires are nearing the end of their service life.

However, a Canadian company making a large skimmer-style water bomber is backed up with orders from European countries until the end of the decade.

Ontario has its own fleet of aircraft. They have 20 fixed-wing aircraft which includes 9 CL215 and CL415 water bombers that are 24 years old on average. The remaining 11 aircraft are an average of 54 years old. Melissa Candelaria, a spokesperson for Minister Graydon Smith says the MNR can handle Ontario fires with these aircraft, but Jennifer Kamau, communications manager for the Canada Interagency Forest Fire Centre, CIFFC, noted that other provinces contract out firebombers and last year there was a strain in Canada to get the resources to areas in need because there were so many fires across the country at the same time and very few aircraft available.

Peter Zimonjic of the CBC quoted the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) President Ken McMullen, “It's not often that the fire chiefs sound the alarm. We are very concerned about this impending crisis that the summer of 2024 and beyond is going to bring our sector.”

In 2023 we all smelled the smoke and saw the sky turn brown. Buildings can be replaced, but lives cannot. And once an area is burned it takes more than a lifetime for it to return to its original state.

WHEREAS Forest fires are a very real threat to rural municipalities.

AND WHEREAS smoke from forest fires put people's health at risk. This is especially true of children and the elderly. The David Suzuki Foundation reports that wildfires kill many thousands of people per year and most of the deaths are from smoke inhalation.

AND WHEREAS forest fires are a very real danger to the climate and according to The Guardian, in 2023 they emitted three times as much carbon as the entire carbon footprint of Canada.

AND WHEREAS according to the John Crace interview in The Guardian with William Kurz, a retired scientist with Natural Resources Canada, around two billion tonnes of carbon have been released into the atmosphere from forest fires in 2023.

AND WHEREAS carbon emissions from forest fires are not counted against Canada's Paris agreement commitments, according to Kurz, but they far exceeded all of the emissions tied to Canada's economy (670 mega tonnes, or 0.67 billion tonnes, according to Environment and Climate Change Canada).

AND WHEREAS that standing healthy forest serves as a carbon sink, drawing in carbon, but once destroyed by fire, even though second growth takes its place, it is much less effective for many decades.

AND WHEREAS the federal government owns no water bombers and assists the provinces through the CIFFC, Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, a spokesperson with CIFFC says that last year there were too many requests and not enough inventory to meet the needs of the country.

AND WHEREAS as reported by De Havilland Canada who manufacture the Canadian made water bomber, they have contracts with European countries for the next 22 of its new DHC-515 planes, which will take until 2029 or 2030 to complete and there will be very little production available to replace the aging water bombers in Ontario and the rest of Canada.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the council of the Corporation of Calvin Township urges and encourages the Federal Government to commit additional funds for cost sharing of provincial firefighting and to consider the development of a national strategy of firefighting. Furthermore, we urge the federal government to consider the measures necessary for acquiring a national fleet of Canadian-made waterbombers, with home bases strategically located to best serve and respond to the needs of rural communities, and a national fire administration to better coordinate and manage efforts across the country. We also encourage the introduction of a program similar to the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) which was ended in 2013.

And we encourage Minister Graydon Smith to step up the on-the-ground firefighting capability and water bomber acquisitions in Ontario.

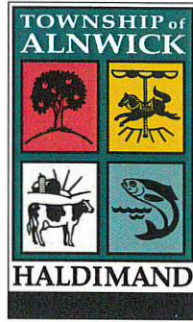
AND THAT this resolution be forwarded to The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, The Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence, The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, The Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry of Ontario, The Honourable Vic Fideli, Minister of Economic Development Ontario, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FMC) and the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO).

AND THAT this resolution be shared with all 444 municipalities in Ontario for their consideration and adoption.

Results: Carried

Recorded Vote:

<u>Member of Council</u>	<u>In Favour</u>	<u>Opposed</u>
Mayor Gould	☐	☐
Councillor Moreton	☐	☐
Councillor Latimer	☐	☐
Councillor Grant	☐	☐
Councillor Manson	☐	☐



May 8, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, M.P.,
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister:

RE: Resolution of Support – Provincial National Fire Fighting Strategy

At its Regular Council meeting of February 13, 2024, the Council of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand passed the following resolution:

RES:20240213-19

Moved by Councillor Mary Catherine O'Neill, seconded by Councillor Mike Ainsworth;

"Whereas the Council of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand considered the Resolution from the Municipality of Calvin regarding a request for a Provincial National Fire Fighting Strategy;

Be it resolved that Council hereby provides its support; and

Further be it resolved that Council direct the Deputy Clerk to send a copy of this Resolution to: the Prime Minister of Canada, the Minister of National Defence, the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry of Ontario, the Minister of Economic Development Ontario, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and all Ontario municipalities."

CARRIED.

Please find attached the resolution from the Municipality of Calvin as supporting documentation.

We respectfully submit the resolution and supporting documentation for your consideration.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yolanda Melburn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Yolanda Melburn
Deputy Clerk

Encl.

Cc: Hon. Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence
Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry of Ontario
Hon. Victor Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)
The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
All Ontario Municipalities

May 6, 2024

Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

I hope this letter finds you well.

I am writing today to bring to your attention a matter of significant importance to the Town of Orangeville, regarding an element of the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23).

As you are aware, this omnibus Bill introduced several changes to various pieces of legislation, including the Planning Act, the Development Charges Act, The Conservation Authorities Act, and the Ontario Heritage Act. It is within the context of the latter that I am reaching out to you today.

Specifically, I wish to draw your attention to subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act, which stipulates that any non-designated heritage property that is listed on the municipal register as of December 31st, 2024, shall be removed from the register on or before January 1st, 2025, unless the Council of the municipality gives notice of intention to designate the property under section 29(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The Heritage Committee for the Town of Orangeville, comprised of dedicated volunteers, alongside our staff members, have diligently worked to review the current non-designated register, which contains a staggering 454 properties. However, despite their best efforts, they are unable to complete this monumental task by the looming deadline due to resource constraints and competing interest, most notably the urgent need to review and support new housing development proposals.

Therefore, on behalf of Council for the Town of Orangeville, I am requesting an amendment to subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act, extending the deadline from January 1st, 2025 to January 1st, 2030. This extension will provide the necessary time and resource allocation to thoroughly assess each property's heritage value, engage with property owners, and take the appropriate steps to designate those deemed significant under the provisions of section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

In light of the urgency of this matter, I kindly ask for your support in facilitating this amendment. I have been authorized to by my Council to send this letter and its attached resolution, which received unanimous support at our Council meeting on Monday, April 29th, 2024.

Thank you in advance for your quick attention to this pressing issue, and I look forward to your prompt consideration and support.

Sincerely,



Lisa Post
Mayor

cc. Hon. Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism
Hon. Sylvia Jones, MPP for Dufferin/Caledon, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
John Ecker, Chair of the Ontario Heritage Trust
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
All Ontario MPPs
Municipal Councils across the Province
Architectural Conservatory of Ontario (ACO)

Corporate Services

May 1, 2024

Re: Ontario Heritage Act Amendment

Please be advised that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Orangeville, at its Regular Council Meeting held on April 29, 2024, approved the following resolution:

Whereas the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23)* received Royal Assent on November 28, 2022. As part of this omnibus Bill, several changes were implemented to various pieces of legislation, including but not limited to, *The Planning Act, The Development Charges Act, The Conservation Authorities Act, and The Ontario Heritage Act*;

And whereas subsection 27 (16) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* stipulates that any non-designated heritage property listed on the municipal register of properties as of December 31, 2024 shall be removed from the municipal register on or before January 1, 2025, if the council of the municipality does not give a notice of intention to designate the property under Section 29(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* on or before January 1, 2025;

And whereas, the Heritage Orangeville committee comprises of a handful of dedicated volunteers who are not able to review the current non-designated register containing 454 properties on or before the deadline of December 31, 2024;

And whereas, Heritage Orangeville committee along with staff members would need to review the municipal heritage register, research the heritage value and interest of listed non-designated properties, contact owners of such properties, determine which properties should potentially be designated in accordance with the provisions of Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and take all required steps to designate such properties;

And whereas the above noted work involving 454 listed properties in the Town of Orangeville is extremely time-consuming and cannot be completed by December 31, 2024 with the current resources available given other competing interests including reviewing and supporting new housing development proposals;

Now therefore be it resolved that:

- 1. The Council of the Town of Orangeville request that Subsection 27 (16) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* be amended to extend the above-noted deadline for five years from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2030; and**
- 2. That the Mayor be authorized to send a letter to Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario and Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, John Ecker, Chair, Ontario Heritage Trust; and**
- 3. That the Town Clerk be directed to send a copy of this motion to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Provincial MPPs, Municipal Councils across the province, and the Architectural Conservatory of Ontario (ACO).**

Carried Unanimously.

Yours truly,



Raylene Martell
Town Clerk



Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
823 Albion Road
Etobicoke, ON
M9V 1A3
VIA EMAIL:
premier@ontario.ca

Hon. Michael Ford
Minister of Citizenship and
Multiculturalism
14th Floor
56 Wellesley St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2E7
VIA EMAIL:
Michael.Ford@pc.ola.org

Township of Puslinch
7404 Wellington Road 34
Puslinch, ON N0B 2J0
www.puslinch.ca

May 9, 2024

RE: Resolution from Town of Coburg Council regarding Request to Amend Subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act

Please be advised that Township of Puslinch Council, at its meeting held on April 10, 2024 considered the aforementioned topic and subsequent to discussion, the following was resolved:

Resolution No. 2024-123:

Moved by Councillor Hurst and
Seconded by Councillor Sepulis

That the Consent Agenda item 6.13 be received for information; and

Whereas Council supports the resolution from the Town of Cobourg Council regarding a Request to Amend Subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act;

That Council direct staff to forward a support resolution accordingly; and

That Council refer this consent item to the Heritage Advisory Committee for its information.

CARRIED

As per the above resolution, please accept a copy of this correspondence for your information and consideration.

Sincerely,



Justine Brotherston
Municipal Clerk

CC: Ontario Municipalities



The Corporation of the Town of Cobourg

Resolution

All Ontario Municipalities

Sent via email

Town of Cobourg
55 King Street West,
Cobourg, ON, K9A 2M2
clerk@cobourg.ca
Town of Cobourg

March 8, 2024

RE: Correspondence from the Architectural Conservancy Ontario regarding Proposed Amendment to Subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act with respect to the removal of listed (non-designated) properties from municipal heritage registers

Please be advised that the Town of Cobourg Council, at its meeting held on February 28, 2024, passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act stipulates that any non-designated heritage property listed on the municipal register of properties as of December 31, 2022 shall be removed from the municipal register on or before January 1, 2025, if the council of the municipality does not give a notice of intention to designate the property under subsection 29(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act on or before January 1, 2025; and

WHEREAS since January 1, 2023, municipal staff and members of the municipal heritage committee in the Town of Cobourg have been diligently working to: review the municipal heritage register; research the heritage value and interest of listed (non-designated) properties; review and research the heritage value and interest of non-designated properties; contact owners of such properties; determine which properties should potentially be designated in accordance with the provisions of Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act; and take all required steps to designate such properties; and

WHEREAS the above-noted work involving 213 listed properties in the Town of Cobourg is extremely time-consuming and cannot be completed by December 31, 2024 with the limited municipal resources available.



The Corporation of the Town of Cobourg

Resolution

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Town of Cobourg authorize the Mayor to promptly send a letter to Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, and Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, requesting that Subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act be amended to extend the above-noted deadline for five years from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2030; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to forward this resolution to all 443 municipalities in Ontario seeking support of the ACO correspondence.

Sincerely,



Kristina Lepik
Deputy Clerk/Manager, Legislative Services

**CORPORATION OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF NORTH GLENGARRY**

Council Meeting

Resolution # 1

Date: Monday, April 29, 2024

Moved by: Jeff Manley

Seconded by: Michael Madden

THAT the Council of the Township of North Glengarry receives staff report PW 2024-08, Request to the Province to Amend Blue Box Regulations for 'Ineligible' Sources; and

THAT the Council of the Township of North Glengarry passes the motion to request that the province amends the blue box regulation for ineligible sources as follows:

WHEREAS under Ontario Regulation 391/21: Blue Box producers are fully accountable and financially responsible for their products and packaging once they reach their end of life and are disposed of, for 'eligible' sources only; and

WHEREAS 'ineligible' sources which producers are not responsible for including businesses, places of worship, daycares, campgrounds, public-facing and internal areas of municipal-owned buildings, and not-for-profit organizations, such as shelters and food banks;

AND WHEREAS should a municipality continue to provide services to the 'ineligible' sources, the municipality will be required to oversee the collection, transportation, and processing of the recycling, assuming 100% of the costs;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of North Glengarry hereby request that the province amend Ontario Regulation 391/21: Blue Box so that producers are responsible for the end-of-life management of recycling products from all sources;

AND FURTHER that Council hereby request the support of all Ontario Municipalities;

AND FURTHER that this resolution be forwarded to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks, and the Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, to MPP of Glengarry, Prescott, Russel, MPP Stéphane Sarrazin, and all Ontario Municipalities

Carried

Deferred

Defeated

Mayor / Deputy Mayor

Jena Doonan — Commissioner
by virtue of my office as
Deputy Clerk
Township of North Glengarry

VERIFIED TRUE COPY OF ORIGINAL
WHICH HAS NOT BEEN ALTERED IN ANY MANNER

Jena Doonan May 6 2024

DATE: May 6, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

RE: Request to the Province to Amend Blue Box Regulation for 'Ineligible' Sources

Please be advised of the following motion passed at the Monday, April 29th, 2024, Municipality of North Glengarry Council Meeting:

Resolution: No. 7

Moved By: Councillor Jeff Manley

Seconded By: Councillor Michael Madden

Whereas under Ontario Regulation 391/21: Blue Box producers are fully accountable and financially responsible for their products and packaging once they reach their end of life and are disposed of, for 'eligible' sources only;

And Whereas 'ineligible' sources which producers are not responsible for including businesses, places of worship, daycares, campgrounds, public-facing and internal areas of municipal-owned buildings, and not-for-profit organizations, such as shelters and food banks;

And Whereas should a municipality continue to provide services to the 'ineligible' sources, the municipality will be required to oversee the collection, transportation, and processing of the recycling, assuming 100% of the costs;

Be it resolved that the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of North Glengarry hereby request that the province amend Ontario Regulation 391/21: Blue Box so that producers are responsible for the end-of-life management of recycling products from all sources;

And further that Council hereby requests the support of all Ontario Municipalities;

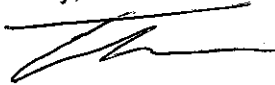
And further that this resolution be forwarded to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks, and the Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, to MPP of Glengarry, Prescott, Russel, MPP Stéphane Sarrazin, and all Ontario Municipalities.

CARRIED

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy Wright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Timothy Wright
Director of Public Works

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LARDER LAKE

69 Fourth Avenue, Larder Lake, ON

Phone: 705-643-2158 Fax: 705-643-2311



MOVED BY:

- ☐ Thomas Armstrong
☒ Patricia Hull
☒ Paul Kelly
☐ Lynne Paquette

SECONDED BY:

- ☐ Thomas Armstrong
☒ Patricia Hull
☐ Paul Kelly
☐ Lynne Paquette

Motion #: 6

Resolution #:

Date: May 14, 2024

THAT the Council of the Township of Larder Lake supports the resolution passed by the Council of the Township of North Glengarry regarding a request to the province to amend the blue box regulation for ineligible sources as follows:

WHEREAS under Ontario Regulation 391/21: Blue Box producers are fully accountable and financially responsible for their products and packaging once they reach their end of life and are disposed of, for 'eligible' sources only; and

WHEREAS 'ineligible' sources which producers are not responsible for including businesses, places of worship, daycares, campgrounds, public-facing and internal areas of municipal-owned buildings, and not-for-profit organizations, such as shelters and food banks;

AND WHEREAS should a municipality continue to provide services to the 'ineligible' sources, the municipality will be required to oversee the collection, transportation, and processing of the recycling, assuming 100% of the costs;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Larder Lake hereby request that the province amend Ontario Regulation 391/21: Blue Box so that producers are responsible for the end-of-life management of recycling products from all sources;

AND FURTHER that Council hereby requests the support of all Ontario Municipalities;

AND FURTHER that this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Minister of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks, and the

Recorded vote requested: ☐

	For	Against
Tom Armstrong		
Patricia Hull		
Paul Kelly		
Lynne Paquette		
Patty Quinn		

I declare this motion

☐ Carried
☐ Lost / Defeated
☐ Deferred to: _____ (enter date)
Because:
☐ Referred to: _____ (enter body)
Expected response: _____ (enter date)

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest*

Chair: _____

*Disclosed his/her (their) interest(s), abstained from discussion and did not vote on this question.

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LARDER LAKE

69 Fourth Avenue, Larder Lake, ON

Phone: 705-643-2158 Fax: 705-643-2311



MOVED BY:

___ ☐ Thomas Armstrong
___ ☐ Patricia Hull
___ ☐ Paul Kelly
___ ☐ Lynne Paquette

SECONDED BY:

___ ☐ Thomas Armstrong
___ ☐ Patricia Hull
___ ☐ Paul Kelly
___ ☐ Lynne Paquette

Motion #: 7

Resolution #:

Date: May 14, 2024

Honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, to MPP Timiskaming-Cochrane and all Municipalities within the District of Timiskaming.

Recorded vote requested: ☐

	For	Against
Tom Armstrong	✓	
Patricia Hull	✓	
Paul Kelly	✓	
Lynne Paquette	✓	
Patty Quinn	✓	

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest*

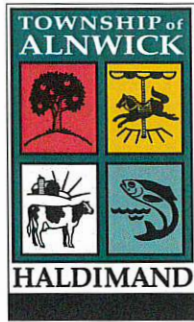
I declare this motion

☒ Carried
☐ Lost / Defeated
☐ Deferred to: _____ (enter date)
Because:
☐ Referred to: _____ (enter body)
Expected response: _____ (enter date)

Chair:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Quinn', is written over a horizontal line.

*Disclosed his/her (their) interest(s), abstained from discussion and did not vote on this question.



May 9, 2024

Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
155 University Avenue, Suite 800
Toronto, ON M5H 3B7
amo@amo.on.ca

Dear Sir/Madam:

**RE: Resolution of Support – Request Province to Undertake with AMO a
Comprehensive Review of Municipal Finances Across Ontario**

At its Regular Council meeting of February 13, 2024, the Council of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand passed the following resolution:

RES:20240213-24

Moved by Deputy Mayor Joan Stover, seconded by Councillor Mike Ainsworth;

"Whereas Council of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand received letters from the Town's of Hanover and Orangeville supporting the province committing to the undertaking of a social and economic prosperity review; and

Whereas current provincial-municipal fiscal arrangements are undermining Ontario's economic prosperity and quality of life; and

Whereas nearly a third of municipal spending in Ontario is for services in areas of provincial responsibility and expenditures are outpacing provincial contributions by nearly \$4 billion a year; and

Whereas municipal revenues, such as property taxes, do not grow with the economy or inflation; and

Whereas unprecedented population and housing growth will require significant investments in municipal infrastructure; and

Whereas municipalities are being asked to take on complex health and social challenges – like homelessness, supporting asylum seekers and addressing the mental health and addictions crises; and

Whereas inflation, rising interest rates, and provincial policy decisions are sharply constraining municipal fiscal capacity; and

Whereas property taxpayers – including people on fixed incomes and small businesses – can't afford to subsidize income re-distribution programs for those most in need; and

Whereas the province can, and should, invest more in the prosperity of communities; and

Whereas municipalities and the provincial government have a strong history of collaboration;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Province of Ontario commit to undertaking with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario a comprehensive social and economic prosperity review to promote the stability and sustainability of municipal finances across Ontario; and

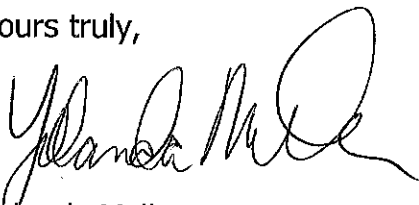
Further be it resolved that Council direct the Deputy Clerk to send a copy of this resolution to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Premier Doug Ford, MPP David Piccini - Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and all Ontario municipalities."

CARRIED.

Please find attached the resolution from the Town's of Hanover and Orangeville as supporting documentation.

We respectfully submit the resolution and supporting documentation for your consideration.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yolanda Melburn', written over a horizontal line.

Yolanda Melburn
Deputy Clerk

Encl.

Cc: Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. David Piccini, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Dev.
Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
All Ontario Municipalities

February 1, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Via Email: premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford:

Re: Social and Economic Prosperity Review

Please be advised that the Council of the Town of Hanover adopted the following resolution at their meeting of January 15, 2024 regarding the above noted matter;

Moved by COUNCILLOR KOEBEL Seconded by COUNCILLOR HOCKING

Whereas current provincial-municipal fiscal arrangements are undermining Ontario's economic prosperity and quality of life;

Whereas nearly a third of municipal spending in Ontario is for services in areas of provincial responsibility and expenditures are outpacing provincial contributions by nearly \$4 billion a year;

Whereas municipal revenues, such as property taxes, do not grow with the economy or inflation;

Whereas unprecedented population and housing growth will require significant investments in municipal infrastructure;

Whereas municipalities are being asked to take on complex health and social challenges – like homelessness, supporting asylum seekers and addressing the mental health and addictions crises;

Whereas inflation, rising interest rates, and provincial policy decisions are sharply constraining municipal fiscal capacity;

Whereas property taxpayers – including people on fixed incomes and small businesses – can't afford to subsidize income re-distribution programs for those most in need;

Whereas the province can, and should, invest more in the prosperity of communities;

Whereas municipalities and the provincial government have a strong history of collaboration;

Therefore be it resolved that the Province of Ontario commit to undertaking with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario a comprehensive social and economic prosperity review to promote the stability and sustainability of municipal finances across Ontario;

And further that a copy of this motion be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

CARRIED

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully,



Tanya Patterson
Deputy Clerk

/tp

cc: Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Honourable Rick Byers, MPP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Ontario Municipalities

Corporate Services

January 26, 2024

Re: Social and Economic Prosperity Review

Please be advised that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Orangeville, at its Regular Council Meeting held on January 22, 2024, approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS current provincial-municipal fiscal arrangements are undermining Ontario's economic prosperity and quality of life; and

WHEREAS nearly a third of municipal spending in Ontario is for services in areas of provincial responsibility and expenditures are outpacing provincial contributions by nearly \$4 billion a year; and

WHEREAS municipal revenues, such as property taxes, do not grow with the economy or inflation; and

WHEREAS unprecedented population and housing growth will require significant investments in municipal infrastructure; and

WHEREAS municipalities are being asked to take on complex health and social challenges – like homelessness, supporting asylum seekers and addressing the mental health and addictions crises; and

WHEREAS inflation, rising interest rates, and provincial policy decisions are sharply constraining municipal fiscal capacity; and

WHEREAS property taxpayers – including people on fixed incomes and small businesses – can't afford to subsidize income redistribution programs for those most in need; and

WHEREAS the province can, and should, invest more in the prosperity of communities; and

WHEREAS municipalities and the provincial government have a strong history of collaboration; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of Orangeville requests the Province of Ontario commit to undertaking with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario a comprehensive social and economic prosperity review to promote the stability and sustainability of municipal finances across Ontario; and

FURTHER THAT a copy of this motion is sent to the Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford; the MPP, Sylvia Jones; and all municipalities in Ontario.

Carried.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raylene Martell".

Raylene Martell
Town Clerk



Honourable Lisa Thompson
Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Via e-mail: lisa.thompsonco@pc.ola.org

Township of Puslinch
7404 Wellington Road 34
Puslinch, ON N0B 2J0
www.puslinch.ca

May 9, 2024

Dear Minister Thompson,

In the 2023 Auditor General's Value-for-Money Audit of Public Health Ontario (PHO) released in December 2023, recommendation number 5 states that PHO, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health (MOH), are to update and implement a laboratory modernization plan within 12 months to streamline the laboratory's operations.

https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en23/AR_publichealth_en23.pdf

This stemmed from a 2017 proposal by PHO, collaboratively with the MOH at the request of the Deputy Minister to close six of the 11 public health laboratory sites (Hamilton, Kingston, Orillia, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins) and gradually discontinue private drinking water testing. The justification:

- Mitigating rising costs of maintaining facilities
- Establishing a more efficient operating model that reduces the rerouting of samples to other PHO laboratory sites

The residents of the Township of Puslinch do not have access to a municipal water supply and rely exclusively on private wells. The phasing out of free well water testing will impose an additional barrier to water sampling.

At the April 10, 2024, meeting of the Township of Puslinch's Council the following resolution was unanimously approved:



Resolution No. 2024-134:

Moved by Councillor Sepulis and
Seconded by Councillor Hurst

That correspondence item 10.2 regarding the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee recommendation Phase Out of Free Well Water Testing be received for information; and

Whereas the Township of Puslinch in receipt of the February 26, 2024 letter from the Ausable Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee (via the Lake Erie Source Protection Committee Meeting of March 28, 2024) to Honourable Lisa Thompson, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs concerned Public Health Ontario's recommended phase out of free well water testing; and

Whereas the residents of the Township does not have access to a municipal water supply and rely exclusively on well water; and

Whereas the phasing of free well water testing will impose an additional barrier to ensuring safe drinking water when it is already difficult to encourage residents to test their water;

Be it resolved that the Township of Puslinch supports the letter from the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee to Minister Lisa Thompson and requests staff to send a similar letter of concern Minister Lisa Thompson, Honourable Sylvia Jones Minister of Health and Long Term Care, Honourable Andrea Khanjin Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, all Ontario Municipalities, AMO, Hon. Ted Arnott, and MPP Rae.

CARRIED

As per the above resolution, please accept a copy of this correspondence for your information and consideration.

Sincerely,

Justine Brotherston
Municipal Clerk



CC: Hon. Sylvia Jones, Hon. Andrea Khanjin, MPP Rae, Hon. Ted Arnott, All Ontario Municipalities

February 26th, 2023

Honourable Lisa Thompson, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Via e-mail: lisa.thompsonco@pc.ola.org

Re: Recommended Phase Out of Free Well Water Testing in the 2023 Auditor General's Report

Dear Minister Thompson,

In the 2023 Auditor General's Value-for-Money Audit of Public Health Ontario (PHO) released in December 2023, recommendation number 5 states that PHO, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health (MOH), are to update and implement a laboratory modernization plan within 12 months to streamline the laboratory's operations.

https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en23/AR_publichealth_en23.pdf

This stemmed from a 2017 proposal by PHO, collaboratively with the MOH at the request of the Deputy Minister to close six of the 11 public health laboratory sites (Hamilton, Kingston, Orillia, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins) and gradually discontinue private drinking water testing. The justification:

- Mitigating rising costs of maintaining facilities
- Establishing a more efficient operating model that reduces the rerouting of samples to other PHO laboratory sites

About 50% of the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Region population is serviced by private wells. The proposed removal of PHO's free private drinking water testing is of concern to our Ausable Bayfield Source Protection Committee, particularly when Source Protection Regions have been directed by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Source Protection Branch, to deliver education and outreach to private well owners under the new Best Practices initiative.

In our region, we have been working with service and community organizations such as the Lions, Optimists and Lakeshore Residents Associations to co-host very successful Best Practices 'Water Wise' events that encourage private well owners to sample their drinking water using the free microbial testing provided by the province. By distributing water sample bottles ahead of the event and delivering the samples to Huron Perth Public Health for lab analysis, most of

the barriers to water sampling are removed. At these events 25% to 50% of a communities well water will be sampled in one day or night.

Well owners understand the importance of testing their well water; it is the inconvenience of doing so that is the barrier. One of the goals of the 'Water Wise' events is to encourage well owners to get in the habit of testing their water regularly as part of Best Practices for protecting their drinking water. The hope is that the community groups and service clubs that Source Protection staff work with will make Water Wise water sampling events part of their regular activities.

Private drinking water systems in Ontario do not have the legislated safeguards that are required for municipal/communal/public systems under the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*. Only municipal water supply systems fall under the *Clean Water Act, 2006* and the Source Water Protection program. Health Canada's guidance on waterborne pathogens references three studies that determine that private systems are vulnerable and there is evidence that demonstrates they are more likely to contribute to gastrointestinal illness than public drinking water systems.

If the free water testing phase out recommendation is approved, well owners would have to use a commercial lab for a fee, which disincentivizes testing. When water is not monitored regularly, there is no way to know the true quality of the water, which puts people at increased risk of becoming ill. With private systems being stand-alone systems, any associated illnesses are isolated sporadic events and do not come to public attention like those seen during the Walkerton outbreak.

The private drinking water test data maintained by PHO has been used by researchers to publish evidence that helps support public health policy. Source Protection Committees can access data associated with their area, as was presented at our March 2023 meeting. The data can be used to inform well owners of regional water quality concerns and associated health risks. If PHO stops testing, this data and affiliated research will no longer be available.

In the Walkerton Inquiry Report Part 2, Justice O'Connor concluded the privatization of laboratory testing of drinking water samples connected directly to the *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak in Walkerton Ontario in May 2000. Twenty-four years later, there is a proposal to privatize water testing once again.

At the January 31st meeting of the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee the following resolution was unanimously approved:

MOTION #SPC: 2024-02-04

Moved by Philip Keightley

Seconded by Mary Ellen Foran

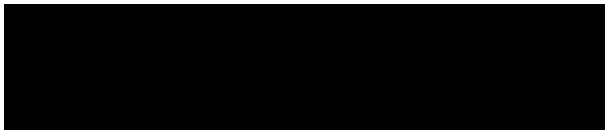
“THAT the Source Protection Committee direct a letter to Minister Thompson requesting that the province not proceed with the recommended phase out of free private well testing in Ontario, and

“FURTHER, THAT area municipalities, the Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, other Source Protection Committees, and local health units be forwarded the letter and asked for their support. “

Carried.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely



Matthew Pearson

Chair

Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Committee

Cc Honourable Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Honourable Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Municipalities of Adelaide Metcalfe, Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh, Bluewater, Central Huron, Goderich, Howick, Huron East, Lambton Shores, Lucan Biddulph, Mapleton, Middlesex Centre, Minto, Morris-Turnberry, North Middlesex, North Perth, Perth South, South Bruce, South Huron, Warwick, West Perth, Wellington North
Townships of Huron-Kinloss and North Huron

Huron Perth Public Health, Lambton Public Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit, Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health

Source Protection Regions: Cataraqui; Central Lake Ontario, Toronto, Credit Valley; Essex; Hamilton Halton; Grey Sauble, Saugeen, Northern Bruce Peninsula; Lake Erie; Lakehead; Mattagami; Mississippi-Rideau; Niagara; North Bay; Quinte; Raisin South Nation; Sault Ste. Marie; South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe; Sudbury; Thames -Sydenham and Region; Trent Conservation Coalition

Executive Services
99-A Advance Avenue, Napanee, ON K7R 3Y5 www.greaternapanee.com

May 14, 2024

Sent via email: info@karea.ca

Kingston and Area Real
Estate Association
720 Arlington Park Place
Kingston, ON K7M 8H9

Re: Protecting Our Community's Water

Dear Erin Finn,

Please be advised that the Council of the Town of Greater Napanee passed the following resolution at its regular session meeting of April 30, 2024:

RESOLUTION #155/24: Pinnell Jr., Norrie

That Council receive for information the correspondence from the Kingston and Area Real Estate Association regarding the local impacts of the proposed closure of the Kingston public health lab;

And further, that Council send a letter of support to the President of the Kingston and Area Real Estate Association;

And further that a copy of the letter to be sent to Premier Doug Ford, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sylvia Jones, Ric Bresee, MPP - Hastings Lennox and Addington; Shelby Kramp-Neuman, MP- Hastings and Lennox and Addington and all municipalities in Ontario.

CARRIED

Please do not hesitate to contact jwalters@greaternapanee.com if you require any further information with respect to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Jessica Walters
Clerk

cc. Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
Ric Bresee, MPP for Hastings-Lennox & Addington
Shelby Kramp-Neuman, MP for Hastings-Lennox &
Addington
All municipalities of Ontario



Dear Mayor Richardson and Council

As a valued members of our community I feel it is important to share with you a matter of significant concern that affects us all, especially those of us living in or considering rural properties in Hastings, Lennox and Addington and Frontenac Counties.

Recent recommendations have put the future of our local Public Health Ontario laboratory in jeopardy. This facility is crucial for conducting no-cost water testing, a service that many of our rural residents rely on to ensure their drinking water is safe. The proposed closure of the Kingston lab could have a direct impact on our community's health and safety, as well as potential implications for property values and the attractiveness of rural living.

Why Your Support is Needed:

- Community Health: Safe drinking water is a cornerstone of public health. Losing access to local, no-cost water testing could lead to increased health risks.
- Rural Impact: Rural residents, in particular, depend on these services due to the absence of municipal water services in many areas.
- Economic Considerations: The availability of reliable water testing services is essential for maintaining property values and the desirability of rural properties.

How You Can Help:

The Kingston and Area Real Estate Association is spearheading a petition to keep the Kingston water testing lab operational and its services free. We believe that by coming together as a community, we can ensure that our voices are heard and that this essential service remains available to those who need it most.

We kindly ask for your support by:

1. Note and receive this letter for information and to provide a motion that a copy of this letter is sent to:
 - Premier Doug Ford
 - Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sylvie Jones
 - MPP Ric Bresee
 - MP Shelby Kramp-Neuman
 - All remaining 443 Ontario Municipalities

2. Spread the Word: Please share this information with friends, family, and neighbours. The more voices we gather, the stronger our appeal.

Your engagement in this cause is not just about preserving a service; it's about upholding the health and well-being of our community. Together, we can make a difference.

Thank you for taking the time to read this message and for considering this call to action. Your support means everything to us and to rural communities across Ontario.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Warm regards,

Erin Finn



May 14, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1
Via Email: premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford:

Re:Public Health Ontario proposes phasing out free water testing for private wells

Please be advised that the Council of the Town of Gore Bay adopted the following resolution at their meeting of May 13, 2024, regarding the above noted matter;

15772

Moved by Kelly Chaytor

Seconded by Rob Dearing

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Gore Bay Council supports the Township of Archipelago's request to the Province of Ontario to reconsider and ultimately decide against the proposed phasing out of free private drinking water testing services;

FURTHER, this resolution is circulated to all Ontario municipalities, the Minister of Health, and Sudbury District Health Unit.

Carried

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stasia', written in a cursive style.

Stasia Carr
Clerk

Cc:
Minister of Health sylvia.jones@pc.ola.org
Sudbury District Health Unit sutcliffe@phsd.ca
Ontario Municipalities



**The Corporation of The Township of The Archipelago
Council Meeting**

Agenda Number: 15.8.

Resolution Number 24-082

Title: Public Health Ontario proposes phasing out free water testing for private wells

Date: Friday, April 19, 2024

Moved by: Councillor Manners

Seconded by: Councillor MacLeod

WHEREAS the Ontario Auditor General's annual report on public health from December 2023 indicates that Public Health Ontario is proposing the phasing-out of free provincial water testing services for private drinking water; and

WHEREAS free private drinking water testing services has played a pivotal role in safeguarding public health, particularly in rural communities, including the entire Township of The Archipelago, that rely predominantly on private drinking water; and

WHEREAS the removal of free private drinking water testing could lead to a reduction in testing, potentially increasing the risk of waterborne diseases in these vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS the tragic events in Walkerton, Ontario underscored the critical importance of safe drinking water.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The Township of The Archipelago hereby requests that the Province reconsider and ultimately decide against the proposed phasing-out of free private drinking water testing services.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that this resolution be sent to all Ontario municipalities, Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks, Minister of Health, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, Graydon Smith, MPP Parry Sound-Muskoka.

Carried



Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

Value-for-Money Audit:
Public Health
Ontario



December 2023

Public Health Ontario

1.0 Summary

Public Health Ontario is an independent, board-governed agency with a broad mandate to provide scientific and technical advice and support to those working across health-related sectors to protect and improve the health of Ontarians. This includes carrying out and supporting activities such as population health assessment, public health research, surveillance, epidemiology, and planning and evaluation. Established in 2007 following the SARS outbreak in 2003, Public Health Ontario is one of the three pillars of Ontario's public health system, consisting of 34 local public health units and the Ministry of Health (Ministry), which exercises its authority in the area of public health primarily through the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Public Health Ontario supports areas such as preventing and controlling infections and the spread of communicable diseases, improving environmental health and preventing chronic diseases, and operates Ontario's public health laboratory. Public Health Ontario provided public health and testing expertise during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, in the area of vaccine safety, through its surveillance of adverse events following immunization.

The Ministry is the primary funder of Public Health Ontario. The agency spends the majority of its annual funding, which was about \$222 million in 2022/23, on operating the province's 11 public health laboratory sites. Ontarians relied on the agency's public health laboratory to perform 6.8 million tests in 2022/23 for diseases that include HIV, syphilis, tuberculosis, influenza, COVID-19 and West Nile virus. The laboratory

also carries out all required testing relating to outbreaks and investigations in Ontario, and has the capability of diagnosing pathogens requiring a high level of biosecurity and safety measures.

In early 2019, the Province announced its intention to modernize Ontario's public health system. A 2019 discussion paper to support the provincial plan outlined the key challenges facing public health. The paper noted the importance of working toward clearer and better aligned roles and responsibilities between the Province, Public Health Ontario and local public health units. In particular, it stated Public Health Ontario's potential to strengthen public health functions if these are co-ordinated or provided at the provincial level. The government revised its approach to modernizing the public health system in August 2023 to include a review of standards that govern the work of public health units, the roles and responsibilities that all three pillars of the public health system play, as well as their relationships and alignment across and beyond the broader health-care system.

Our audit found that Public Health Ontario has been unable to meet a number of its legislated responsibilities under the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*. This is partially due to a lack of direction from the Ministry to perform at its full potential. This includes a continued lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities in an evolving health-care system that saw the introduction of a new health agency, Ontario Health, that became operational in 2019. Though Public Health Ontario is responsible for providing scientific and technical advice and support to clients in the government, it was not consulted on some critical decisions concerning public health, such as the health impacts of increased access to gambling

and alcohol in recent years, and it did not address these topics independently.

We also found that lack of information sharing between the Ministry, public health units and Public Health Ontario has limited the agency's ability to centralize and co-ordinate work effectively in the area of research and evidence synthesis (a research methodology involving collecting the best available evidence on a given topic and summarizing it to inform best practice). This has resulted in duplication of efforts between provincial and local public health entities. From our work, we noted examples where multiple public health units have independently developed local resources in areas including key public health issues such as mental health and alcohol, when it would have been more cost-effective for Public Health Ontario to develop resources centrally.

Further, we found that Public Health Ontario's laboratory sites, where about 70% of its financial resources are allocated, were not operating efficiently. We found that three sites were able to perform tests on only 9% to 20% of the samples and specimens they receive, transferring the remainder of samples to other laboratory sites. Each of these three sites had base operating costs ranging from \$5 million to \$10 million over the last five years. The agency explained that transferring out laboratory tests to other sites was necessary for reasons that included lack of expertise or lack of sufficient volume to maintain competency of laboratory personnel in a specific test, lack of equipment to conduct certain tests, and efficiencies to achieve economy of scale. The agency developed a plan collaboratively with the Ministry in 2017 to modernize its laboratory operations by consolidating resources into fewer laboratory sites and discontinuing or restricting eligibility for certain tests; however, the government still had not approved the plan at the time of our audit. The Ministry stated this was due to reasons that include the COVID-19 pandemic and more recent recommendations relating to provincial laboratory optimization from an external consulting firm. We also found that the agency was not taking the lead in performing or co-ordinating testing for the surveillance of some diseases of public health significance.

These include a laboratory test to detect latent tuberculosis—a disease of public health significance that can disproportionately affect Indigenous people and newcomers to Ontario—as well as wastewater testing for the detection of COVID-19, which is currently led by another Ministry.

Other observations of this audit include:

- **Public Health Ontario is challenged by a lack of sustainable funding from the Ministry of Health.** We found that since 2019/20, Public Health Ontario has seen limited increases in base funding, and has had some of its base funding replaced by one-time annual funding. While the Ministry has increased base funding since 2020/21, it has still not restored it to pre-pandemic levels. This lack of consistent funding threatens Public Health Ontario's ability to fully deliver on its mandate, and hinders the agency's ability to continue to provide services. For example, the agency has begun to explore options to scale back or dismantle the operations of a committee designed to enhance provincial capacity to respond to public health emergencies.
- **Public Health Ontario did not adequately monitor compliance with procurement policies.** We found that Public Health Ontario has not always followed the Ontario Public Service Procurement Directive, as well as the agency's own corporate procurement policy. From 2018/19 to 2022/23, Public Health Ontario staff at various laboratory sites were using their purchasing cards to make recurring purchases of laboratory and health-care supplies from the same vendor, instead of engaging in competitive procurement as required by internal policies. The agency provided explanations for why it used purchasing cards for recurring transactions with two of the top vendors. For the remaining 28 vendors, we found that annual transaction values over this same period ranged from \$25,133 to \$222,283. We further found that Public Health Ontario does not have a formal process to track vendor performance

and non-compliance, even though the Directive requires vendor performance to be managed and documented.

- **Public Health Ontario mostly measures outputs but little in the way of client satisfaction or service quality.** The agency establishes performance indicators as well as targets in its annual business plans; however, these indicators mostly focus on quantifying the output of the agency's operational activities rather than client satisfaction and actual performance of its core activities, making it difficult for the agency to demonstrate that it has been effective in meeting the needs of its clients. We also found that the agency's performance indicators do not cover all of its key functions, for example, the performance of its research ethics committee, which provides ethics reviews to 26 of Ontario's 34 public health units, to measure the turnaround time of its reviews.
- **Public Health Ontario's information technology (IT) processes need improvement.** We examined Public Health Ontario's IT controls and processes related to user account management, cybersecurity and software management. Due to the nature of these findings and so as to minimize the risk of exposure for Public Health Ontario, we provided relevant details of our findings and recommendations directly to Public Health Ontario. Public Health Ontario agreed with the recommendations and committed to implementing them.

This report contains 10 recommendations, with 24 action items, to address our audit findings and to position Public Health Ontario for success to continue to contribute to the overall health of Ontarians as a public health agency, independent from the government.

Overall Conclusion

Our audit concluded that Public Health Ontario has delivered on some areas of its mandate as set out in the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007* (Act), but does not yet sufficiently collaborate

with the Ministry of Health and local public health units to clearly define and ascertain the agency's role in areas such as undertaking public health research, disseminating knowledge, and delivering public health laboratory services to more effectively protect and promote the health of the people in Ontario and reduce health inequities.

We also concluded that Public Health Ontario mostly measures outputs but little in the way of client satisfaction or service quality, and that the agency's suite of performance indicators does not cover all of its key functions.

OVERALL PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario thanks the Auditor General for this comprehensive value-for-money audit report.

Public Health Ontario is committed to fulfilling our mission to enhance the protection and promotion of the health of the people in Ontario and to contribute efforts toward reducing health inequities. By providing scientific and technical advice and leadership to support our clients across the public health and health systems, we enable evidence-informed public health action and decision-making.

In consideration of our role in the province, we recognize the importance of continuing to strive to improve our operations and enhance the quality of our services and products. As such, we appreciate the independent review of our organization by the Auditor General and the recommendations brought forward, all of which we have accepted and have plans to address.

When interpreting the findings of the report, it is important to note that the time frame covered by the audit includes more than three years during which Public Health Ontario was actively engaged in the COVID-19 pandemic response. Public Health Ontario, like other public health organizations, was greatly affected by the extraordinary demands of the pandemic. Due to the need to dedicate considerable resources to the pandemic, some areas of

our work did not progress as planned during this period, such as efforts to reduce purchasing card usage in the laboratory and expand our outcome-based performance measures.

As we are now in the process of returning to a “new normal” for the public health system in Ontario, Public Health Ontario is leveraging the lessons learned during the pandemic to inform the development of our next strategic plan covering the years 2024–29. The insights shared through this audit are helpful inputs that will support us in our commitment to continuous quality improvement and further enhance our leadership role within the public health system.

2.0 Background

2.1 Overview of Public Health Ontario

The Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (also known as Public Health Ontario) was established in 2007 as an independent, board-governed agency, primarily funded by the Ministry of Health (Ministry) in response to Ontario’s challenges faced during SARS, a global respiratory outbreak that affected Ontario and other parts of Canada in 2003. Public health is the organized effort of society to promote and protect the health of populations and reduce health inequities through the use of supportive programs, services and policies. Thus, Public Health Ontario’s role is chiefly in disease surveillance, disease prevention and outbreak preparedness, as opposed to clinical treatment.

In accordance with the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*, the legislation that created Public Health Ontario, the agency’s mandate is to:

- enhance the protection and promotion of the health of Ontarians;
- contribute to efforts to reduce health inequities by providing scientific and technical advice and support to those working across health-related

sectors to protect and improve the health of Ontarians; and

- carry out and support activities such as population health assessment, public health research, surveillance, epidemiology, planning and evaluation.

The agency’s primary clients are the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health as well as various divisions within the Ministry, Ontario’s 34 public health units, health system providers and health system partners. The Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario is responsible for determining provincial public health needs, developing public health initiatives and strategies, and monitoring public health programs delivered by Ontario’s local public health units. Ontario’s 34 public health units are primarily funded by the Ministry but also receive funding from local municipalities; each is led by its own Medical Officer of Health and governed by a Board of Health—and therefore they operate independently from each other. The public health units provide programs and services to all members of their respective communities as per the Ontario Public Health Standards—the minimum requirements that public health units must adhere to in delivering programs and services—and as determined by their own Boards of Health. They are not accountable to Public Health Ontario.

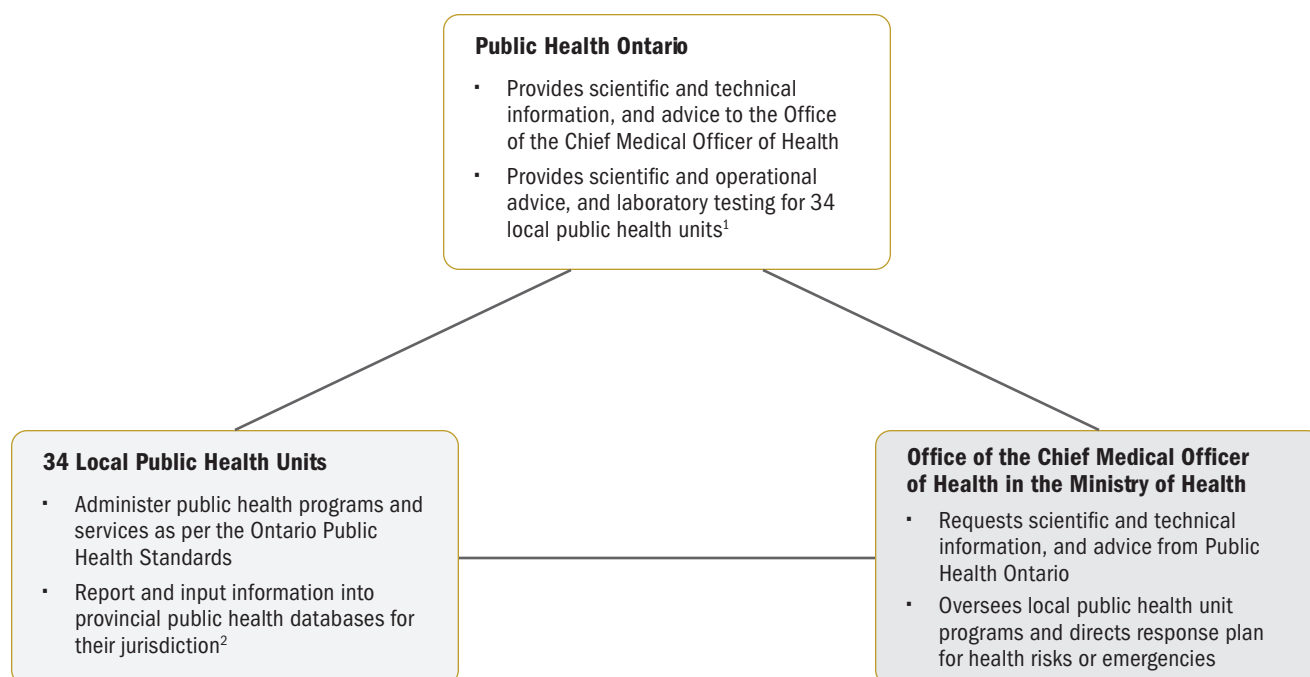
Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between Public Health Ontario and the various organizations involved in Ontario’s public health system, which, according to the Chief Medical Officer of Health, consists of about 9,000 people. Public Health Ontario has a complement of just under 870 full-time-equivalent staff as of June 2023.

2.1.1 Public Health Modernization

As part of the 2019 Ontario Budget, the Province announced in April 2019 (pre-COVID-19 pandemic) that public health would be undergoing a modernization process. This decision had the most impact on public health units, aiming to reduce their number from 35 (since reduced to 34 through amalgamation)

Figure 1: Public Health Model in Ontario

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario



1. In addition to public health units, Public Health Ontario's laboratory provides testing services to other health-care providers, for example, clinicians and community laboratories.

2. Local public health units are not accountable to Public Health Ontario.

to 10 by April 1, 2020; however, this modernization process was paused when the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020.

As part of the modernization process, the Ministry of Health launched a public consultation in November 2019, appointing a special advisor to lead the process of gathering feedback, and releasing a discussion paper in November 2019 outlining the key challenges facing public health. In this paper, Public Health Ontario is acknowledged as a key partner in the public health system, with the following themes being discussed:

- working toward improved clarity and alignment of roles and responsibilities between the Province, Public Health Ontario and local public health units;
- reducing duplication of efforts, co-ordinating and providing certain public health functions, programs or services at the provincial level, possibly by Public Health Ontario; and

- clarifying the role of Public Health Ontario in better informing and co-ordinating provincial priorities to increase consistency.

The government revised its approach to modernizing the public health system in August 2023 to include a review of the Ontario Public Health Standards, the roles and responsibilities that all three pillars of the system—the Ministry, Public Health Ontario and the local public health units—play, as well as their relationships and alignment across and beyond the broader health-care system.

2.2 Key Program Areas

Public Health Ontario's operations consist of five principal public health program areas: Laboratory Science and Operations; Health Protection; Environmental and Occupational Health; Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention; and Knowledge Exchange and Informatics.

2.2.1 Laboratory Science and Operations

About 70% of the agency's resources are allocated to the operation of its laboratory. Public Health Ontario has 11 fully accredited laboratory sites across Ontario, located in Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Orillia, Ottawa, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Timmins. The agency's laboratory conducts a wide range of functions described by the Canadian Public Health Laboratory Network, including laboratory tests such as diagnostic tests and confirmatory tests, as well as complex tests that other providers, such as hospital and community laboratories, refer to it. This testing informs public health surveillance, detects threats and outbreaks, and enables preventive and therapeutic interventions for public health action and patient management in Ontario.

Public Health Ontario's laboratory serves public health units, hospital and community laboratories, long-term-care homes and other congregate settings, clinicians in private practice, and private citizens in the context of private well water testing. It performs the majority of its laboratory tests Monday to Friday for the detection and diagnosis of infectious diseases (such as tuberculosis) or antimicrobial resistance (that is, when a bacterium or fungus develops the ability to defeat the drug designed to kill it), and for specialized testing for molecular profiling of pathogens by examining the entire genetic makeup of a specimen (for example, identifying which variant of COVID-19 someone has), including genomics. Public Health Ontario's laboratory also offers after-hours support, and it has been performing COVID-19 testing daily since the summer of 2020. It was still performing this daily testing at the time of our audit.

Public Health Ontario's laboratory performed about 6.8 million tests in 2022/23; these tests include 100% of diagnostic HIV testing and over 95% of syphilis testing in the province. According to the agency, it operates one of the largest tuberculosis laboratories and one of the largest diagnostic mycology laboratories in North America. As well, the agency indicates that it is known as the provincial resource and expert for laboratory testing and outbreak support for emerging

pathogens, as well as for the 10 most common infectious agents causing the greatest burden of disease in Ontario. These agents include *C. difficile*, *E. coli*, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, human papillomavirus, influenza, rhinovirus, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. The laboratory also carries out all testing relating to pathogens found in food, water or the environment to assist in their investigations, and is able to diagnose pathogens requiring a high level of biosecurity and safety measures, such as tuberculosis and anthrax.

Public Health Ontario's laboratory undergoes accreditation by Accreditation Canada and the Canadian Association for Laboratory Accreditation Inc. to ensure that processes in accordance with the International Organization for Standards and requirements under environmental laws such as the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002* are in place. As of June 2023, all 11 public health laboratory sites have met these standards and requirements, including those designed to help mitigate future occurrences similar to the Walkerton *E. coli* outbreak in 2000.

Figure 2 shows that test volumes at public health laboratory sites increased from about 6.3 million in 2018/19 to 7.7 million in 2021/22, primarily due to conducting COVID-19-related laboratory tests, and then decreased to 6.8 million in 2022/23. The cost of each laboratory test generally increased between 2018/19 and 2022/23 by 36%, from about \$16.33 to \$22.15.

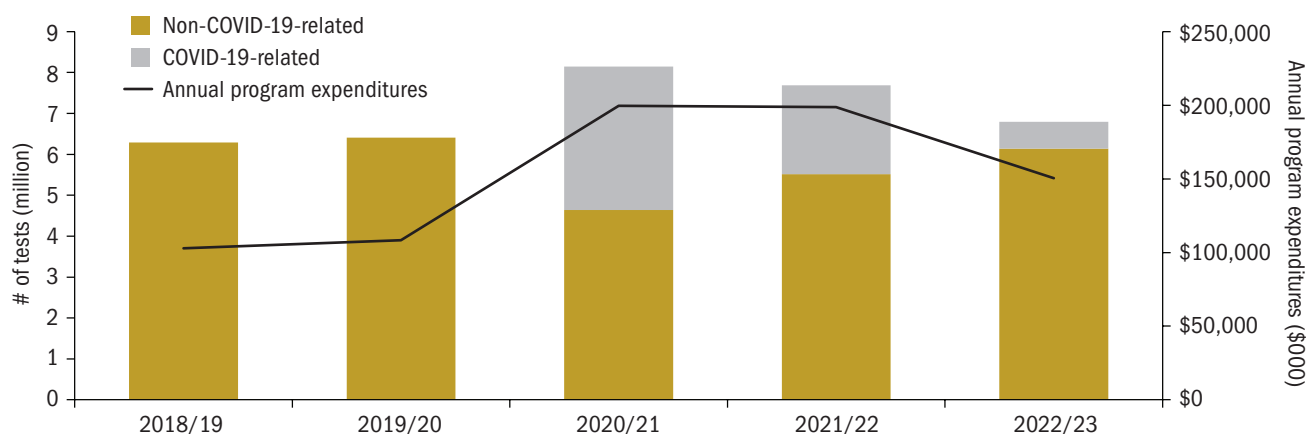
2.2.2 Health Protection

Public Health Ontario's Health Protection program provides data analysis, surveillance, evidence generation and synthesis, and consultation services to its clients. These activities are intended to better prevent communicable diseases, reduce transmission of infectious agents, and support system capacity building and professional development in public health and infection control best practices in Ontario. Expertise in this program spans:

- all diseases of public health significance (such as hepatitis A and B) as defined under the

Figure 2: Expenditures on Laboratory Services and Number of Tests Performed by Public Health Ontario, 2018/19–2022/23

Source of data: Public Health Ontario



Health Protection and Promotion Act (see **Appendix 1** for a full list of diseases of public health significance);

- surveillance and epidemiology of communicable diseases;
- infection prevention and control (IPAC) best practices and lapse investigations (that is, deviations from IPAC standard of care);
- programs and research to support epidemiology, immunization and antimicrobial stewardship (that is, promoting appropriate use of antibiotics to limit the development of antibiotic resistance); and
- emergency preparedness.

Public Health Ontario has an interactive online tool to track infectious disease trends, which provides 10 years of analyzed data on diseases of public health significance in Ontario. This helps the agency's clients and partners with surveillance, as well as informing program planning and policy. For example, as shown in **Figure 3**, the cases and rate of syphilis in Ontario from 2012 to 2021 have been steadily increasing according to Public Health Ontario's surveillance efforts; this information could be helpful to clinicians, policy-makers, and the public to raise awareness. In 2021/22—the latest year for which information is available—over 2.1 million total visits were made to Public Health Ontario's online centralized data and

analytic tools, down from about 2.9 million in 2020/21, the first year that the agency measured this metric.

2.2.3 Environmental and Occupational Health

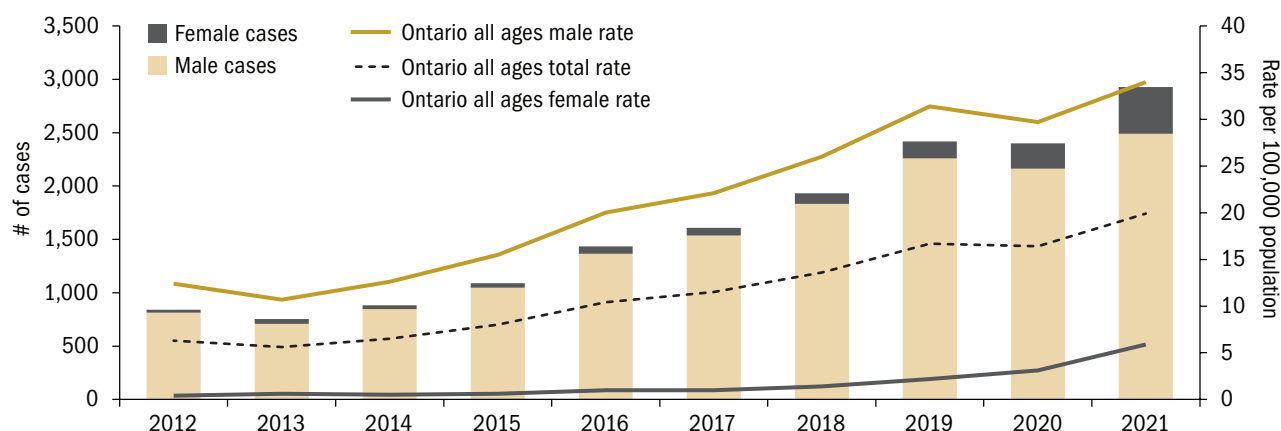
Public Health Ontario's Environmental and Occupational Health program area provides field support and helps the agency's clients and partners better understand and address evolving public health issues relating to exposures in the environment, such as indoor air quality, outdoor air pollution, water quality and food safety. This program works with and supports public health units and policy-makers to better respond to environmental threats and issues. This is done through situation-specific consultation and advice, interpretation of data, research, evidence-based reviews, case studies, access to environmental monitoring equipment, and training workshops.

2.2.4 Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention

According to the World Health Organization, health promotion entails building healthy public policy; creating supportive environments; strengthening community action; developing personal skills; and reorienting health-care services toward prevention of illness and promotion of health. Public Health

Figure 3: Infectious Syphilis Cases and Rates for All Ages and by Sex in Ontario, 2012–2021

Source of data: Public Health Ontario



Ontario's Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention program focuses on non-communicable diseases (such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes) and injuries, oral health conditions, and the modifiable risk factors that contribute to them. The program covers comprehensive tobacco control; healthy eating and physical activity; oral health; reproductive, child and youth health; healthy schools; mental health promotion; substance use (for example, opioids, alcohol, cannabis, tobacco); injury prevention; health equity; and health promotion. One of the program's activities is tracking data on substance abuse, such as opioid-related morbidity and mortality, as shown in **Figure 4**.

2.2.5 Knowledge Exchange and Informatics

Public Health Ontario's Knowledge Exchange program supports the development and dissemination of the agency's products and services, including its external website. The program delivers professional development, including special events and learning exchanges, and the annual Ontario Public Health Convention; supports medical resident and student placements at Public Health Ontario and in public health units; provides training and education programs; and delivers library services, knowledge mobilization and

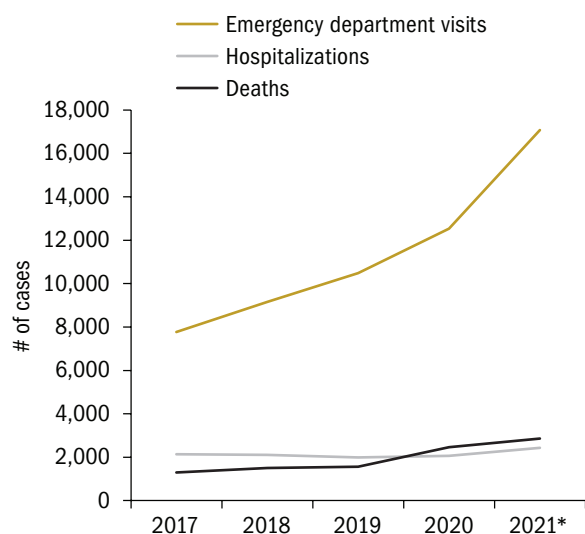
evaluation supports to its own staff, as well as to the overall public health sector. In 2021/22—the latest year for which information is available—this program area facilitated 70 professional development sessions to external clients and stakeholders.

This program also includes the Locally Driven Collaborative Projects (LDCP) program, which brings together public health units, along with academic and community partners, to collaboratively design and implement applied research and program evaluation projects on important public health issues of shared interest, and build new partnerships among participants. Examples of LDCP in prior years include a project to help public health units plan programs around substance abuse and harm reduction, and another project to identify lessons learned from the collection of sociodemographic data during the COVID-19 pandemic, as this data informs targeted improvement to address health inequities.

Informatics applies information and data science to public health practice, research and learning, enabling and bridging the use of technology and data to present critical information needed for effective public health decision-making. This team provides specialized and centralized supports for the governance, acquisition, synthesis, analysis, interpretation and presentation of data and information.

Figure 4: Emergency Department Visits, Hospitalizations and Deaths Related to Opioid Use in Ontario, 2017–2021

Source of data: Public Health Ontario



* According to Public Health Ontario, death data for 2021 should be considered as preliminary and is subject to change. Possible contributing factors to rising rates of opioid-related harm during the COVID-19 pandemic include increased stress, social isolation and mental illness, resulting in changes in drug use, and reduced accessibility of addiction, mental health and harm reduction services.

2.3 Organizational Structure and Accountability

2.3.1 Organizational Structure

Figure 5 shows Public Health Ontario's program areas and senior management. Public Health Ontario's office and main laboratory site is located in Toronto, with laboratory sites in 10 other cities across Ontario. As of August 2023, Public Health Ontario had 1,176 employees (just under 870 full-time equivalents), with 67% (792) of its employees working in laboratory sites across the province.

2.3.2 Governance and Accountability

The Agencies and Appointments Directive issued by the Management Board of Cabinet, an accountability framework for all board-governed provincial agencies, outlines the requirements of the reporting relationships between parties (see **Appendix 2** for more information). Public Health Ontario must adhere to this

accountability framework. The Chief Medical Officer of Health, a senior employee of the Ministry, also has the power to issue directives to the agency, as shown in **Figure 6**.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the agency and the Ministry outlines accountability relationships, roles and responsibilities, and expectations for the operational, administrative, financial, staffing, auditing and reporting relationships. Public Health Ontario's day-to-day operations are administered by the President and CEO, who reports to the agency Board of Directors. Public Health Ontario's Board of Directors consists of a maximum of 13 voting members; each is appointed for a three-year term by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. According to the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*, appointment of people to Public Health Ontario's Board should consider persons with skills and expertise in areas covered by Public Health Ontario or in corporate governance, and include a person with expertise in public accounting or with related financial experience, and a lay person with demonstrated interest or experience in health issues. **Figure 7** shows that the agency's Board of Directors consisted of 12 people, with one vacancy, as of June 2023.

2.3.3 Joint Liaison Committee

The Joint Liaison Committee was created by the Ministry in 2008, shortly after the agency was established, to address issues of mutual interest between the Ministry and Public Health Ontario, resolve issues, provide direction, and delegate and co-ordinate work. The Committee is co-chaired by either the Assistant Deputy Minister or the Chief Medical Officer of Health from the Ministry, as well as the Chief Executive Officer of Public Health Ontario. The Committee held its last meeting prior to 2017/18, and since then the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Chief Executive Officer of Public Health Ontario have mutually agreed to liaise informally as needed.

In April 2020, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health created the COVID-19 Public Health Measures Table, consisting of public health unit

Figure 5: Program Areas and Senior Management of Public Health Ontario, August 2023

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

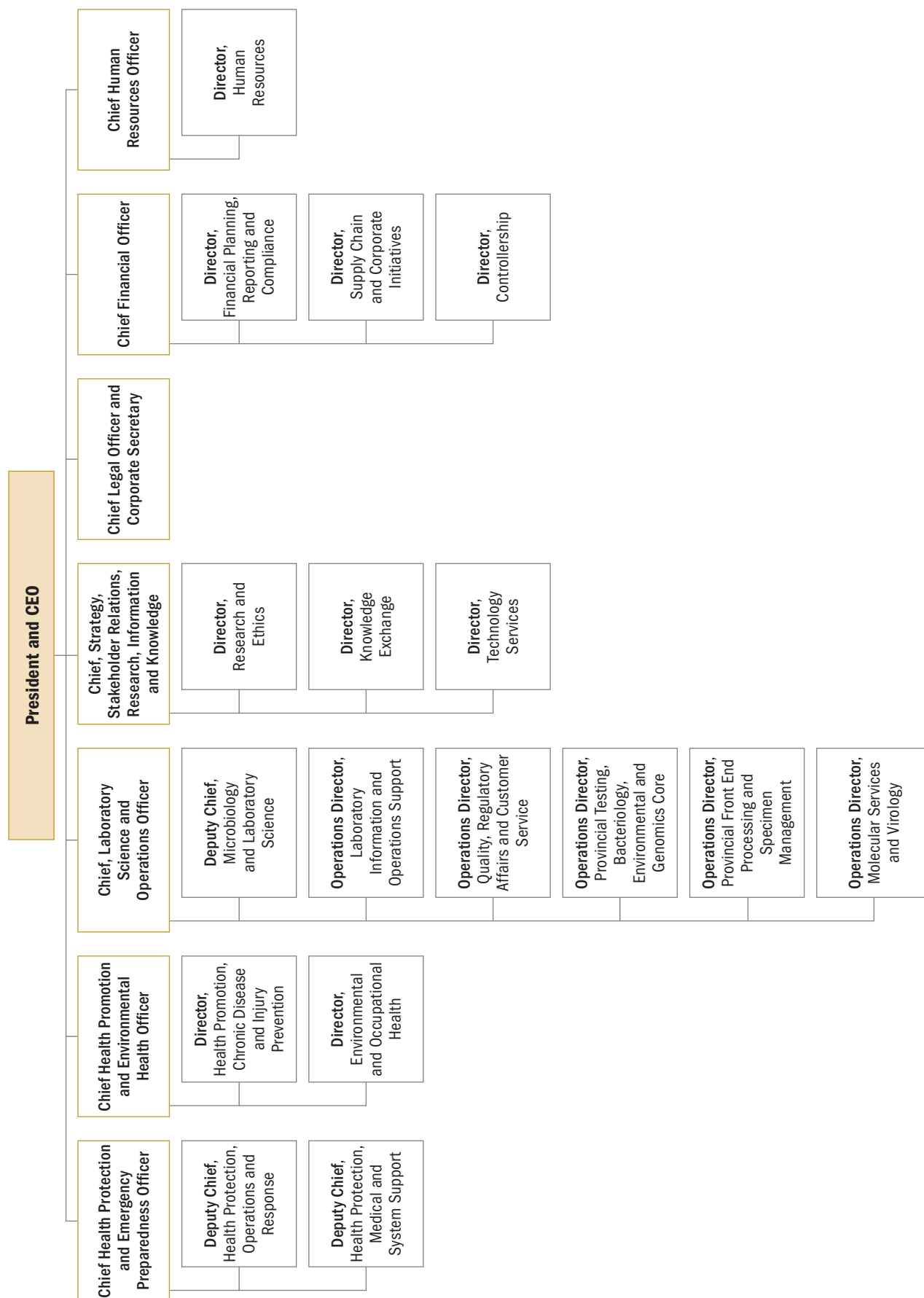
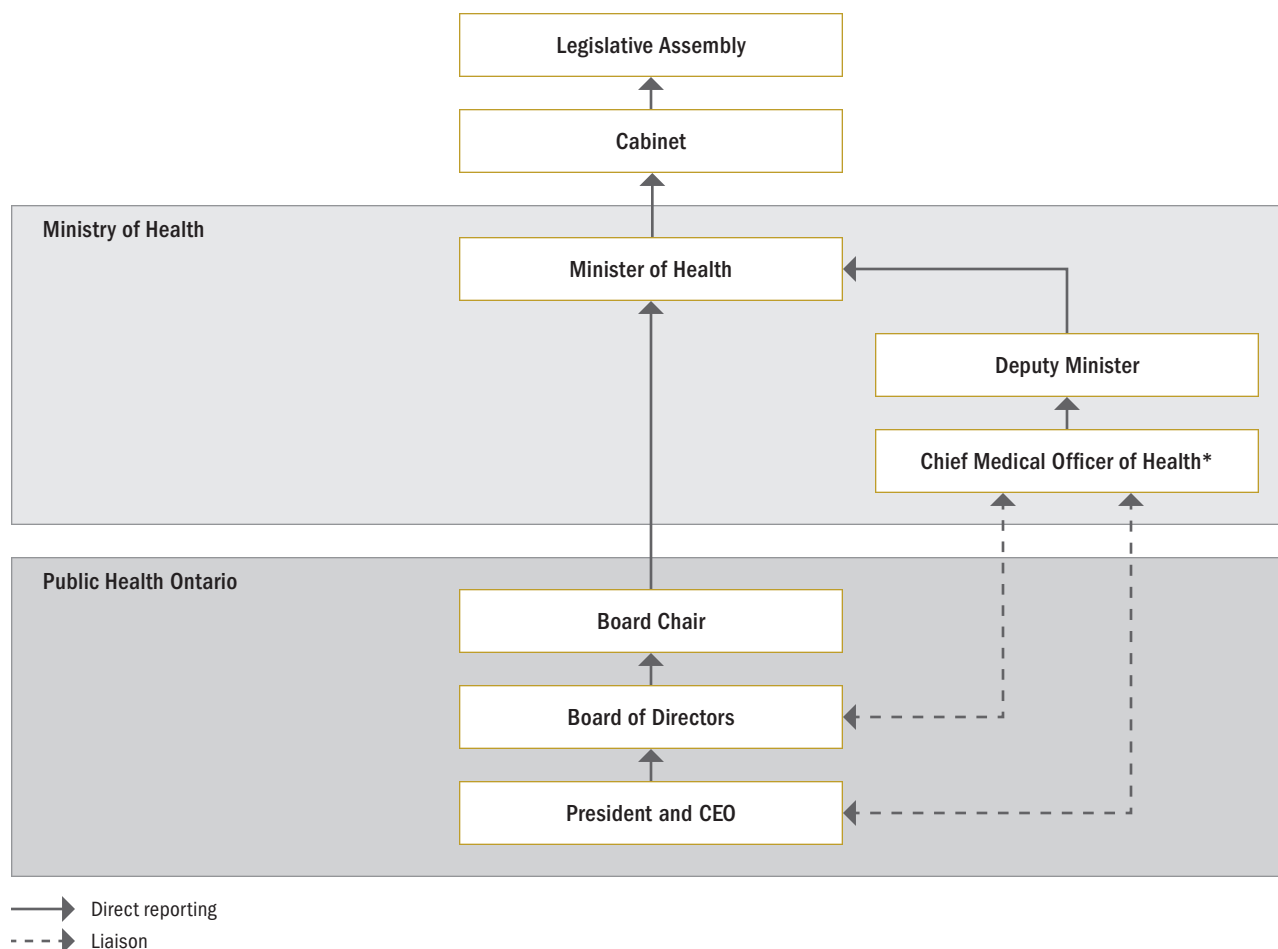


Figure 6: Accountability Framework for Public Health Ontario

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario



* The Chief Medical Officer of Health plays a liaison role between Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health, sitting as a non-voting member of the Board of Directors at Public Health Ontario, as well as a voting member on the Strategic Planning Standing Committee of the Board of Directors at Public Health Ontario to convey Ministry strategies and provincial priorities to Public Health Ontario. The Chief Medical Officer of Health also has the power to issue directives to Public Health Ontario.

representatives and Public Health Ontario, with the purpose of providing advice to the Chief Medical Officer of Health on public health measures that may be implemented to prevent or slow the transmission of COVID-19.

2.4 Financial Information

As shown in **Figure 8**, Public Health Ontario's expenditures were about \$222 million in 2022/23, an approximately 37% increase over the last five fiscal years. The increase was mainly attributable to

a temporary increase in testing volumes during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the last five years, 71% of the agency's actual expenditures related to its laboratory program, 18% related to science and public health programs, and the remaining 11% were for general administrative and amortization expenses.

Figure 9 shows funding provided to Public Health Ontario for the last five years. The Ministry is the primary funder of Public Health Ontario, providing about 94% of the agency's revenue. The agency also receives grants, mainly from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, which averaged about \$1.8 million

Figure 7: Public Health Ontario Board of Directors as of June 30, 2023

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

Name	Board Position	Current/Most Recent Role
Helen Angus	Chair	Chief Executive Officer of AMS Healthcare, former Deputy Minister of Health
Dr. Isra Levy	Vice-Chair Chair, Governance and Human Resources Standing Committee ¹	Vice-President of Medical Affairs and Innovation, Canadian Blood Services
Ian McKillop	Member Chair, Strategic Planning Standing Committee ²	Associate Professor at University of Waterloo, School of Public Health Sciences
S. Ford Ralph	Member Chair, Audit Finance and Risk Standing Committee ³	Former Vice-President of Petro-Canada
Roxanne Anderson	Member	Senior Vice-President of Business Optimization and the Chief Financial Officer of the Victorian Order of Nurses
Harpreet Bassi	Member	Executive Vice-President, Strategy and Communications, Niagara Health
Cat (Mark) Criger	Member	Indigenous Elder, Traditional Teacher and Knowledge Keeper
William MacKinnon	Member	Former Chief Executive Officer of KPMG
Theresa McKinnon	Member	Former Partner at PwC Canada, Assurance
Rob Notman	Member	Trustee and former Board Chair of the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre
Dr. Andy Smith	Member	President and Chief Executive Officer of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Professor of Surgery at the University of Toronto
David Wexler	Member	Former Chief Human Resources Officer for the Vector Institute for Artificial Intelligence, FreshBooks, Syncapse, Alias Systems and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board

1. The Governance and Human Resources Standing Committee supports the Board's commitment to and responsibility for the sound and effective governance of Public Health Ontario. This includes nominations for recommendation by the Board for appointment to the Board; appointment of Board members to committees; help with orientation and education of new directors to assist them in fulfilling their duties effectively; and support for the Board in its oversight of human resources policies and strategies.
2. The Strategic Planning Standing Committee provides reviews and advice on Public Health Ontario's strategic planning, performance measurement, quality assurance and stakeholder engagement processes, and monitors and advises it on progress against goals. The Chief Medical Officer of Health is part of this standing committee.
3. The Audit Finance and Risk Standing Committee ensures that Public Health Ontario conducts itself according to the principles of ethical financial and management behaviour and that it is efficient and effective in its use of public funds by overseeing Public Health Ontario's accounting, financial reporting, audit practices and enterprise risk management.

annually in the last five years. Ministry-provided base funding for Public Health Ontario has generally flatlined over the last 10 years, and decreased in 2019/20 just prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Ministry has increased base funding subsequent to 2020/21, it still has not restored it to pre-pandemic levels.

2.5 Other Jurisdictions

In Canada, British Columbia's BC Centre for Disease Control and Quebec's Institut national de santé publique are close comparators to Public Health Ontario. The federal government's Public Health Agency of

Figure 8: Public Health Ontario Expenditures, 2018/19–2022/23 (\$000)

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% of Total Expenditures (2018/19–2022/23)
Public health labs	102,889	108,399	199,562	198,741	150,495	71
Science and public health programs	38,802	37,757	36,597	38,537	39,843	18
General and administrative	14,007	13,148	17,024	19,098	19,102	8
Amortization of capital assets	6,547	5,464	7,428	11,655	12,539*	3
Total	162,245	164,768	260,611	268,031	221,979	100

* Increased 92% over five years due to increase in capital acquisitions starting in 2020/21 due to COVID-19.

Figure 9: Public Health Ontario Funding, 2018/19–2022/23 (\$000)

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% of Total Funding (2018/19–2022/23)
Base operations¹	152,703	156,151	250,480	252,612	205,324	94
Base funding	152,703	153,114	148,563	151,282	150,683	60²
COVID-19 one-time funding ³	n/a	3,037	101,917	101,331	54,641	34²
Amortization of deferred capital asset contributions	6,547	5,464	7,428	11,655	12,539	4
Other grants	1,781	2,207	1,377	1,867	2,003	1
Miscellaneous recoveries	1,214	946	1,326	1,897	2,113	1
Total	162,245	164,768	260,611	268,031⁴	221,979	100

1. Increased revenue from 2019/20 to 2021/22 corresponds to increased operating expenditures due to Public Health Ontario's increased services to respond to COVID-19.
2. Covers fiscal years 2020/21 to 2022/23 only, as this represents the most significant time period for COVID-19 expenses, and represents three-year base funding and COVID-19 one-time funding as a percentage of base operations expenditures.
3. Public Health Ontario recognized COVID-19 revenue in its accounting records as related expenses were incurred.
4. Numbers do not add up due to rounding.

Canada, while similar to Public Health Ontario, is not governed by a board but rather overseen by the federal Minister of Health. **Appendix 3** shows a comparison of mandates and reporting relationships among these agencies.

3.0 Audit Objective and Scope

Our audit objective was to assess whether Public Health Ontario has effective systems and procedures in place to:

- deliver its mandate as set out in the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*, which includes providing scientific and technical advice and support to identified clients, including the Ministry of Health and other relevant ministries and agencies, public health units, and health-care providers; delivering public health laboratory services; undertaking public health research; and advancing and disseminating knowledge, best practices and research, with the goal of protecting and promoting the health of the people in Ontario and reducing health inequities; and

- measure and publicly report on the quality and effectiveness of these activities.

In planning for our work, we identified the audit criteria (see **Appendix 4**) we would use to address our audit objective. These criteria were established based on a review of applicable legislation, policies and procedures, internal and external studies, previous reports from our Office, and best practices. Senior management at Public Health Ontario reviewed and agreed with the suitability of our objectives and associated criteria.

We conducted our audit between January 2023 and August 2023. We obtained written representation from Public Health Ontario management that, effective November 10, 2023, it had provided us with all the information it was aware of that could significantly affect the findings or the conclusion of this report.

At Public Health Ontario, we:

- reviewed applicable legislation and regulations as well as documents consisting mainly of financial information, contracts and agreements, policy and procedure manuals, annual business plans, annual reports, strategic plans and meeting minutes;
- interviewed senior management and program staff responsible for all program areas, selected former agency management staff, as well as the Board Chair;
- obtained and analyzed financial and operational data from Public Health Ontario systems; and
- observed laboratory operations and met with staff at four of the 11 public health laboratory sites, located in London, Orillia, Sudbury and Toronto.

At the Ministry of Health, we conducted the majority of our work at the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, where we interviewed staff and senior management, and reviewed documents consisting mainly of briefing notes, agreements, funding letters and external review reports of Public Health Ontario conducted since 2016.

We interviewed medical officers of health or their delegates from eight of the province's 34 public health units, consisting of Eastern Ontario; Grey Bruce;

Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington; Niagara; Peel; Sudbury; Timiskaming; and Toronto, to better understand local interactions with and perspectives on Public Health Ontario. We selected these public health units based on their size, geographic location and issues identified through our research. We reached out to 18 public health units to obtain more information on their courier routes for laboratory samples and specimens that would be delivered to Public Health Ontario, of which 16 responded. We selected these public health units based on factors including their geographic location and whether they used the agency's or their own couriers. We also reviewed public-facing websites for all 34 public health units to identify locally developed knowledge products.

To assess the cybersecurity risks to Public Health Ontario, we met with and obtained data from the Cyber Security Division of the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery, which provides certain services to the agency.

To gain familiarity with emerging public health issues, we attended The Ontario Public Health Convention in March 2023. This conference was organized by Public Health Ontario for public health professionals.

In addition, we researched similar organizations in British Columbia and Quebec to identify best practices for public health agencies.

We conducted our work and reported on the results of our examination in accordance with the applicable Canadian Standards on Assurance Engagements—Direct Engagements issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada. This included obtaining a reasonable level of assurance.

The Office of the Auditor General of Ontario applies Canadian Standards on Quality Management and, as a result, maintains a comprehensive system of quality management that includes documented policies and procedures with respect to compliance with rules of professional conduct, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

We have complied with the independence and other ethical requirements of the Code of Professional Conduct of the Chartered Professional Accountants of

Ontario, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour.

4.0 Detailed Audit Observations

4.1 Ministry of Health Has Not Leveraged Public Health Ontario Effectively to Achieve Its Full Intended Capacity and Potential to Improve the Health of Ontarians

4.1.1 Public Health Ontario Has Been Left Out of the Province's Decision-Making with Major Public Health Implications

Despite the mandate of Public Health Ontario to provide scientific and technical advice and support to clients working in government, public health, health care and related sectors, the agency was not consulted when the government made some of its decisions affecting public health, such as those relating to increased access to alcohol and gambling. As well, upon observing recent government decisions on increased access to alcohol and gambling, Public Health Ontario has not conducted independent research in these areas.

Increased Access to Alcohol and Gambling

The government's decision to increase access to alcohol in various settings, such as grocery stores and convenience stores, was first announced in 2015 and saw expansion in 2019 and 2023. In addition, the new legal Internet gaming market in Ontario has grown by an average of more than 50% in total wagers and gaming revenue each quarter since its launch in April 2022. According to iGaming Ontario, a total of 1.65 million player accounts were active over the course of the 2022/23 fiscal year; these players on average spent about \$70 per month.

Public Health Ontario representatives confirmed with us that government decision-makers have not consulted them on the health impacts of either of these decisions, which have implications on addictions and

mental health on a population level. We asked the Ministry of Health (Ministry) why it did not consult Public Health Ontario, and Ministry representatives explained that the Ministry of Finance made both of these decisions. It did not seek an assessment of the impacts on public health from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, which also did not conduct a health impact assessment on increased access to alcohol and gambling. The Ministry informed us that, instead, the Ministry of Finance, working with other partner ministries, engaged and consulted stakeholders, for example, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, to understand the potential impacts.

In these cases, the government did not fully leverage Public Health Ontario to provide expert advice on the potential population health impacts of policy decisions made. One of the legislated responsibilities of Public Health Ontario according to the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007* (Act) that created it, is “to inform and contribute to policy development processes across sectors of the health care system and within the Government of Ontario through advice and impact analysis of public health issues.” Our 2017 audit on Public Health: Chronic Disease Prevention highlighted the Health in All Policies approach, defined by the World Health Organization as an approach that considers how government decisions affect population health so that more accountability is placed on policy-makers. Our 2017 report recommended that the Ministry develop a process to integrate this approach into policy settings where appropriate, but this had not yet been fully implemented as of the time of this audit.

While these provincial policy changes affecting public health were occurring, Public Health Ontario did not prioritize publishing the state of the evidence in these areas. To illustrate, in relation to alcohol, a public health unit in October 2018 requested Public Health Ontario to answer a research question on the impact of increasing alcohol availability. However, instead of publishing an independently researched knowledge product that could establish Public Health Ontario's position on the state of the evidence, the agency compiled a list of existing journal articles and sent the

completed list directly to the public health unit in May 2019.

Similarly, we found that Public Health Ontario has not published any research on the health impact of problem gambling. In 2012, the agency published a knowledge product on the burden of mental illness and addictions in Ontario, but that product did not discuss problem gambling. We researched whether public health units had to independently develop knowledge products on problem gambling and found that six public health units—North Bay and Parry Sound, Ottawa, Peterborough, Sudbury, Toronto, and Windsor—had developed such research independently. Toronto Public Health explained in its report that studies have suggested an increase in problem or pathological gambling rates after gambling expansion, such as in Niagara where the rate increased from 2.2% to 4.4% one year after a casino opening. It also went on to note a consistent social impact from problem gambling, such as suicide and personal bankruptcy rates, with direct or indirect impacts on individuals and families.

We found that, unlike Public Health Ontario, other provinces have centrally developed knowledge products on problem gambling. For example, Quebec has made available centrally developed resources and knowledge products on the population health impact of problem gambling. Specifically, the Institut national de santé publique du Québec has on its website an interactive map that allows the public to quantify and visualize exposure and vulnerability to gambling in Quebec, and to support development of preventive initiatives and interventions to address these issues. Similarly, we found that British Columbia's Centre for Disease Control had included problem gambling on its website on substance use, indicating that a report was forthcoming.

Decisions Made During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Public Health Ontario was also not consistently consulted by the Province to provide scientific and technical advice in certain key decisions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Act, one of the roles of Public Health Ontario is to provide scientific and technical advice, and operational support, to any person or entity in an emergency or outbreak situation that has health implications, as directed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Our 2020 audit on COVID-19 preparedness and management, Outbreak Planning and Decision-Making, noted that Public Health Ontario played a diminished role in the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the agency being created in response to the SARS outbreak in 2003. Even when Public Health Ontario provided advice, such as on the recommended indicators and threshold triggers for lockdown, the Ministry of Health either did not fully follow this advice, or implemented the agency's advice much later than suggested.

Similarly, our 2022 audit on the COVID-19 Vaccination Program noted that Public Health Ontario was not represented on the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force, where it felt that it could have contributed more scientific or technical expertise and support on vaccine distribution decisions.

4.1.2 Public Health Ontario's Role Has Continued to Diminish in the Public Health System, with Increased Reliance on One-Time Annual Funding

Public Health Ontario Could Not Fully Deliver Its Mandate, Citing Capacity and Funding Constraints

As noted in **Section 2.4**, in 2019/20, the Ministry reduced Public Health Ontario's base funding, replacing it with one-time annual funding. This was done because the Ministry at that time had assumed that its laboratory modernization plan would be implemented and that Public Health Ontario would be consolidated as part of Ontario Health. One-time funding makes it challenging for Public Health Ontario to plan for activities, as such funding is susceptible to being withdrawn. While the Ministry has increased base funding since 2020/21, it has still not restored it to pre-pandemic levels.

We found that, while the Ministry reduced Public Health Ontario's base funding assuming implementation of the laboratory modernization plan, the Ministry has not yet implemented this plan. We discuss this plan in greater detail in **Section 4.2.1**.

The Ministry also eventually did not consolidate Public Health Ontario into Ontario Health, as it had assumed it would. The government announced in 2019 that it would consolidate multiple health-care agencies and organizations, including Cancer Care Ontario, Trillium Gift of Life Network and all 14 Local Health Integrated Networks, within a single agency, known as Ontario Health. Ontario Health is responsible for planning and funding the health-care system, primarily in clinical settings, and ensuring health service providers have the tools and information to deliver quality care.

Despite both of these assumptions resulting in reduced base funding for Public Health Ontario, the Ministry has still not restored the agency's base funding to pre-pandemic levels, even though neither assumption was realized.

Our 2020 audit on COVID-19 preparedness and management, Outbreak Planning and Decision-Making, noted that, due to resource constraints, Ontario Health performed some tasks that were outlined in the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic as the responsibility of Public Health Ontario. These included co-ordinating laboratory testing for COVID-19 and analyzing provincial surveillance data.

Public Health Ontario explained to us that its budget has been flatlined for over 10 years, and has repeatedly raised this concern in its annual business plan, which it has submitted to the Ministry. While the Ministry provided Public Health Ontario with one-time COVID-19 funding between 2019/20 and 2022/23, this was strictly for use in the laboratory for COVID-19 testing, and little was added to fund the rest of the agency's mandate to support its growth, such as in environmental health, health promotion, and chronic disease and injury prevention.

As explained in **Section 2.3.2**, the relationship between Public Health Ontario and the Ministry is governed by provincial legislation and directives, but also

by a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that has not been updated since 2015. The Ministry and Public Health Ontario have continued to affirm the existing MOU since 2015 when new Board chairs and ministers have taken office. They informed us at the time of our audit that they were working on refreshing the MOU, with expected completion by the end of 2023.

Lack of Consistent Funding Puts the Continuation of Advisory Committee for Public Health Emergencies at Risk

In July 2020, the Province created the COVID-19 Science Advisory Table to provide emerging evidence and advice to the Ministry of Health to inform Ontario's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of the impetus for this Table was that Public Health Ontario could not fully support the Province in providing synthesized evidence relating to the COVID-19 pandemic due to capacity constraints. The Table was external to Public Health Ontario, though one of the then vice-presidents of the agency was a co-chair. In July 2022, following direction from the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario became the permanent home of this Table. In September 2022, Public Health Ontario, building on the work of the Table, announced the establishment of the Ontario Public Health Emergencies Science Advisory Committee, an external advisory committee whose mandate is to enhance provincial capacity to respond to public health emergencies with the best available evidence.

The Ministry provided one-time funding of \$1.2 million in 2022/23 to the agency to establish and oversee this committee, but did not continue this funding in 2023/24. Public Health Ontario informed us that, as a result of the Ministry no longer providing funding, it was exploring options to scale back or dismantle the operations of this committee.

RECOMMENDATION 1

To enhance the clarity, relevance and value of Public Health Ontario's role in Ontario's public health system, we recommend that Public Health Ontario work with the Ministry of Health (Ministry) to:

- develop and implement a process to include Public Health Ontario's review of evidence when developing provincial policy decisions that impact public health; and
- clarify the agency's roles and responsibilities in the memorandum of understanding between the agency and the Ministry, especially with respect to Public Health Ontario's role in relation to Ontario Health's role.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation, and will work with the Ministry of Health to enhance and clarify our role within the public health system. While there are existing mechanisms in place for the Ministry to request support and advice from Public Health Ontario as needed, we recognize that there may be opportunity for improvement by formalizing a process specific to supporting provincial policy decisions. We also recognize the importance of clarifying the agency's roles and responsibilities in the memorandum of understanding between Public Health Ontario and the Ministry, which, as noted in the report, is currently in the process of being refreshed.

RECOMMENDATION 2

To ensure that Public Health Ontario has sustainable resources required to deliver on the agency's mandate effectively, we recommend that Public Health Ontario work with the Ministry of Health to develop a business case that addresses reallocation of one-time annual funding to base funding.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation to work with the Ministry of Health to reallocate its one-time annual funding to base funding for the agency.

4.1.3 Lack of Information Sharing on Priority Areas of Public Health Units Limits Public Health Ontario's Ability to Centralize and Co-ordinate Work

Public Health Ontario obtains input from the Ministry and public health units, often through regular meetings, to inform its work. However, it does not have established information-sharing processes on what Ontario's 34 public health units plan to do in terms of their program priorities and what research they would require that is best done centrally. Public health units report planned activities to the Ministry on an annual basis, but the Ministry does not share this information with Public Health Ontario. As a result, we found instances of fragmented responses to key public health issues and duplication of effort.

According to the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*, the agency is tasked with the responsibility to "undertake, promote and coordinate public health research in cooperation with academic and research experts as well as the community." About half of the requests made to Public Health Ontario between 2018/19 and 2022/23 to conduct consultations, answer scientific questions and deliver presentations came from public health units, and the number of these requests ranged from 413 to 1,023 requests per year. Despite this, Public Health Ontario does not receive important summarized information on public health units' planned program activities for the upcoming year so as to proactively prepare and direct its own efforts.

In contrast, every year, the Ministry of Health requires all 34 public health units to submit an annual service plan that outlines how each public health unit plans on satisfying the Ontario Public Health Standards, which we explain in **Section 2.1**. This includes planned activities, such as seasonal flu clinics, and the vaccine clinics in schools that public health units deliver as part of their programs. However, as the Ministry does not share the priorities in these annual service plans with Public Health Ontario, the agency

cannot synthesize information from these annual service plans to effectively identify areas where it can provide the most value across all public health units, such as co-ordinating research efforts and developing knowledge products, including evidence briefs and literature reviews. One of the purposes of these is to give users synthesized and easy-to-understand evidence to help them design programs and support advancing public health policy, knowledge and best practices in Ontario.

We found that public health units had duplicated efforts in producing resources on public health topics. For example, as noted in **Section 4.1.1**, six public health units individually developed resource materials on problem gambling, with Public Health Ontario not having published any such materials centrally. Similarly, between 2016 and 2020, eight public health units individually developed local resources on mental health and made these resources public. While five of these public health units referenced Public Health Ontario materials for either data or publications, the remaining three did not reference the agency at all. Public Health Ontario last conducted a full literature review on the burden of mental health problems and addictions in 2012, over 10 years ago.

With respect to the agency-developed resource on mental health from 2012, we further found that Public Health Ontario's research did not cover some important areas that public health units needed and therefore had to produce on their own. This led to public health units duplicating efforts amongst themselves, a missed opportunity to have Public Health Ontario prepare one central report covering all these common topics. Specifically, public health units individually compiled data on the use of mental health services, suicide rates, emergency department visits, and community belongingness in the context of their own regions, while comparing these to the provincial scale. Public Health Ontario's knowledge products on mental health did not discuss any of these topics for public health units to reference and adapt to their communities.

A successful example of this type of centralization has been seen in the topic of alcohol consumption. Seven public health units created knowledge products

on low-risk alcohol consumption guidelines, and six out of the seven referenced the agency for either data or publications. In this instance, the majority of data references were taken from Public Health Ontario's snapshot of self-reported rates of exceeding the low-risk consumption guidelines, where individual public health units pulled the centralized data and informational pieces for use in their local context.

Nevertheless, Public Health Ontario has demonstrated the ability to partner with public health units and other stakeholders to produce knowledge products:

- In 2013, one year after its literature review on mental health, Public Health Ontario released a report in partnership with Toronto Public Health and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, which discussed how Ontario public health units were addressing child and youth mental health.
- Since 2012, Public Health Ontario has partnered with four public health units to become hub libraries, which provide library services to 22, or 65%, of the province's 34 public health units. Public health units may use the services of a hub library to promote knowledge exchange, which may be used for a variety of purposes, including to search for peer-reviewed journal articles and research done on a topic that a public health unit would want to build local resources on.

Agency representatives informed us that, as part of their strategic planning consultations in 2023, they heard feedback from some public health units that there is an interest in Public Health Ontario developing more centralized and shared services to avoid overlap and duplication of effort. Such services may include a repository of resources on topics of mutual interest. They added that the agency would be considering its role in this. In the meantime, librarians performing the search through this partnership are encouraged to check to see if any other librarians have done a similar search already. Neither Public Health Ontario nor the partnered libraries receive copies of completed health unit knowledge products, limiting the potential for information sharing and reduction of duplication of efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 3

To improve the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of generating public health research in Ontario, we recommend that Public Health Ontario work with the Ministry of Health and public health units to:

- evaluate the feasibility of a formal process to centralize public health research across all three pillars of the public health system in Ontario; and
- if the current process is kept, create a searchable research repository consisting of all public health journal articles and research products prepared by Public Health Ontario as well as individual public health units and share access to this repository with all public health units.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation, and recognizes that there are opportunities to gain efficiencies through centralized public health research activities. While Public Health Ontario already routinely produces knowledge products, including scientific reports and research publications, on a variety of public health topics, we will engage with the Ministry of Health and public health units to evaluate the feasibility of further centralization. With respect to the potential creation of a central research repository, Public Health Ontario will also explore this idea with the Ministry and our public health unit clients to determine if this would be a valuable resource to support their work.

4.1.4 Multiple Recommendations of the Agency's 2016 Mandate Review Still Not Implemented

In 2016, the Ministry commissioned a review of Public Health Ontario's mandate, as is required for board-governed agencies every six years under the Agencies and Appointments Directive (Directive), described in

Section 2.3.2. However, we found that the Ministry never shared the final report of this mandate review with Public Health Ontario, despite some of the recommendations being directed to the agency; many of the recommendations are still outstanding seven years later. When we asked the Ministry why it has withheld the final report, it informed us that it is common practice to not share final mandate review reports with provincial agencies. The Ministry noted that the recommendations in the final report directed toward Public Health Ontario were shared through other mechanisms and processes, including through the issuing of mandate letters. However, this did not give Public Health Ontario an opportunity to provide input into the mandate review process or address specific recommendations from this review.

The mandate review noted areas for improvement that spanned different areas including revising Public Health Ontario's mandate and refining the agency's activities and operations. Notably, the review recommended the following, which remain outstanding more than seven years later:

- the Ministry to update the MOU to incorporate the respective roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of Public Health Ontario with Ministry communications with the public;
- the Ministry to decide whether or not to amend the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007* or develop a new regulation to clarify how the agency's services will be directed; and
- Public Health Ontario and the Ministry to confirm alignment of the agency's functions for supporting Ministry priorities and programs for health promotion and reducing health inequities.

Furthermore, as per the Directive, Public Health Ontario should have undergone another mandate review in 2022. However, the Ministry indicated to us that this was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with no expected date for completion.

Mandate Letters Either Provided Late or Not Provided at All to Public Health Ontario, Contrary to Government Directive Requirement

Every year for the last six years (2018/19–2023/24), the Ministry has not complied with the Agencies and Appointments Directive requirement to provide Public Health Ontario with a mandate letter 180 days before the start of its fiscal year. The mandate letter is issued by the Minister of Health, and lays out the focus, priorities, objectives, opportunities and challenges that the Minister has set for the agency for the coming year. The Ministry transmitted Public Health Ontario's mandate letters as late as six days before the start of the next fiscal year in 2021/22, making it difficult for the agency to set priorities for its annual business and strategic plans, and not providing sufficient time to plan activities prior to the start of the fiscal year. When we asked the Ministry why it had not complied with this requirement, the Ministry acknowledged that the timing to issue mandate letters to Public Health Ontario had not always met the 180-day requirement due to competing public health demands and priorities. The Ministry also indicated that the Chief Medical Officer of Health routinely shares Ministry priorities with Public Health Ontario through Board and committee meetings to help inform the agency's development of its annual business plan.

As well, the Ministry did not provide a mandate letter to Public Health Ontario in 2019/20 or 2020/21. The Ministry's explanation was that it was planning for public health modernization (explained in **Section 2.1.1**), and the public health system could have potentially changed.

RECOMMENDATION 4

To allow Public Health Ontario to more effectively plan its activities, we recommend that the Ministry of Health:

- share any review reports with Public Health Ontario and follow up on the implementation of any outstanding recommendation at least on an annual basis; and

- provide annual mandate letters to the agency on a timely basis in accordance with the Agencies and Appointments Directive.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry of Health agrees with this recommendation and will continue to work closely with Public Health Ontario to ensure that agency goals, objectives and strategic directions align with government's priorities and direction. This includes, but is not limited to, providing annual mandate letters to the agency in accordance with the Agencies and Appointments Directive and sharing any relevant review recommendations with Public Health Ontario and following up on the implementation on any outstanding recommendations on a timely basis.

4.2 Public Health Ontario Laboratory Not Operating Efficiently

4.2.1 Streamlining of 11 Public Health Ontario Laboratory Sites Not Yet Implemented

In addition to its main Toronto laboratory, Public Health Ontario has 10 regional laboratory sites across Ontario to provide regional coverage for public health units and hospitals. However, we found that some regional laboratory sites are unable to perform a large proportion of the tests on the samples and specimens they receive. The agency provided the Ministry with the recommendation to consolidate some of these laboratory sites, in 2017 and again in early 2023, based on factors that included test volume and productivity, stating that the consolidation can save \$6 million in its budget. Although a 2020 consultant report had reached similar conclusions, the Ministry had not approved the consolidation of these sites at the completion of our audit.

According to an internal agency document, from September 2021 to September 2022, three public health laboratory sites transferred out more than 90% of the non-COVID-19 tests they received. We expanded this analysis to include all laboratory tests, including

COVID-19, that Public Health Ontario laboratory sites received and performed from 2018/19 to 2022/23. As shown in **Figure 10**, we found that:

- regional laboratory sites were completing wide ranges of between 9% and 80% of the tests they received and transferring the remainder to other laboratory sites;
- three laboratory sites—Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury—transferred between 80% and 91% of all tests to other sites; and
- Toronto was the largest receiver of these transfers, receiving about 19 million tests from regional laboratory sites, with the London site receiving the next most tests, at over four million tests.

The three laboratory sites that transferred between 80% and 91% of the tests they received each had operating costs ranging from \$5 million to \$10 million over the last five years.

Public Health Ontario explained to us that the reasons for these transfers could include capacity issues, lack of expertise or sufficient volume to maintain competency of laboratory personnel in a specific test, lack of equipment to conduct certain tests, or

efficiencies to achieve economy of scale. For example, only one of the 11 public health laboratory sites has the equipment necessary to test for *H. pylori*, a bacterium that affects the stomach.

In 2017, Public Health Ontario proposed a joint modernization plan to update its public health laboratory, collaboratively with Ministry staff at the request of the Deputy Minister, that would have resulted in:

- gradually closing six of its 11 public health laboratory sites (Hamilton, Kingston, Orillia, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins), while maintaining coverage across the province through five geographic areas; and
- changing the types of tests offered at the Public Health Ontario laboratory that would remove 20 tests and restrict eligibility for 12 additional tests, as well as the gradual discontinuation of private drinking water testing.

According to the agency, this plan was needed to mitigate rising costs of repairs and upgrades in existing laboratory sites, and would result in a more efficient operating model to address issues such as sites needing to reroute the majority of samples and specimens they receive to other sites.

Figure 10: Number of Tests Received, Completed and Transferred Out by Public Health Ontario Laboratory Sites, 2018/19–2022/23

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

Laboratory Site	# Received ¹	# Completed	# Transferred Out	% Transferred Out
Sudbury	670,052	57,935	612,994	91
Sault Ste. Marie	251,953	87,116	223,915	89
Peterborough	839,389	192,579	668,436	80
Ottawa	3,163,981	1,578,148	2,034,978	64
Timmins	415,938	276,814	203,773	49
Hamilton	2,769,143	1,484,913	1,301,497	47
Thunder Bay	1,027,948	603,753	433,203	42
London	4,211,543	3,224,316	1,199,701	28
Kingston	1,695,958	3,240,155 ²	366,121	22
Orillia	1,044,555	1,599,189 ²	213,330	20
Toronto	19,040,243	22,785,785 ²	233,173	1

1. Refers to the laboratory location that originally logged the sample or specimen in the laboratory information system; includes those tests that hospital and community laboratories and public health units send to this location.

2. Number of laboratory tests completed is greater than number of laboratory tests received mainly due to additional tests that other regional laboratory sites transferred to these laboratory sites.

The most recent iteration of this modernization plan, presented by Public Health Ontario to the Ministry in January 2023, included the same plan to consolidate sites, but instead focused on discontinuing its testing for *H. pylori*, which is not a disease of public health significance, and again recommended the gradual discontinuation of private drinking water testing. This updated plan also showed that current test volumes per full-time-equivalent staff ranged widely between all 11 existing sites, from 775 in Timmins to 13,523 in Hamilton.

A 2020 laboratory facilities report by a private-sector consultant commissioned by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (now the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery) and Infrastructure Ontario had findings consistent with Public Health Ontario's proposed plan, and made identical recommendations with respect to Public Health Ontario laboratory sites. Our 2020 audit on COVID-19 preparedness and management, Laboratory Testing, Case Management and Contact Tracing, recommended that the Ministry of Health immediately review Public Health Ontario's laboratory modernization plan, and consult with the agency to determine and provide the level of base funding that would allow the agency to fulfill its mandate.

Despite this, at the time of our audit, the Ministry of Health was still in the process of obtaining necessary internal approvals for the plan. We asked the Ministry why the plan was not yet implemented; it informed us that in the 2019 Ontario Budget, the government committed to modernize Ontario's public health laboratory system by developing a regional strategy. However, implementation of this plan was put on hold due to the construction of the new London public health laboratory, as well as increased capacity required from all Public Health Ontario laboratory sites for COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATION 5

To more efficiently deliver public health laboratory services, we recommend that Public Health Ontario, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, update and implement a plan within 12 months to streamline public health laboratory operations.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation, and will continue to work in conjunction with the Ministry of Health to update the plan to streamline and modernize the agency's laboratory operations. Upon receipt of Ministry approval to proceed, Public Health Ontario will commence the phased implementation of the plan. We will work closely with our stakeholders throughout the implementation process to communicate changes in service delivery and minimize service disruptions.

4.2.2 Courier Services That Deliver Samples and Specimens Do Not Cover All Regions of the Province

Primary-care clinicians, hospitals and public health units are just some examples of places that send specimens (such as blood, phlegm and stool) to Public Health Ontario laboratory sites across the province for testing. Private citizens also send samples (such as well water) to these sites. Public Health Ontario co-ordinates courier services that pick up and deliver samples and specimens, most of which are sensitive to time and temperature during transit, to and from these locations as well as among its own network of 11 public health laboratory sites. For example, in the five-year period between 2018/19 and 2022/23, 21% of the tests received by public health laboratory sites were transported to other public health laboratory locations for testing.

Over the last five years, Public Health Ontario has relied on a roster of up to 18 courier companies to transport samples and specimens, and has established formal contracts with four of them. Currently, there are two contracted couriers providing the majority of these services to the agency. One company covers the Greater Toronto Area, southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario; the other company focuses on Northern Ontario. Public Health Ontario engaged the other courier companies on its roster only when needed, such as to supplement any shortfalls of the two contracted courier companies.

Public Health Ontario's spending on courier services has increased by \$1.6 million, or 99%, in the last five years. The majority of this increase is attributable to the change in market pricing for this specialized service, and the remainder is attributable to an 8% increase in overall test volumes over the same period. In 2022/23, Public Health Ontario spent about \$3.8 million on courier services for samples and specimens, up from \$1.9 million in 2018/19, as shown in **Figure 11**.

We could not determine whether Public Health Ontario's courier services fully cover all primary-care clinician offices and hospitals that send samples and specimens to the public health laboratory, because the total number of these collection sites is not readily available. We found, however, that Public Health Ontario does not provide courier services to nine, or 26%, of the 34 public health units. We surveyed these nine public health units, and another random sample of nine geographically dispersed public health units that use Public Health Ontario's contracted courier, of which seven responded. We noted the following:

- Five of the nine public health units that do not use Public Health Ontario's courier were not even aware that this service exists; these public health units therefore had to co-ordinate their

own couriers to send samples and specimens to the public health laboratory.

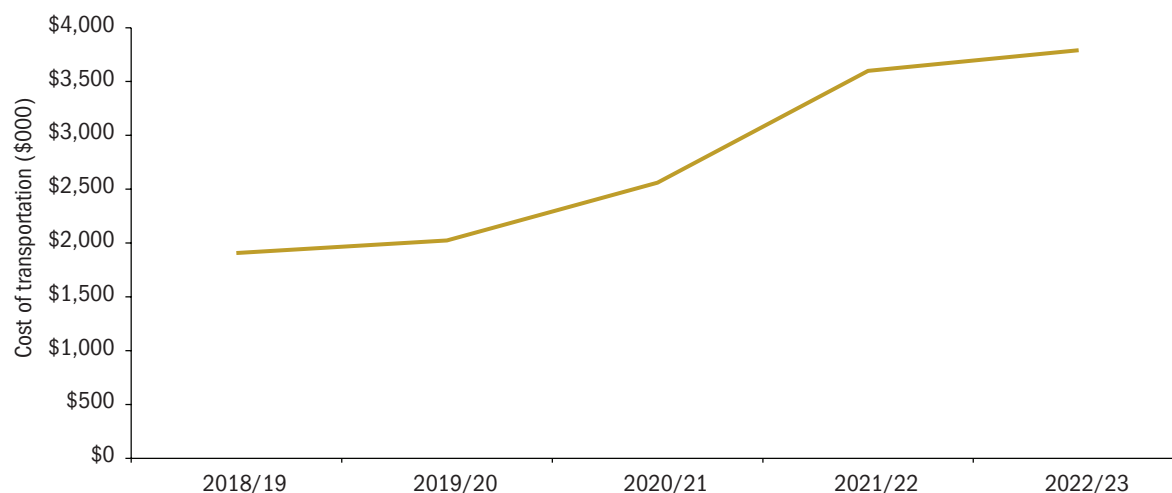
- Of the public health units that use the agency's courier, some cited challenges with the courier services including delayed, missed and/or infrequent pickups; this can sometimes result in samples and specimens being rejected by the public health laboratory as they did not arrive within the time frame required for testing. Public Health Ontario and some public health units also have had to use external couriers to cover the shortfalls of the current courier routes so that samples and specimens can be delivered on time to be suitable for testing.

RECOMMENDATION 6

To achieve better value for money for the province's use of couriers for the public health laboratory, we recommend that Public Health Ontario, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, consult with all public health units to determine whether centrally procured courier services for laboratory samples and specimens would be beneficial, and make centrally co-ordinated courier services available to all public health units.

Figure 11: Public Health Ontario Courier Expenses for Transportation of Laboratory Samples and Specimens, 2018/19-2022/23

Source of data: Public Health Ontario



PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation, and recognizes the importance of better value for money with respect to laboratory courier services across the public health sector. We will work with the Ministry of Health, public health units and other partners, including the Ontario Laboratory Medicine Program, to determine the feasibility of making centrally co-ordinated courier services available to all public health units, including a collaborative procurement approach.

4.2.3 Some Laboratory Tests for Diseases of Public Health Significance Not Offered at the Public Health Laboratory

Public Health Ontario provides surveillance of communicable diseases based on data it collects through its laboratory or obtains from other sources. It provides over 270 tests, and is often the only laboratory in Ontario to test for certain diseases, for example, HIV. Providing comprehensive laboratory tests to detect and identify diseases of public health significance in its role as the provincial public health laboratory is therefore critical to effectively protect the health of Ontarians. We compared testing menus from Public Health Ontario to those of other provincial health agencies, and found some examples of tests not done through public health laboratories for diseases of public health significance, such as certain types of testing for latent tuberculosis, and wastewater testing that can identify COVID-19 transmission in geographic areas.

Interferon Gamma Radiation Assay for Latent Tuberculosis

One of Public Health Ontario's legislated responsibilities is "to provide scientific and technical advice and support to the health care system and the Government of Ontario in order to protect and promote the health of Ontarians and reduce health inequities." Despite this, we found that the Public Health Ontario laboratory does not offer a test that is specifically beneficial for the

detection of latent tuberculosis in at-risk populations such as Indigenous communities and foreign-born populations.

Latent tuberculosis is a dormant form of tuberculosis, meaning the person does not feel sick or have symptoms, but has the potential to progress to active tuberculosis later in life due to weakened or compromised immune systems. Approximately 15% of people with latent tuberculosis progress to the active disease, which is preventable, as latent tuberculosis can be treated with antibiotics, through shared decision-making between the health-care providers and patients. Statistics from the Government of Canada showed that in 2020, there were 1,772 cases of active tuberculosis in Canada, with more than 80% of these cases found in foreign-born individuals and Indigenous people.

In Ontario, the only publicly funded test to detect latent tuberculosis is a skin test, which public health units and other health-care clinics conduct. Another testing method—interferon gamma release assay (IGRA)—involves blood testing done by laboratories. The last Ministry guidelines on tuberculosis, from 2018, stated that Ontario was assessing the use of IGRA in select communities. However, at the time of our audit, this test was still not publicly funded across Ontario. IGRA is currently available in Ontario at one children's hospital under specific eligibility, as well as selected private laboratories at a cost of around \$90 per test to the patient. Public Health Ontario's laboratory currently does not perform any laboratory tests to detect latent tuberculosis.

Public Health Ontario published a report in 2019 that looked at testing for tuberculosis infection using IGRA as compared to the conventional skin testing method. The report did not look into the estimated costs of delivering IGRA versus the skin test method, but noted the pros and cons of each method as follows:

- The conventional skin test method requires a second clinic visit 48 to 72 hours after the first, which may result in patients, especially those living in rural and northern communities, not making that follow-up visit.

- IGRA is more specific to obtain the right diagnosis but also costlier due to the need for new equipment, training and processing time.
- IGRA requires specimens to be processed within a specific window of time after collection; Public Health Ontario's laboratory does not have co-located facilities to support timely blood specimen collection and submission for assay testing, though one commercially available test can be processed up to 53 hours after specimen collection.

The agency has not more recently analyzed the full costs and benefits of IGRA versus the skin test to detect latent tuberculosis, and does not have plans to do so in the near future. Such an analysis could include the potential impact of not diagnosing and treating someone with latent tuberculosis. For instance, a recent study, using data obtained at a treatment centre in Ontario as well as two other centres in Canada, found that the median cost to treat patients with tuberculosis infection was \$804 for the most easily treatable varieties and ranged as high as \$119,014 for highly drug-resistant tuberculosis infections.

In contrast, the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control has co-ordinated with hospitals to offer IGRA for the diagnosis of latent tuberculosis. It controlled for some of the limitations of this test, such as time from sample collection to processing, by co-ordinating sample collection times with lab availability, to ensure that samples will be tested before spoiling.

Wastewater Testing

Public Health Ontario does not perform wastewater testing in Ontario, which can identify COVID-19 transmission in geographic areas and supplement other clinical data sources. Currently, wastewater testing is led by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, through its Wastewater Surveillance Initiative. Through this initiative, laboratory tests are conducted through 13 different Ontario universities, as well as the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory.

In contrast, the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control collects samples two to three times a week for testing from wastewater treatment plants in urban

regions across British Columbia, to identify respiratory pathogens such as influenza and COVID-19. At the time of our audit, the Ministry of Health informed us that it was working collaboratively with Public Health Ontario to develop a proposal for a public health model for wastewater surveillance in Ontario.

RECOMMENDATION 7

To help ensure the public health laboratory in Ontario applies current and best practices to conduct surveillance on diseases of public health significance, we recommend that Public Health Ontario, together with the Ministry of Health:

- perform a jurisdictional scan to compare public health laboratory test menus;
- conduct a cost/benefit analysis on the tests not conducted by the public health laboratory in Ontario to determine whether the alternative tests would yield more accurate and timely results; and
- develop a plan to incorporate new tests into the Ontario public health laboratory test menu.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation, and will work with the Ministry of Health to ensure that our test menu supports the evolving public health needs and ensures fiscal responsibility. We will continue our work to finalize the public health laboratory test menu for Ontario, which will be informed by a jurisdictional scan of other public health laboratory test menus in Canada and the findings of test cost/benefit analyses.

4.3 Weaknesses in Corporate Procurement Policy and Lack of Enforcement, Resulting in Poor Procurement Governance

The Ontario Public Service Procurement Directive (Directive), developed by the Management Board of Cabinet in March 2019, sets out the responsibilities of organizations throughout the procurement process. The purpose of the Directive is to ensure that goods

and services are acquired through an open, fair and transparent process, to reduce purchasing costs, and to ensure consistency in the management of procurement. Public Health Ontario's internal corporate procurement policy, originally drafted in July 2010 and last updated in November 2022, is based on this Directive.

During our audit, we reviewed details of procurement projects that were active as of May 31, 2023, and examined a sample of them. We found that Public Health Ontario did not always follow its own corporate procurement policy, which contributed to weaknesses in procurement governance and could have prevented the agency from achieving value for money. From 2018/19 to 2022/23, Public Health Ontario spent, on average, \$207 million per year in goods and services to operate its laboratory and deliver its science and public health programs.

4.3.1 Agency Staff Purchased Goods and Services from Vendors Using Purchasing Cards Rather than Procuring Them Competitively

We found that Public Health Ontario's laboratory staff were using purchasing cards (P Cards) in ways that are contrary to their intended purposes. As a result, we found instances where the agency did not acquire goods or services through an open, fair and transparent process.

According to the agency's procurement policy, P Cards are "primarily used for low value purchases" and may only be used for individual purchases valued under \$5,000 (or \$10,000 for senior staff) that are "not recurring transactions with a single vendor." The policy further clarifies that "a series of reasonably related transactions shall be considered as a single transaction for purposes of determining the required approval and authority levels." At the time of our audit, the agency had issued P Cards to 126 of its staff, 68 of whom were responsible for laboratory operations.

The corporate procurement policy further states that program areas are required to work with the procurement team "to assist in the planning and coordination of all procurement activities." However, the agency has not been enforcing this requirement. In fact, laboratory staff at Public Health Ontario can

procure goods and services on their own without having to go through the procurement team.

We found that staff from various laboratory sites at Public Health Ontario were using their P Cards to make recurring purchases of laboratory and health-care supplies from the same vendor between 2018/19 and 2022/23. Although the individual purchases were under \$5,000, the cumulative value of the recurring transactions exceeded \$25,000—the amount above which purchases must be procured competitively according to procurement policies. As shown in **Figure 12**, we found that from 2018/19 to 2022/23, Public Health Ontario staff made almost 17,000 transactions on their P Cards with 30 different vendors, for a combined purchase value of over \$11 million over five years. Over \$4 million of this amount related to purchases from two vendors. According to Public Health Ontario, the use of P Cards is required for purchases below \$5,000 in the User Guide for the Vendor of Record arrangement with the top vendor. The User Guide was prepared by the then Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (now Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery), Ontario Shared Services and Supply Chain Ontario. As a result, its staff have to follow this User Guide, resulting in recurring transactions using their P Cards. Regarding the second vendor, agency staff told us that, until recently, it accepted only P Cards as payment. Excluding the top two vendors, annual transaction values ranged from \$25,133 to \$222,283. Agency staff purchased laboratory equipment and supplies on a recurring basis from these vendors using their P Cards, when they should have instead procured these supplies and equipment competitively.

Our review of the individual transactions found that this practice, although limited to the agency's laboratory operations, was widespread across several laboratory sites. For example, in 2022/23, 35 staff across various laboratory sites cumulatively made 1,339 recurring purchases of medical laboratory and health-care supplies from a single vendor totalling over \$554,000. This is equivalent to an average of 39 recurring transactions per staff member for that year alone. According to Public Health Ontario, these recurring P Card transactions were done in accordance

Figure 12: Top 10 Vendors by Total Value of Recurring Transactions Charged to Purchasing Cards (P Cards) and Totals for All 30 Vendors, 2018/19–2022/23

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

Vendor #	# of Years with P Card Charges >\$25,000	Value of Charges (\$)		# of Charges	
		Total	Avg. per Year	Total	Avg. per Year
Top 10 Vendors					
1	5	2,789,087	557,817	6,669	1,334
2	3	1,381,694	460,565	1,349	450
3	5	1,037,100	207,420	1,955	391
4	3	666,848	222,283	882	294
5	5	622,895	124,579	1,350	270
6	5	485,805	97,161	294	59
7	5	475,601	95,120	963	193
8	4	408,235	102,059	523	131
9	4	360,486	90,121	387	97
10	5	352,095	70,419	479	96
All 30 Vendors					
1-30	1-5	11,104,934	3,286,409	16,961	4,111

with the User Guide for the agency's arrangement with this vendor. We noted that the agency's P Card guidelines state that they are used to acquire goods and services that are not required frequently. According to Public Health Ontario, it has to follow this User Guide as opposed to its own procurement policy. This practice was also not limited to a single year. As shown in **Figure 12**, recurring P Card purchases exceeded \$25,000 in all the five years we analyzed.

The agency's finance team explained that for low-dollar and low-risk routine purchases, laboratory operations used P Cards instead of going through competitive procurement in these circumstances either because they needed to acquire the goods urgently, or, in cases where a contract existed between the agency and the vendor, because the contract did not cover the goods they needed. Additionally, they used P Cards for low-dollar and low-risk routine purchases when they needed to source from an alternative vendor if there were unforeseen supply shortages with the existing vendor. The dollar value of these recurring purchases, whether taken per year or cumulatively over the five years, should have required staff to

procure the goods and services competitively, either by soliciting quotes from at least three vendors or requesting bids from vendors. In either process, the procurement would have resulted in formal contracts with the chosen vendors, stipulating deliverables, payments and performance monitoring. However, because these transactions were made through P Cards, the agency's procurement team was not involved in these procurements, even though the team is responsible for monitoring the agency's compliance with both internal and public-sector procurement policies. At the time of our audit, the finance team did not periodically review P Card use across the agency to identify recurring transactions for which central procurement might be used without the need to use P Cards.

Our review of individual P Card limits noted that six of the cards have spending limits that range from \$35,000 to \$60,000, and one card has a limit of \$200,000 specifically for urgent COVID-19 pandemic-related purchases. According to Public Health Ontario, these exceptions were granted to meet operational needs resulting from the pandemic.

4.3.2 Vendor Progress and Performance Not Measured or Monitored

We found that Public Health Ontario does not have a formal process to track vendor performance and non-compliance, and does not always evaluate whether vendors have accomplished deliverables before it makes payment. As a result, procurement staff cannot easily verify, as part of their responsibilities to manage contracts, whether the vendor's work has been completed satisfactorily and whether the vendor met agreed upon terms before making payments.

Public Health Ontario's corporate procurement policy does not outline how to periodically monitor vendor performance and how to resolve matters of poor performance or non-compliance, even though the Directive outlines that vendor performance must be managed and documented, and any performance issues must be addressed.

Nonetheless, over half of the contracts we reviewed included requirements for the vendor to submit mandatory quarterly activity reports to Public Health Ontario that reflect all activities pertaining to the provision of goods and services. We requested copies of these reports submitted to Public Health Ontario for all contracts we reviewed, but the agency could not provide these reports for any contracts in our sample.

We also found that over half of the contracts we reviewed required the creation of a Contract Management Committee with representatives from Public Health Ontario and the vendor. The contract terms require the committee to meet regularly and conduct quarterly or semi-annual reviews of the vendors' fulfillment of the deliverables. We requested minutes of committee meetings; the agency informed us that the committees, though mentioned in the contracts, were never struck or acted upon. As a result, these reviews had not been completed at the time of our audit.

The procurement team told us that they regularly met with program staff to review contracts and discuss procurement issues, and that they had not identified performance issues with any of the vendors in our sample. However, they could not provide us with supporting documentation for 35% of our sample. In all

cases where the agency provided us with documentation, the communication between procurement staff and program area staff centred around clarification about contract terms and renewal options, with no discussion of the vendor's performance.

We noted that, as of May 31, 2023, 43 vendors had between two and seven active contracts with Public Health Ontario, with one vendor accounting for \$32 million in contracts. The value of the contracts with just these 43 vendors totalled \$108 million, which comprised 78% of the total value of all active contracts at the time. The multiple contracts with certain vendors highlight the importance of having a system in place to monitor and document vendor performance across different contracts.

The consequences of not monitoring vendor performance were evident in 2022 when Public Health Ontario paid a consulting firm almost \$50,000 to conduct a survey of staff to assess burnout, and recommend policies and practices to address agency staff burnout resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. At the conclusion of the contract, the vendor recommended that Public Health Ontario develop initiatives to help staff become involved with self-help activities such as exercise and meditation. The vendor also recommended that the agency implement policies that would provide staff with sufficient time off to allow meaningful recovery from work stress. However, the agency already had these initiatives and policies in place at the time; it had provided the consultant with its existing initiatives and policies, but the consultants still made these recommendations. With proper vendor performance monitoring, this lapse would have been identified earlier, thereby preventing the redundant recommendations.

The lack of vendor performance tracking also hinders Public Health Ontario's ability to review its history with vendors to help inform its decision-making process when engaging a vendor for a new project. In our review of a sample of contracts, we noted that in 73% of cases, there was no discussion of the vendors' historical performance with the agency or evidence of reference checks to inquire about other organizations' past experience with the vendors. For example, four

of the contracts we reviewed, with a combined value of over \$32 million, were awarded to one vendor. The contracts had effective dates between March 2020 and April 2022 for terms of three to over six years. None of the documentation for any of the four contracts discussed the vendor's historical performance.

RECOMMENDATION 8

To help ensure that Public Health Ontario is using taxpayer money to procure goods and services in an open and transparent manner and is receiving value for money, we recommend that Public Health Ontario:

- review the use of purchasing cards at least on an annual basis to identify recurring transactions with vendors, and take corrective actions as necessary;
- monitor that payments to vendors are made only when goods and services have been satisfactorily delivered and within the contract ceiling price;
- evaluate vendor progress and performance in accordance with contract terms; and
- develop and implement a process to include evaluation results in the consideration of vendor selection in future projects.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation. Prior to the pandemic, we had initiated a purchasing card (P Card) project to reduce P Card usage in Laboratory Operations. The project, which was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, was restarted in April 2023 and is now expected to be completed by February 2024. Public Health Ontario also plans to augment our procurement practices to ensure that processes are in place to evaluate vendor progress and performance. We will develop and implement a risk-based vendor performance framework to support these processes.

4.4 Public Health Ontario Has No Succession Plan in Place for Specialized Management Roles

Public Health Ontario does not have a formal succession plan in place to identify when key roles may need to be filled, such as in the case of retirement. This leaves Public Health Ontario at risk of being without senior leadership and/or key specialized roles for long periods before the positions are filled, potentially affecting its ability to appropriately respond to public health risks, especially during times of emergency.

The agency employs a wide variety of specialized roles, such as medical laboratory technologists, public health physicians, epidemiologists, clinical microbiologists, scientists and more. The scientific and technical advice Public Health Ontario provides to its clients is dependent on having a skilled workforce and anticipating any changes in these highly specialized roles, so that the agency can continue to carry out its mandate without any setbacks.

The impact of not having a succession plan was felt during the COVID-19 pandemic, when between April 2020 and September 2021, Public Health Ontario lost its President and CEO, Chief Health Protection Officer, and Chief of Microbiology and Laboratory Science all in the span of 17 months. Except for the President and CEO role, which was filled temporarily by an existing executive, these positions were filled by promoting internal senior leaders at a time when Public Health Ontario was looked to for leadership. The position of President and CEO was filled in July 2022, more than two years after its temporary holder took on the role.

In its 2017/18 annual business plan, Public Health Ontario outlined a strategic direction to continue to improve employee engagement, which included piloting a succession planning process for senior leadership positions. Work on this had begun in 2019 prior to the pandemic, specifically with the laboratory, such as developing guiding documents to support the succession planning process. More recently, in its 2020/23 strategic plan, Public Health Ontario outlined a

goal to build leadership capacity, by developing and implementing a proactive approach to workforce and succession planning that enhances diversity and inclusion and improves continuity and consistency of services. At the time of our audit, Public Health Ontario had not fully realized this goal.

Public Health Ontario also does not track which senior leadership or specialized positions have had a successor identified internally, and has not set a target for when a successor should be identified before an anticipated departure. Further, the agency does not have a formal process to identify which staff, including those in senior leadership or specialized positions, are about to retire and therefore would leave a position vacant or without effective leadership. During our audit, in June 2023 the agency's new Chief of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Officer assumed the full responsibilities of the position only after a transition period that had begun with her predecessor's retirement in January 2023. The predecessor's retirement was known from May 2022, at which point a formal public recruitment began. However, this role required an experienced public health physician executive, and there was a limited pool of qualified candidates. Although the successful candidate accepted the position in March 2023, the responsibilities of the position were still being covered by agency executives for an additional three months, during which the successful candidate was transitioning to her new role.

Other jurisdictions have targeted goals in their strategic plans and annual reports for the proportion of prioritized positions they want to have a successor identified for internally. For example, Quebec's Institut national de santé publique has a stated objective to anticipate the retirement of staff members whose expertise plays a key role in the pursuit of the institute's mission, and to develop succession plans to offset the impact of such departures by focusing on the full potential of its personnel. The Quebec institute targeted 60% of its prioritized positions to have an internal successor identified in 2020/21.

RECOMMENDATION 9

To better prepare Public Health Ontario in continuing to deliver its mandate with the support of skilled staff and management, we recommend that Public Health Ontario:

- conduct an analysis to determine when senior positions and specialized roles are expected to become vacant;
- identify and develop potential talent from within the organization, or identify the need to recruit;
- develop and track key performance indicators that support succession planning; and
- develop and implement a succession plan for senior leadership and specialized roles.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation. We are currently in the process of developing a new human resources strategy, which will include a focus on succession planning for the organization and will incorporate the elements described in the recommendation.

4.5 Continuous Improvement Efforts Needed to Collect Better Data on Performance Indicators

4.5.1 Public Health Ontario's Performance Indicators Mostly Measure Output Volume Instead of Client Satisfaction or Service Quality

Public Health Ontario establishes performance indicators as well as targets in its annual business plans; however, these indicators mostly focus on quantifying the output of the agency's operational activities rather than client satisfaction and actual performance of its core activities, making it difficult for the agency to demonstrate that it has been effective in meeting the needs of its clients.

As early as 2018/19, Public Health Ontario acknowledged in its annual report that the performance of public health organizations is often difficult to assess quantitatively. The agency noted that it continued to explore new approaches to performance measurement to incorporate additional impact, value and outcome considerations. Its 2018 peer review also recommended that the current performance indicators could be reoriented to capture service quality rather than focusing largely on volume of services delivered. However, the agency has made little progress on this. It stated in its 2021/22 annual report that it did not advance this work substantively due to focusing on requirements relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the time of our audit, Public Health Ontario was tracking performance indicators that are mostly volumetric. These include the number of knowledge products published on the agency's website, the number of visits to the agency's online data and analytic tools, and the number of scientific and technical support activities and data requests completed in response to clients and stakeholders.

With respect to measuring client satisfaction, the only performance indicator where satisfaction is directly measured is the percentage of professional development sessions achieving a client/stakeholder rating of at least 3.5 out of 5. The agency noted that it also measures the quality of its core activities and services through indicators of the percentage of laboratory tests completed within the target turnaround time that it has established, and the percentage of multi-jurisdictional outbreaks of diseases of public health significance that it assesses for further investigation within one day of being notified. In our view, these are indirect measures of client satisfaction. Public Health Ontario also noted that it frequently receives client feedback; however, these results are not shared publicly.

The agency informed us that, historically, it has conducted client satisfaction surveys via third-party marketing firms on a two-year cycle, with its last survey completed in 2016. Since then, the agency has

not sought these services due to government-imposed expenditure constraints.

In contrast, the Institut national de santé publique du Québec reported on more client-focused performance indicators such as clients' satisfaction with the usefulness of the institute's scientific productions to support them in their work, and satisfaction with its support for intervention with public health departments in the event of a public health threat (for more examples of these indicators, see **Appendix 5**).

Public Health Ontario informed us that it last fully reviewed its performance indicators during the development of its 2014–19 strategic plan. At that time, the agency reframed the performance scorecard reported in its annual reports to better align with its strategic direction. While it continues to review them on an annual basis, it plans to conduct its next full review of organizational performance measurement when it develops its next strategic plan, covering 2024–29.

4.5.2 Public Health Ontario Does Not Track or Report on Performance of Several Key Functions or Programs

Public Health Ontario's suite of performance indicators do not cover all its key functions, for example, the performance of its research ethics committee, environmental and occupational health program consults, or the agency's Locally Driven Collaborative Projects, explained in **Section 2.2.5**.

Public Health Ontario has contracts with 26 public health units to perform ethics reviews for local research these health units plan and conduct. According to the World Health Organization's Tool for Benchmarking Ethics Oversight of Health-Related Research with Human Participants, among the criteria research ethics committees should select to evaluate is time from a project application's submission to its approval. Public Health Ontario confirmed with us that it had not established clear definitions for the submission date of a project application for the purposes of tracking turnaround time.

We reviewed ethics reviews conducted by Public Health Ontario's research ethics committee for public health units from 2017/18 to 2022/23 using the date of receipt or, in lieu of that, the earliest indicated date, and found that on average it completed the reviews in seven weeks, ranging from one week to 18 weeks. When asked why this was not reported as a performance indicator, the agency informed us that it was still in the process of determining an appropriate performance indicator for ethics reviews, as the time it takes to grant approval may vary due to the quality of the application, including missing information or necessary follow-up with the applicants.

We looked to other public health agencies, and found that the joint ethics review board for Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada reported on its review board turnaround time, citing an average of 42 days (six weeks) in 2021/22 from time of application submission to approval, and this was reported in its ethics review board's annual report. Tracking this metric and publicly reporting on it may allow Public Health Ontario to identify education opportunities for the agency to train public health units on best practices relating to the development of project applications, and a demonstrated record of efficiency will help as the agency works toward bringing the remaining public health units into agreements for its services.

4.5.3 Public Health Ontario Does Not Track or Report Uptake of Its Services by Public Health Issue

Between 2020/21 and 2022/23, Public Health Ontario on average received about 1,630 requests annually from all clients, including public health units, which represent about 50% of those requests. The agency internally tracks the number of requests by the responsible lead program areas that handle them, but not by public health issue. Tracking and reporting on incoming requests by public health issue, such as alcohol, cannabis, dental health, food safety and healthy eating, could help the agency better inform and advise the Ministry on the most topical issues on which public health units require assistance from Public Health Ontario throughout the year, which would in turn provide the Ministry with a more complete picture of public health events that require intervention throughout the year across all three pillars of the public health system.

As shown in **Figure 13**, between 2020/21 and 2022/23, Public Health Ontario's "health protection" was assigned as the lead program area for most of these requests, which includes communicable diseases, emergency preparedness and response. The high volume of requests in this program area likely corresponded with the COVID-19 pandemic and can

Figure 13: Lead Program Areas Where Public Health Ontario Received Requests from All Clients, 2020/21-2022/23

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

Lead Program Area	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Health Protection ¹	1,540	1,441	980
Environmental and Occupational Health	216	120	122
Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention	77	35	57
Laboratory ²	126	115	49
Other ³	11	7	14
Total	1,970	1,718	1,222

1. Includes communicable diseases, emergency preparedness and response, infection prevention and control and antimicrobial stewardship.

2. Reflects the requests made primarily by public health units and the Ministry of Health; separate from support requests to the laboratory customer support centre.

3. Includes knowledge exchange and communications, strategy stakeholder relations, and legal and privacy.

be readily linked to that public health issue. However, program areas such as “environmental and occupational health” and “health promotion, chronic disease and injury prevention” cover a wide range of potential public health issues and yield less specific information to inform the full scope of issues raised by requestors. Public Health Ontario noted that the title and description of the request can be filtered for key words. However, this is not done regularly, and can result in inconsistency.

In addition, the agency reports publicly only on total volume of outputs but does not break down the total into program areas. For example, one of its performance indicators is “responses to client and stakeholder requests,” which includes all program areas.

RECOMMENDATION 10

To increase its value and impact on public health units and other clients, we recommend that Public Health Ontario:

- conduct a jurisdictional scan of key performance indicators used by other public health agencies, focusing on those that measure client satisfaction;
- establish and collect data on key performance indicators that are focused on client satisfaction and outcomes;
- update the request tracking database to categorize requests according to public health issue, and report on this in its annual report; and
- publicly report on key performance indicators, including those that relate to client and stakeholder requests, broken down by program areas.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation. As described in the report, we intend to complete a fundamental review of organization-wide performance measurement as part of the implementation of our new Strategic Plan for 2024–29. We will use that review as an opportunity to introduce additional performance indicators that are focused on client satisfaction and outcomes, informed by a jurisdictional scan of performance indicators used by other public health agencies. We also plan to make updates to our request tracking database at the start of the next fiscal year, which will enable reporting on client request performance indicators broken down by the lead program area and public health issue.

4.6 IT Governance and Operations of Public Health Ontario

We examined Public Health Ontario’s information technology (IT) controls and processes related to user account management, cybersecurity and software management. Due to the nature of these findings and so as to minimize the risk of exposure for Public Health Ontario, we provided relevant details of our findings and recommendations directly to Public Health Ontario. Public Health Ontario agreed with the recommendations and committed to implementing them.

Appendix 1: Diseases of Public Health Significance under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

Disease	Communicable ¹	Virulent ²
Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)	✓	
Acute flaccid paralysis		
Amebiasis	✓	
Anaplasmosis		
Anthrax	✓	
Babesiosis		
Blastomycosis	✓	
Botulism	✓	
Brucellosis	✓	
<i>Campylobacter</i> enteritis	✓	
Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae infection or colonization	✓	
Chancroid	✓	
Chickenpox (varicella)	✓	
<i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> infections	✓	
Cholera	✓	✓
<i>Clostridium difficile</i> infection outbreaks in public hospitals	✓	
Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, all types	✓	
Cryptosporidiosis	✓	
Cyclosporiasis	✓	
Diphtheria	✓	✓
Diseases caused by a novel coronavirus, including severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and coronavirus disease (COVID-19)	✓	
<i>Echinococcus multilocularis</i> infection	✓	
Encephalitis, primary, viral	✓	
Encephalitis, post-infectious, vaccine-related, subacute sclerosing panencephalitis, unspecified		
Food poisoning, all causes	✓	
Gastroenteritis, outbreaks in institutions and public hospitals	✓	
Gonorrhea	✓	✓
Group A streptococcal disease, invasive	✓	
Group B streptococcal disease, neonatal		
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> disease, all types, invasive	✓	
Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome	✓	
Hemorrhagic fevers, including Ebola virus disease, Marburg virus disease, Lassa fever, and other viral causes	✓	✓
Hepatitis A, viral	✓	
Hepatitis B, viral	✓	
Hepatitis C, viral	✓	

Disease	Communicable ¹	Virulent ²
Influenza	✓	
Legionellosis	✓	
Leprosy	✓	✓
Listeriosis	✓	
Lyme disease		
Measles	✓	
Meningitis, acute, including bacterial, viral and other	✓	
Meningococcal disease, invasive	✓	
Mumps	✓	
Ophthalmia neonatorum		
Paralytic shellfish poisoning	✓	
Paratyphoid fever	✓	
Pertussis (whooping cough)	✓	
Plague	✓	✓
Pneumococcal disease, invasive	✓	
Poliomyelitis, acute	✓	
Powassan virus		
Psittacosis/ornithosis	✓	
Q fever	✓	
Rabies	✓	
Respiratory infection outbreaks in institutions and public hospitals	✓	
Rubella	✓	
Rubella, congenital syndrome	✓	
Salmonellosis	✓	
Shigellosis	✓	
Smallpox and other orthopoxviruses, including monkeypox	✓	✓
Syphilis	✓	✓
Tetanus	✓	
Trichinosis	✓	
Tuberculosis	✓	✓
Tularemia	✓	
Typhoid fever	✓	
Verotoxin-producing <i>E. coli</i> infection, including hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS)	✓	
West Nile virus illness		
Yersiniosis	✓	

1. An illness caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; can spread from the environment or from one person to another.
2. A pathogen's or microorganism's ability to cause damage to a host, such as a human.

Appendix 2: Mandatory Requirements for Board-Governed Agencies per Agencies and Appointments Directive

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

Requirement	Details
Directives	Must comply with all Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet (TB/MBC) directives whose application and scope cover board-governed agencies, unless exempted
Mandate reviews	Required once every six years
Mandate letter	Provided to the agency in time to influence business plan, no later than 180 calendar days prior to the start of the agency's next fiscal year
Business plan	- Must be submitted to Minister no later than one month before the start of the provincial agency's fiscal year - Must be Minister approved - Must be submitted to Chief Administrative Officer or executive lead three months prior to the beginning of the agency's fiscal year
Annual Report	- Must be submitted to Minister: - no later than 120 calendar days after the provincial agency's fiscal year-end, or - where the Auditor General is the auditor of record, within 90 calendar days of the provincial agency's receipt of the audited financial statement - Minister must approve within 60 calendar days of the Ministry's receipt of the report - The Ministry must table an agency's annual report in the Legislative Assembly within 30 days of Minister's approval of the report
Compliance attestation	- Chairs of board-governed agencies must send a letter to the responsible Minister, at a date set by annual instructions, confirming their agency's compliance with legislation, directives and accounting and financial policies - To support the Chair, Chief Executive Officers of provincial agencies should attest to the Chair that the provincial agency is in compliance with mandatory requirements
Public posting	- MOU, business plan and annual report must be made available to the public on a government or provincial agency website within 30 calendar days of Minister's approval of each - Agency mandate letter must be made available to the public on a government or provincial agency website at the same time as the agency's business plan - Expense information for appointees and senior executives must be posted on a government or provincial agency website
Memorandum of understanding (MOU)	- Must have a current MOU signed by the Chair and Minister - Upon a change in one of the parties, an MOU must be affirmed by all parties within six months
Risk assessment evaluation	- Ministries are required to complete risk assessment evaluations for each provincial agency - Ministries must report high risks to TB/MBC on a quarterly basis
Financial audit	Financial statements must be audited and reported based on meeting audit threshold criteria

Appendix 3: Jurisdictional Scan of Public Health Agencies in Canada

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

	Canada: Public Health Agency of Canada	British Columbia: BC Centre for Disease Control	Quebec: Institut national de santé publique du Québec
Mandate and function	• Contributes to disease and injury prevention and health promotion. • Enhances sharing of surveillance information and knowledge of disease and injury. • Provides federal leadership and accountability in managing public health events. • Strengthens intergovernmental collaboration and facilitates national approaches to public health policy and planning. • Serves as a central point for sharing public health expertise across Canada and with international partners, and for using this knowledge to inform and support Canada's public health priorities.	Provides surveillance, detection, prevention, treatment, policy development, and health promotion programming to promote and protect the health of British Columbians.	Offers expertise and support to Quebec's Ministre de la Santé and the health sector.
Governing document(s)	<i>Public Health Agency of Canada Act, 2006</i> <i>Department of Health Act, 1996</i> <i>Quarantine Act, 2005</i> <i>Human Pathogens and Toxins Act, 2009</i>	<i>Societies Act, 2015</i> Provincial Health Services Authority (Authority) Constitution and By-Laws	<i>The Act respecting Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 1998</i>
Organization type	Agency	Non-profit/Agency	Agency
Governed by Board	No	Yes—part of the Authority	Yes

	Canada: Public Health Agency of Canada	British Columbia: BC Centre for Disease Control	Quebec: Institut national de santé publique du Québec
Reporting relationship	The President is the deputy head of the agency and reports to the Minister of Health. As part of the agency, the Chief Public Health Officer provides the Minister of Health and the President of the agency with scientific public health advice.	The Vice President, Population and Public Health, is the lead for the agency and reports to the CEO of the Authority. The CEO of the Authority reports to the Authority's Board Chair. The Board Chair of the Authority is the interface between the CEO and the Minister. The Provincial Health Officer reports to the Ministry of Health and is external to the agency but works with it on disease control, health protection and population health.	All Board members, including the Président-directeur général and Chair of the Board, are appointed by the government. The Board reports to the Minister. The province's Directeur national de santé publique reports to the sous-ministre à la Santé et aux Services sociaux and is external to the agency.
Board appointment process	Governor-in-Council appointment	Appointed by the government	Appointed by the government
# of full-time- equivalent employees	4,565	444	666

Appendix 4: Audit Criteria

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

-
1. Effective governance and accountability structures are in place and operating to ensure Public Health Ontario operates cost-effectively.
-
2. Public Health Ontario's role in Ontario's public health system is clearly defined, and understood by its clients, stakeholders and the public.
-
3. Public Health Ontario has access to and collects relevant data and provides timely and objective data analyses and advice to its clients that meet their needs.
-
4. Public Health Ontario has effective processes in place to support public health units in developing programs and capacity to help deliver public health services locally, and seeks to identify opportunities for minimizing duplication of efforts in the public health system and achieving efficiencies in the laboratory system.
-
5. Public Health Ontario has resources available to fulfill its mandate and allocates and uses them efficiently and effectively.
-
6. Performance measures and targets are established, monitored and compared against actual results to ensure that the intended outcomes are achieved, and are publicly reported.
-
7. Processes are in place to identify areas of improvement and to operate more efficiently and effectively, and changes are made on a timely basis.
-

Appendix 5: Institut national de santé publique du Québec Examples of Strategic Objectives Performance Measures, 2021/22

Source of data: Institut national de santé publique du Québec

	Indicators	Target (%)
Participate in relevant legislative and governmental processes	Rate of participation in parliamentary committees and selected public consultations	80
Support public departments in their regional partnerships	Response rate to requests for support from public health departments in health impact assessment	90
Support public health actors in integrating knowledge into their practices	Client satisfaction rate on the usefulness of scientific productions to support clients in their work	95
Continuously capture the needs of regional partners	Satisfaction rate regarding support for intervention with public health departments in the event of a threat to the health of the population	90
Deliver scientific products in a timely manner for decision-makers	Rate of compliance with the deadlines set out in the charter of prioritized projects	80



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REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

HELD
May 14th, 2024

2024-105

**Moved by Councillor Trahan
Seconded by Councillor Kelly**

THAT Council for the Municipality of East Ferris supports the resolution from the Township of the Archipelago regarding requesting the Province reconsider and ultimately decide against the proposed phasing-out of free private drinking water testing services;

AND FURTHER THAT that this resolution be sent to all Ontario municipalities, Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks, Minister of Health, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, MPP Nipissing.

Carried Mayor Rochefort

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of
Resolution No. 2024-105 passed by the
Council of the Municipality of East Ferris
on the 14th day of May, 2024.



Kari Hanselman, Dipl. M.A.
Clerk



**The Corporation of The Township of The Archipelago
Council Meeting**

Agenda Number: 15.8.

Resolution Number 24-082

Title: Public Health Ontario proposes phasing out free water testing for private wells

Date: Friday, April 19, 2024

Moved by: Councillor Manners

Seconded by: Councillor MacLeod

WHEREAS the Ontario Auditor General's annual report on public health from December 2023 indicates that Public Health Ontario is proposing the phasing-out of free provincial water testing services for private drinking water; and

WHEREAS free private drinking water testing services has played a pivotal role in safeguarding public health, particularly in rural communities, including the entire Township of The Archipelago, that rely predominantly on private drinking water; and

WHEREAS the removal of free private drinking water testing could lead to a reduction in testing, potentially increasing the risk of waterborne diseases in these vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS the tragic events in Walkerton, Ontario underscored the critical importance of safe drinking water.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The Township of The Archipelago hereby requests that the Province reconsider and ultimately decide against the proposed phasing-out of free private drinking water testing services.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that this resolution be sent to all Ontario municipalities, Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks, Minister of Health, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, Graydon Smith, MPP Parry Sound-Muskoka.

Carried



Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

Value-for-Money Audit:
Public Health
Ontario



December 2023

Public Health Ontario

1.0 Summary

Public Health Ontario is an independent, board-governed agency with a broad mandate to provide scientific and technical advice and support to those working across health-related sectors to protect and improve the health of Ontarians. This includes carrying out and supporting activities such as population health assessment, public health research, surveillance, epidemiology, and planning and evaluation. Established in 2007 following the SARS outbreak in 2003, Public Health Ontario is one of the three pillars of Ontario's public health system, consisting of 34 local public health units and the Ministry of Health (Ministry), which exercises its authority in the area of public health primarily through the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Public Health Ontario supports areas such as preventing and controlling infections and the spread of communicable diseases, improving environmental health and preventing chronic diseases, and operates Ontario's public health laboratory. Public Health Ontario provided public health and testing expertise during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, in the area of vaccine safety, through its surveillance of adverse events following immunization.

The Ministry is the primary funder of Public Health Ontario. The agency spends the majority of its annual funding, which was about \$222 million in 2022/23, on operating the province's 11 public health laboratory sites. Ontarians relied on the agency's public health laboratory to perform 6.8 million tests in 2022/23 for diseases that include HIV, syphilis, tuberculosis, influenza, COVID-19 and West Nile virus. The laboratory

also carries out all required testing relating to outbreaks and investigations in Ontario, and has the capability of diagnosing pathogens requiring a high level of biosecurity and safety measures.

In early 2019, the Province announced its intention to modernize Ontario's public health system. A 2019 discussion paper to support the provincial plan outlined the key challenges facing public health. The paper noted the importance of working toward clearer and better aligned roles and responsibilities between the Province, Public Health Ontario and local public health units. In particular, it stated Public Health Ontario's potential to strengthen public health functions if these are co-ordinated or provided at the provincial level. The government revised its approach to modernizing the public health system in August 2023 to include a review of standards that govern the work of public health units, the roles and responsibilities that all three pillars of the public health system play, as well as their relationships and alignment across and beyond the broader health-care system.

Our audit found that Public Health Ontario has been unable to meet a number of its legislated responsibilities under the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*. This is partially due to a lack of direction from the Ministry to perform at its full potential. This includes a continued lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities in an evolving health-care system that saw the introduction of a new health agency, Ontario Health, that became operational in 2019. Though Public Health Ontario is responsible for providing scientific and technical advice and support to clients in the government, it was not consulted on some critical decisions concerning public health, such as the health impacts of increased access to gambling

and alcohol in recent years, and it did not address these topics independently.

We also found that lack of information sharing between the Ministry, public health units and Public Health Ontario has limited the agency's ability to centralize and co-ordinate work effectively in the area of research and evidence synthesis (a research methodology involving collecting the best available evidence on a given topic and summarizing it to inform best practice). This has resulted in duplication of efforts between provincial and local public health entities. From our work, we noted examples where multiple public health units have independently developed local resources in areas including key public health issues such as mental health and alcohol, when it would have been more cost-effective for Public Health Ontario to develop resources centrally.

Further, we found that Public Health Ontario's laboratory sites, where about 70% of its financial resources are allocated, were not operating efficiently. We found that three sites were able to perform tests on only 9% to 20% of the samples and specimens they receive, transferring the remainder of samples to other laboratory sites. Each of these three sites had base operating costs ranging from \$5 million to \$10 million over the last five years. The agency explained that transferring out laboratory tests to other sites was necessary for reasons that included lack of expertise or lack of sufficient volume to maintain competency of laboratory personnel in a specific test, lack of equipment to conduct certain tests, and efficiencies to achieve economy of scale. The agency developed a plan collaboratively with the Ministry in 2017 to modernize its laboratory operations by consolidating resources into fewer laboratory sites and discontinuing or restricting eligibility for certain tests; however, the government still had not approved the plan at the time of our audit. The Ministry stated this was due to reasons that include the COVID-19 pandemic and more recent recommendations relating to provincial laboratory optimization from an external consulting firm. We also found that the agency was not taking the lead in performing or co-ordinating testing for the surveillance of some diseases of public health significance.

These include a laboratory test to detect latent tuberculosis—a disease of public health significance that can disproportionately affect Indigenous people and newcomers to Ontario—as well as wastewater testing for the detection of COVID-19, which is currently led by another Ministry.

Other observations of this audit include:

- **Public Health Ontario is challenged by a lack of sustainable funding from the Ministry of Health.** We found that since 2019/20, Public Health Ontario has seen limited increases in base funding, and has had some of its base funding replaced by one-time annual funding. While the Ministry has increased base funding since 2020/21, it has still not restored it to pre-pandemic levels. This lack of consistent funding threatens Public Health Ontario's ability to fully deliver on its mandate, and hinders the agency's ability to continue to provide services. For example, the agency has begun to explore options to scale back or dismantle the operations of a committee designed to enhance provincial capacity to respond to public health emergencies.
- **Public Health Ontario did not adequately monitor compliance with procurement policies.** We found that Public Health Ontario has not always followed the Ontario Public Service Procurement Directive, as well as the agency's own corporate procurement policy. From 2018/19 to 2022/23, Public Health Ontario staff at various laboratory sites were using their purchasing cards to make recurring purchases of laboratory and health-care supplies from the same vendor, instead of engaging in competitive procurement as required by internal policies. The agency provided explanations for why it used purchasing cards for recurring transactions with two of the top vendors. For the remaining 28 vendors, we found that annual transaction values over this same period ranged from \$25,133 to \$222,283. We further found that Public Health Ontario does not have a formal process to track vendor performance

and non-compliance, even though the Directive requires vendor performance to be managed and documented.

- **Public Health Ontario mostly measures outputs but little in the way of client satisfaction or service quality.** The agency establishes performance indicators as well as targets in its annual business plans; however, these indicators mostly focus on quantifying the output of the agency's operational activities rather than client satisfaction and actual performance of its core activities, making it difficult for the agency to demonstrate that it has been effective in meeting the needs of its clients. We also found that the agency's performance indicators do not cover all of its key functions, for example, the performance of its research ethics committee, which provides ethics reviews to 26 of Ontario's 34 public health units, to measure the turnaround time of its reviews.
- **Public Health Ontario's information technology (IT) processes need improvement.** We examined Public Health Ontario's IT controls and processes related to user account management, cybersecurity and software management. Due to the nature of these findings and so as to minimize the risk of exposure for Public Health Ontario, we provided relevant details of our findings and recommendations directly to Public Health Ontario. Public Health Ontario agreed with the recommendations and committed to implementing them.

This report contains 10 recommendations, with 24 action items, to address our audit findings and to position Public Health Ontario for success to continue to contribute to the overall health of Ontarians as a public health agency, independent from the government.

Overall Conclusion

Our audit concluded that Public Health Ontario has delivered on some areas of its mandate as set out in the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007* (Act), but does not yet sufficiently collaborate

with the Ministry of Health and local public health units to clearly define and ascertain the agency's role in areas such as undertaking public health research, disseminating knowledge, and delivering public health laboratory services to more effectively protect and promote the health of the people in Ontario and reduce health inequities.

We also concluded that Public Health Ontario mostly measures outputs but little in the way of client satisfaction or service quality, and that the agency's suite of performance indicators does not cover all of its key functions.

OVERALL PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario thanks the Auditor General for this comprehensive value-for-money audit report.

Public Health Ontario is committed to fulfilling our mission to enhance the protection and promotion of the health of the people in Ontario and to contribute efforts toward reducing health inequities. By providing scientific and technical advice and leadership to support our clients across the public health and health systems, we enable evidence-informed public health action and decision-making.

In consideration of our role in the province, we recognize the importance of continuing to strive to improve our operations and enhance the quality of our services and products. As such, we appreciate the independent review of our organization by the Auditor General and the recommendations brought forward, all of which we have accepted and have plans to address.

When interpreting the findings of the report, it is important to note that the time frame covered by the audit includes more than three years during which Public Health Ontario was actively engaged in the COVID-19 pandemic response. Public Health Ontario, like other public health organizations, was greatly affected by the extraordinary demands of the pandemic. Due to the need to dedicate considerable resources to the pandemic, some areas of

our work did not progress as planned during this period, such as efforts to reduce purchasing card usage in the laboratory and expand our outcome-based performance measures.

As we are now in the process of returning to a “new normal” for the public health system in Ontario, Public Health Ontario is leveraging the lessons learned during the pandemic to inform the development of our next strategic plan covering the years 2024–29. The insights shared through this audit are helpful inputs that will support us in our commitment to continuous quality improvement and further enhance our leadership role within the public health system.

2.0 Background

2.1 Overview of Public Health Ontario

The Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (also known as Public Health Ontario) was established in 2007 as an independent, board-governed agency, primarily funded by the Ministry of Health (Ministry) in response to Ontario’s challenges faced during SARS, a global respiratory outbreak that affected Ontario and other parts of Canada in 2003. Public health is the organized effort of society to promote and protect the health of populations and reduce health inequities through the use of supportive programs, services and policies. Thus, Public Health Ontario’s role is chiefly in disease surveillance, disease prevention and outbreak preparedness, as opposed to clinical treatment.

In accordance with the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*, the legislation that created Public Health Ontario, the agency’s mandate is to:

- enhance the protection and promotion of the health of Ontarians;
- contribute to efforts to reduce health inequities by providing scientific and technical advice and support to those working across health-related

sectors to protect and improve the health of Ontarians; and

- carry out and support activities such as population health assessment, public health research, surveillance, epidemiology, planning and evaluation.

The agency’s primary clients are the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health as well as various divisions within the Ministry, Ontario’s 34 public health units, health system providers and health system partners. The Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario is responsible for determining provincial public health needs, developing public health initiatives and strategies, and monitoring public health programs delivered by Ontario’s local public health units. Ontario’s 34 public health units are primarily funded by the Ministry but also receive funding from local municipalities; each is led by its own Medical Officer of Health and governed by a Board of Health—and therefore they operate independently from each other. The public health units provide programs and services to all members of their respective communities as per the Ontario Public Health Standards—the minimum requirements that public health units must adhere to in delivering programs and services—and as determined by their own Boards of Health. They are not accountable to Public Health Ontario.

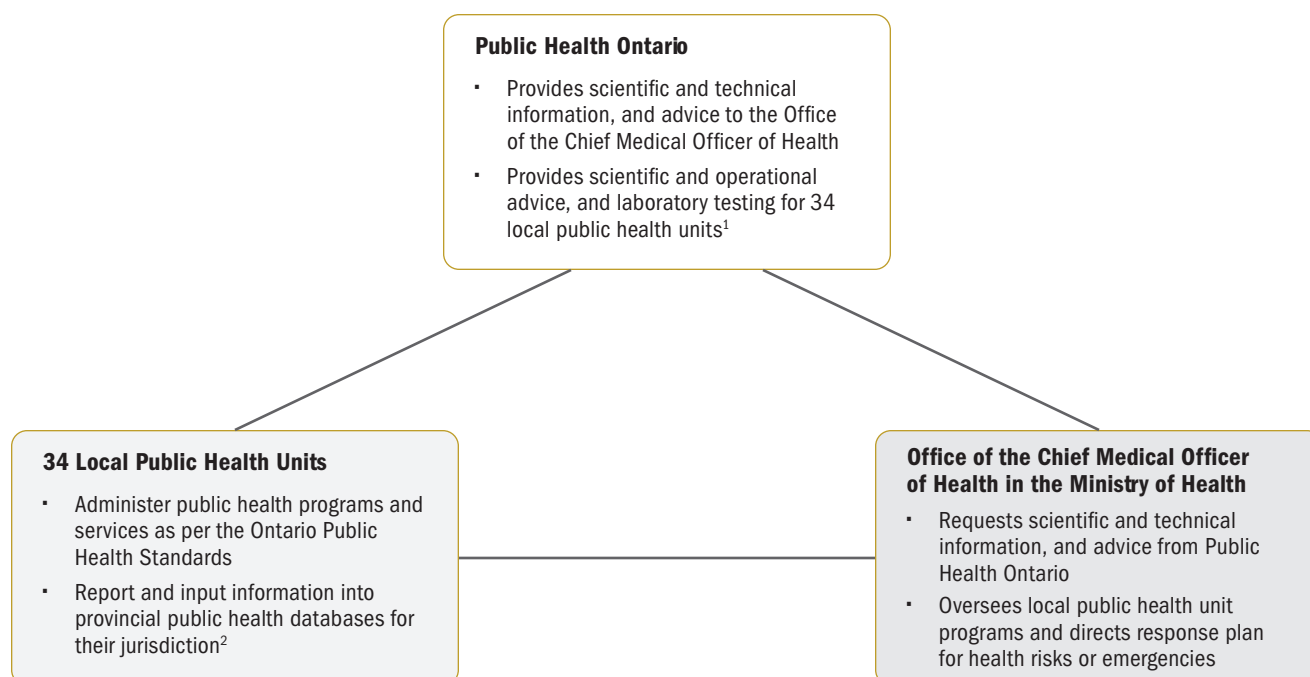
Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between Public Health Ontario and the various organizations involved in Ontario’s public health system, which, according to the Chief Medical Officer of Health, consists of about 9,000 people. Public Health Ontario has a complement of just under 870 full-time-equivalent staff as of June 2023.

2.1.1 Public Health Modernization

As part of the 2019 Ontario Budget, the Province announced in April 2019 (pre-COVID-19 pandemic) that public health would be undergoing a modernization process. This decision had the most impact on public health units, aiming to reduce their number from 35 (since reduced to 34 through amalgamation)

Figure 1: Public Health Model in Ontario

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario



1. In addition to public health units, Public Health Ontario's laboratory provides testing services to other health-care providers, for example, clinicians and community laboratories.

2. Local public health units are not accountable to Public Health Ontario.

to 10 by April 1, 2020; however, this modernization process was paused when the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020.

As part of the modernization process, the Ministry of Health launched a public consultation in November 2019, appointing a special advisor to lead the process of gathering feedback, and releasing a discussion paper in November 2019 outlining the key challenges facing public health. In this paper, Public Health Ontario is acknowledged as a key partner in the public health system, with the following themes being discussed:

- working toward improved clarity and alignment of roles and responsibilities between the Province, Public Health Ontario and local public health units;
- reducing duplication of efforts, co-ordinating and providing certain public health functions, programs or services at the provincial level, possibly by Public Health Ontario; and

- clarifying the role of Public Health Ontario in better informing and co-ordinating provincial priorities to increase consistency.

The government revised its approach to modernizing the public health system in August 2023 to include a review of the Ontario Public Health Standards, the roles and responsibilities that all three pillars of the system—the Ministry, Public Health Ontario and the local public health units—play, as well as their relationships and alignment across and beyond the broader health-care system.

2.2 Key Program Areas

Public Health Ontario's operations consist of five principal public health program areas: Laboratory Science and Operations; Health Protection; Environmental and Occupational Health; Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention; and Knowledge Exchange and Informatics.

2.2.1 Laboratory Science and Operations

About 70% of the agency's resources are allocated to the operation of its laboratory. Public Health Ontario has 11 fully accredited laboratory sites across Ontario, located in Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Orillia, Ottawa, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Timmins. The agency's laboratory conducts a wide range of functions described by the Canadian Public Health Laboratory Network, including laboratory tests such as diagnostic tests and confirmatory tests, as well as complex tests that other providers, such as hospital and community laboratories, refer to it. This testing informs public health surveillance, detects threats and outbreaks, and enables preventive and therapeutic interventions for public health action and patient management in Ontario.

Public Health Ontario's laboratory serves public health units, hospital and community laboratories, long-term-care homes and other congregate settings, clinicians in private practice, and private citizens in the context of private well water testing. It performs the majority of its laboratory tests Monday to Friday for the detection and diagnosis of infectious diseases (such as tuberculosis) or antimicrobial resistance (that is, when a bacterium or fungus develops the ability to defeat the drug designed to kill it), and for specialized testing for molecular profiling of pathogens by examining the entire genetic makeup of a specimen (for example, identifying which variant of COVID-19 someone has), including genomics. Public Health Ontario's laboratory also offers after-hours support, and it has been performing COVID-19 testing daily since the summer of 2020. It was still performing this daily testing at the time of our audit.

Public Health Ontario's laboratory performed about 6.8 million tests in 2022/23; these tests include 100% of diagnostic HIV testing and over 95% of syphilis testing in the province. According to the agency, it operates one of the largest tuberculosis laboratories and one of the largest diagnostic mycology laboratories in North America. As well, the agency indicates that it is known as the provincial resource and expert for laboratory testing and outbreak support for emerging

pathogens, as well as for the 10 most common infectious agents causing the greatest burden of disease in Ontario. These agents include *C. difficile*, *E. coli*, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, human papillomavirus, influenza, rhinovirus, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. The laboratory also carries out all testing relating to pathogens found in food, water or the environment to assist in their investigations, and is able to diagnose pathogens requiring a high level of biosecurity and safety measures, such as tuberculosis and anthrax.

Public Health Ontario's laboratory undergoes accreditation by Accreditation Canada and the Canadian Association for Laboratory Accreditation Inc. to ensure that processes in accordance with the International Organization for Standards and requirements under environmental laws such as the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002* are in place. As of June 2023, all 11 public health laboratory sites have met these standards and requirements, including those designed to help mitigate future occurrences similar to the Walkerton *E. coli* outbreak in 2000.

Figure 2 shows that test volumes at public health laboratory sites increased from about 6.3 million in 2018/19 to 7.7 million in 2021/22, primarily due to conducting COVID-19-related laboratory tests, and then decreased to 6.8 million in 2022/23. The cost of each laboratory test generally increased between 2018/19 and 2022/23 by 36%, from about \$16.33 to \$22.15.

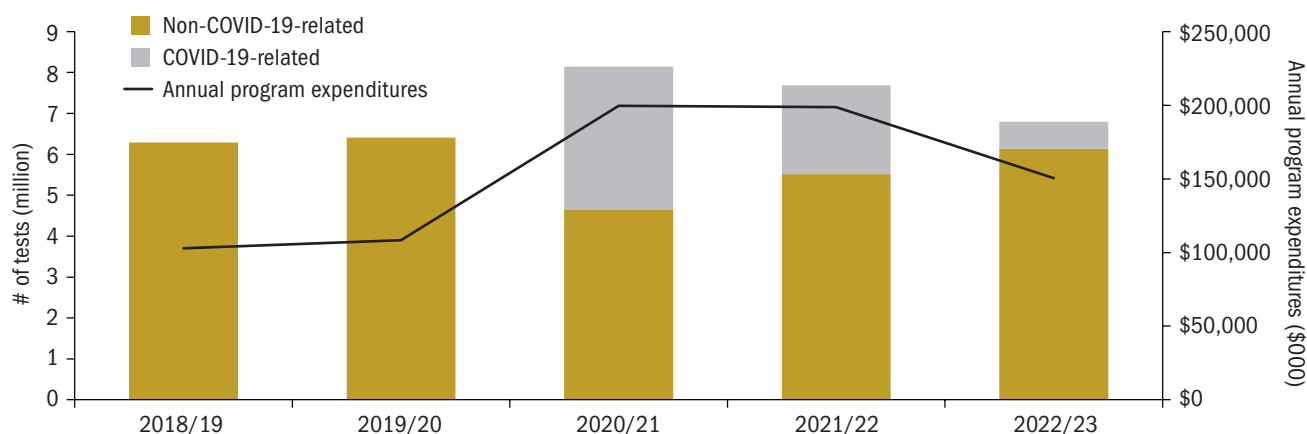
2.2.2 Health Protection

Public Health Ontario's Health Protection program provides data analysis, surveillance, evidence generation and synthesis, and consultation services to its clients. These activities are intended to better prevent communicable diseases, reduce transmission of infectious agents, and support system capacity building and professional development in public health and infection control best practices in Ontario. Expertise in this program spans:

- all diseases of public health significance (such as hepatitis A and B) as defined under the

Figure 2: Expenditures on Laboratory Services and Number of Tests Performed by Public Health Ontario, 2018/19–2022/23

Source of data: Public Health Ontario



Health Protection and Promotion Act (see **Appendix 1** for a full list of diseases of public health significance);

- surveillance and epidemiology of communicable diseases;
- infection prevention and control (IPAC) best practices and lapse investigations (that is, deviations from IPAC standard of care);
- programs and research to support epidemiology, immunization and antimicrobial stewardship (that is, promoting appropriate use of antibiotics to limit the development of antibiotic resistance); and
- emergency preparedness.

Public Health Ontario has an interactive online tool to track infectious disease trends, which provides 10 years of analyzed data on diseases of public health significance in Ontario. This helps the agency's clients and partners with surveillance, as well as informing program planning and policy. For example, as shown in **Figure 3**, the cases and rate of syphilis in Ontario from 2012 to 2021 have been steadily increasing according to Public Health Ontario's surveillance efforts; this information could be helpful to clinicians, policy-makers, and the public to raise awareness. In 2021/22—the latest year for which information is available—over 2.1 million total visits were made to Public Health Ontario's online centralized data and

analytic tools, down from about 2.9 million in 2020/21, the first year that the agency measured this metric.

2.2.3 Environmental and Occupational Health

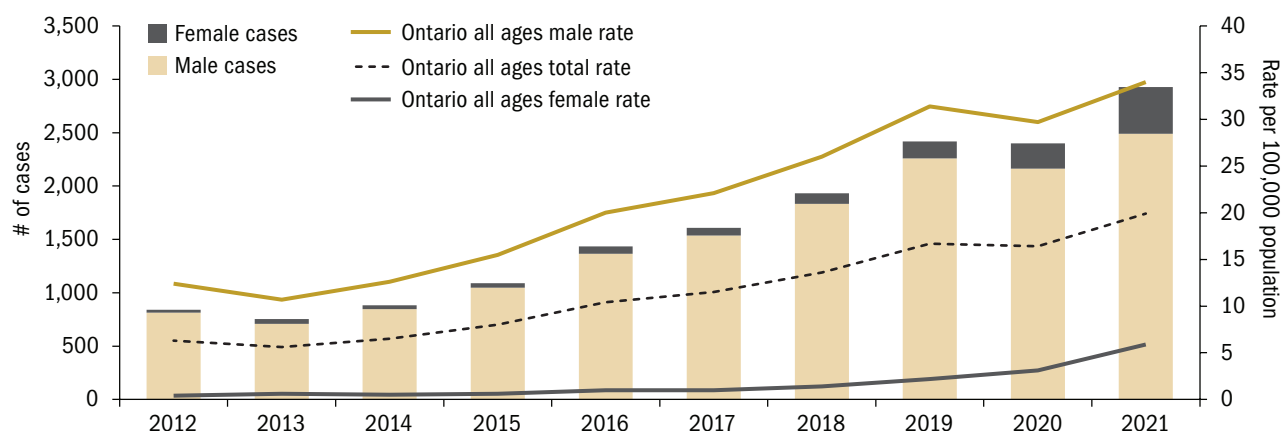
Public Health Ontario's Environmental and Occupational Health program area provides field support and helps the agency's clients and partners better understand and address evolving public health issues relating to exposures in the environment, such as indoor air quality, outdoor air pollution, water quality and food safety. This program works with and supports public health units and policy-makers to better respond to environmental threats and issues. This is done through situation-specific consultation and advice, interpretation of data, research, evidence-based reviews, case studies, access to environmental monitoring equipment, and training workshops.

2.2.4 Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention

According to the World Health Organization, health promotion entails building healthy public policy; creating supportive environments; strengthening community action; developing personal skills; and reorienting health-care services toward prevention of illness and promotion of health. Public Health

Figure 3: Infectious Syphilis Cases and Rates for All Ages and by Sex in Ontario, 2012–2021

Source of data: Public Health Ontario



Ontario's Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention program focuses on non-communicable diseases (such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes) and injuries, oral health conditions, and the modifiable risk factors that contribute to them. The program covers comprehensive tobacco control; healthy eating and physical activity; oral health; reproductive, child and youth health; healthy schools; mental health promotion; substance use (for example, opioids, alcohol, cannabis, tobacco); injury prevention; health equity; and health promotion. One of the program's activities is tracking data on substance abuse, such as opioid-related morbidity and mortality, as shown in **Figure 4**.

2.2.5 Knowledge Exchange and Informatics

Public Health Ontario's Knowledge Exchange program supports the development and dissemination of the agency's products and services, including its external website. The program delivers professional development, including special events and learning exchanges, and the annual Ontario Public Health Convention; supports medical resident and student placements at Public Health Ontario and in public health units; provides training and education programs; and delivers library services, knowledge mobilization and

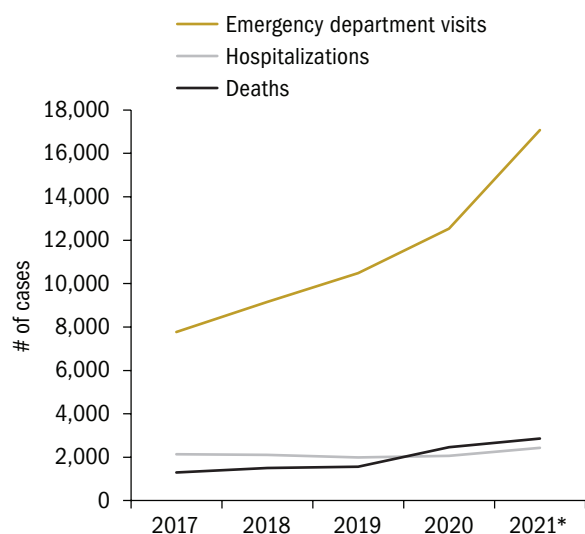
evaluation supports to its own staff, as well as to the overall public health sector. In 2021/22—the latest year for which information is available—this program area facilitated 70 professional development sessions to external clients and stakeholders.

This program also includes the Locally Driven Collaborative Projects (LDCP) program, which brings together public health units, along with academic and community partners, to collaboratively design and implement applied research and program evaluation projects on important public health issues of shared interest, and build new partnerships among participants. Examples of LDCP in prior years include a project to help public health units plan programs around substance abuse and harm reduction, and another project to identify lessons learned from the collection of sociodemographic data during the COVID-19 pandemic, as this data informs targeted improvement to address health inequities.

Informatics applies information and data science to public health practice, research and learning, enabling and bridging the use of technology and data to present critical information needed for effective public health decision-making. This team provides specialized and centralized supports for the governance, acquisition, synthesis, analysis, interpretation and presentation of data and information.

Figure 4: Emergency Department Visits, Hospitalizations and Deaths Related to Opioid Use in Ontario, 2017–2021

Source of data: Public Health Ontario



* According to Public Health Ontario, death data for 2021 should be considered as preliminary and is subject to change. Possible contributing factors to rising rates of opioid-related harm during the COVID-19 pandemic include increased stress, social isolation and mental illness, resulting in changes in drug use, and reduced accessibility of addiction, mental health and harm reduction services.

2.3 Organizational Structure and Accountability

2.3.1 Organizational Structure

Figure 5 shows Public Health Ontario's program areas and senior management. Public Health Ontario's office and main laboratory site is located in Toronto, with laboratory sites in 10 other cities across Ontario. As of August 2023, Public Health Ontario had 1,176 employees (just under 870 full-time equivalents), with 67% (792) of its employees working in laboratory sites across the province.

2.3.2 Governance and Accountability

The Agencies and Appointments Directive issued by the Management Board of Cabinet, an accountability framework for all board-governed provincial agencies, outlines the requirements of the reporting relationships between parties (see **Appendix 2** for more information). Public Health Ontario must adhere to this

accountability framework. The Chief Medical Officer of Health, a senior employee of the Ministry, also has the power to issue directives to the agency, as shown in **Figure 6**.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the agency and the Ministry outlines accountability relationships, roles and responsibilities, and expectations for the operational, administrative, financial, staffing, auditing and reporting relationships. Public Health Ontario's day-to-day operations are administered by the President and CEO, who reports to the agency Board of Directors. Public Health Ontario's Board of Directors consists of a maximum of 13 voting members; each is appointed for a three-year term by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. According to the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*, appointment of people to Public Health Ontario's Board should consider persons with skills and expertise in areas covered by Public Health Ontario or in corporate governance, and include a person with expertise in public accounting or with related financial experience, and a lay person with demonstrated interest or experience in health issues. **Figure 7** shows that the agency's Board of Directors consisted of 12 people, with one vacancy, as of June 2023.

2.3.3 Joint Liaison Committee

The Joint Liaison Committee was created by the Ministry in 2008, shortly after the agency was established, to address issues of mutual interest between the Ministry and Public Health Ontario, resolve issues, provide direction, and delegate and co-ordinate work. The Committee is co-chaired by either the Assistant Deputy Minister or the Chief Medical Officer of Health from the Ministry, as well as the Chief Executive Officer of Public Health Ontario. The Committee held its last meeting prior to 2017/18, and since then the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Chief Executive Officer of Public Health Ontario have mutually agreed to liaise informally as needed.

In April 2020, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health created the COVID-19 Public Health Measures Table, consisting of public health unit

Figure 5: Program Areas and Senior Management of Public Health Ontario, August 2023

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

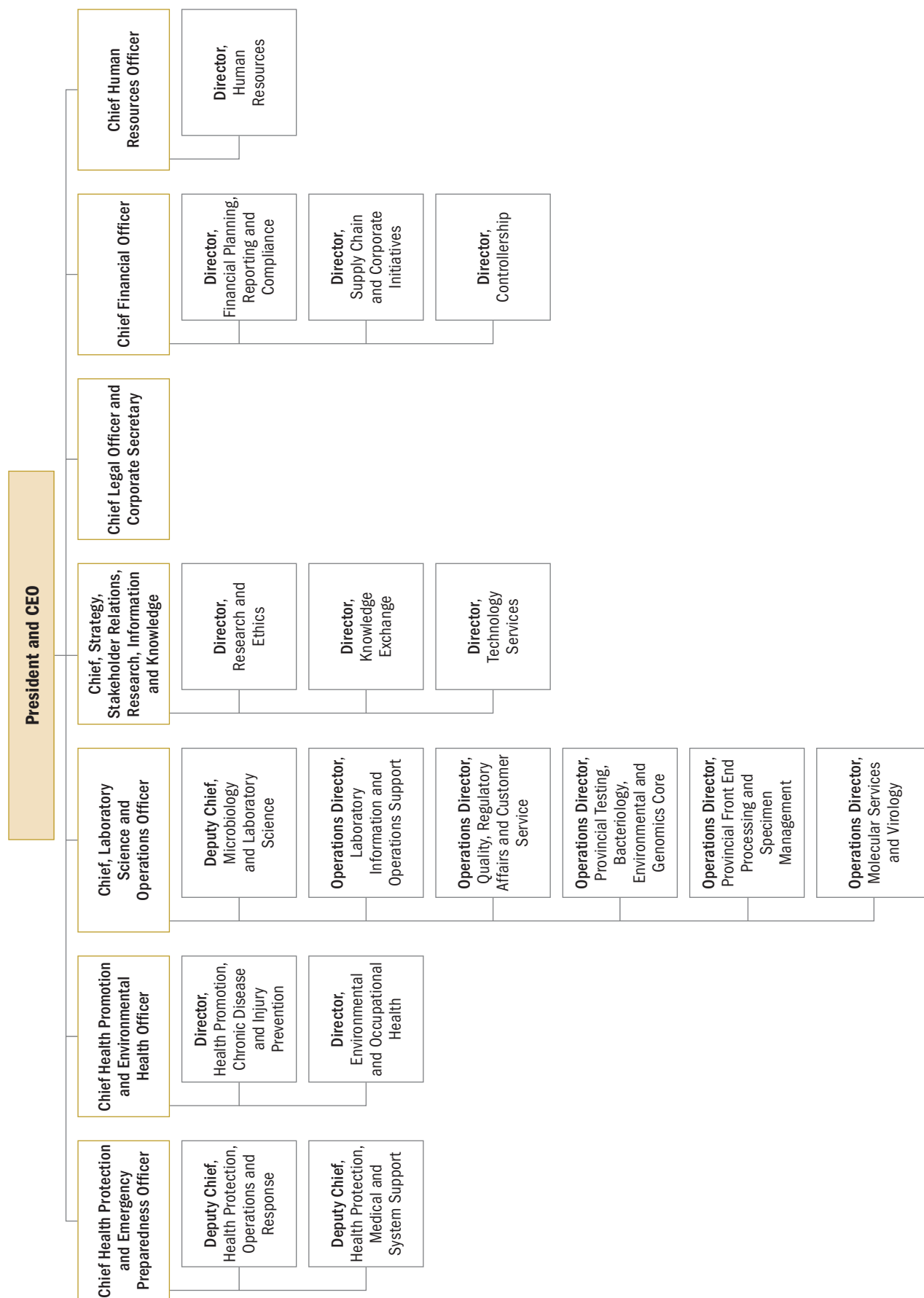
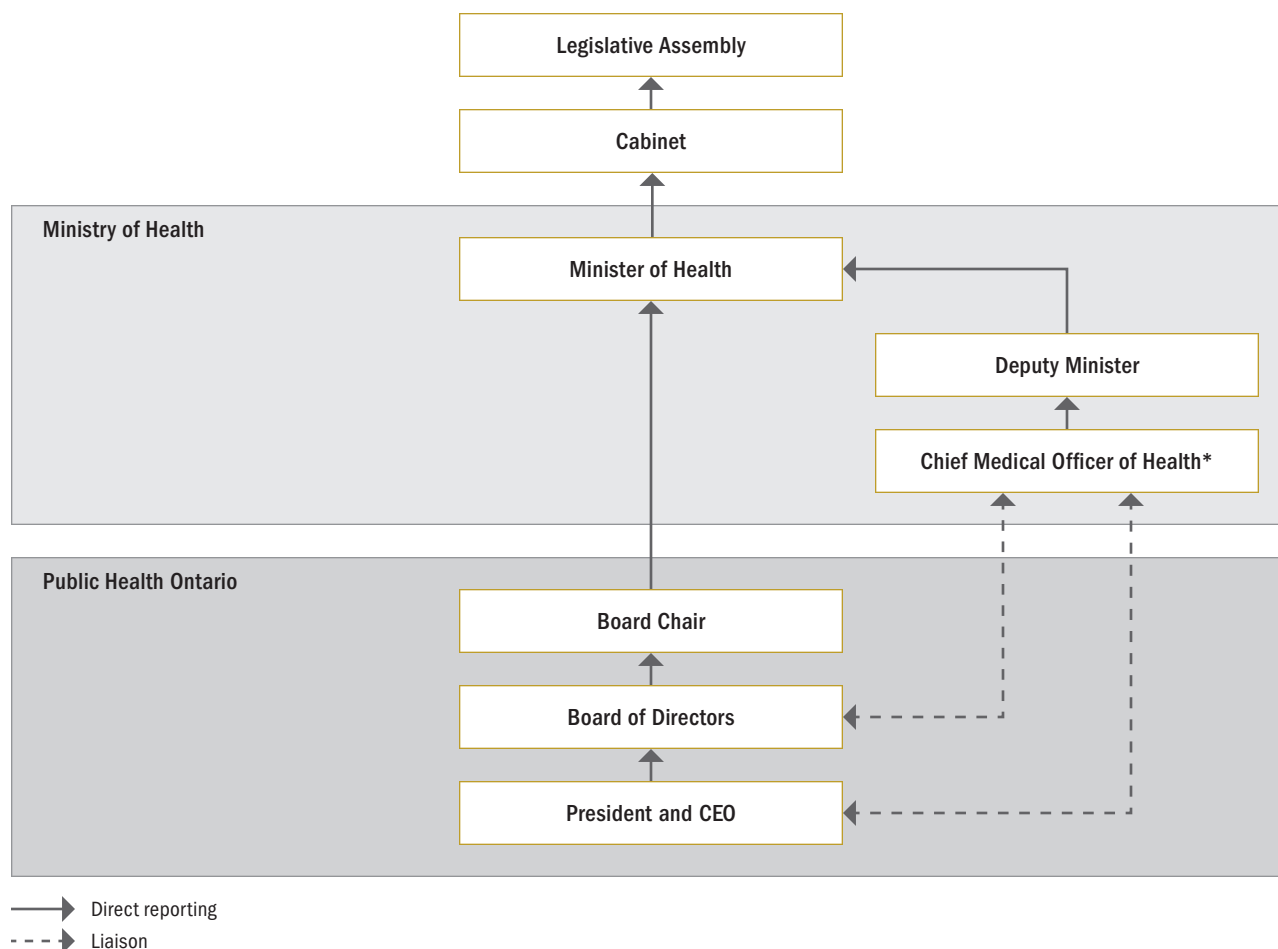


Figure 6: Accountability Framework for Public Health Ontario

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario



* The Chief Medical Officer of Health plays a liaison role between Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health, sitting as a non-voting member of the Board of Directors at Public Health Ontario, as well as a voting member on the Strategic Planning Standing Committee of the Board of Directors at Public Health Ontario to convey Ministry strategies and provincial priorities to Public Health Ontario. The Chief Medical Officer of Health also has the power to issue directives to Public Health Ontario.

representatives and Public Health Ontario, with the purpose of providing advice to the Chief Medical Officer of Health on public health measures that may be implemented to prevent or slow the transmission of COVID-19.

2.4 Financial Information

As shown in **Figure 8**, Public Health Ontario's expenditures were about \$222 million in 2022/23, an approximately 37% increase over the last five fiscal years. The increase was mainly attributable to

a temporary increase in testing volumes during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the last five years, 71% of the agency's actual expenditures related to its laboratory program, 18% related to science and public health programs, and the remaining 11% were for general administrative and amortization expenses.

Figure 9 shows funding provided to Public Health Ontario for the last five years. The Ministry is the primary funder of Public Health Ontario, providing about 94% of the agency's revenue. The agency also receives grants, mainly from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, which averaged about \$1.8 million

Figure 7: Public Health Ontario Board of Directors as of June 30, 2023

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

Name	Board Position	Current/Most Recent Role
Helen Angus	Chair	Chief Executive Officer of AMS Healthcare, former Deputy Minister of Health
Dr. Isra Levy	Vice-Chair Chair, Governance and Human Resources Standing Committee ¹	Vice-President of Medical Affairs and Innovation, Canadian Blood Services
Ian McKillop	Member Chair, Strategic Planning Standing Committee ²	Associate Professor at University of Waterloo, School of Public Health Sciences
S. Ford Ralph	Member Chair, Audit Finance and Risk Standing Committee ³	Former Vice-President of Petro-Canada
Roxanne Anderson	Member	Senior Vice-President of Business Optimization and the Chief Financial Officer of the Victorian Order of Nurses
Harpreet Bassi	Member	Executive Vice-President, Strategy and Communications, Niagara Health
Cat (Mark) Criger	Member	Indigenous Elder, Traditional Teacher and Knowledge Keeper
William MacKinnon	Member	Former Chief Executive Officer of KPMG
Theresa McKinnon	Member	Former Partner at PwC Canada, Assurance
Rob Notman	Member	Trustee and former Board Chair of the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre
Dr. Andy Smith	Member	President and Chief Executive Officer of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Professor of Surgery at the University of Toronto
David Wexler	Member	Former Chief Human Resources Officer for the Vector Institute for Artificial Intelligence, FreshBooks, Syncapse, Alias Systems and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board

1. The Governance and Human Resources Standing Committee supports the Board's commitment to and responsibility for the sound and effective governance of Public Health Ontario. This includes nominations for recommendation by the Board for appointment to the Board; appointment of Board members to committees; help with orientation and education of new directors to assist them in fulfilling their duties effectively; and support for the Board in its oversight of human resources policies and strategies.
2. The Strategic Planning Standing Committee provides reviews and advice on Public Health Ontario's strategic planning, performance measurement, quality assurance and stakeholder engagement processes, and monitors and advises it on progress against goals. The Chief Medical Officer of Health is part of this standing committee.
3. The Audit Finance and Risk Standing Committee ensures that Public Health Ontario conducts itself according to the principles of ethical financial and management behaviour and that it is efficient and effective in its use of public funds by overseeing Public Health Ontario's accounting, financial reporting, audit practices and enterprise risk management.

annually in the last five years. Ministry-provided base funding for Public Health Ontario has generally flatlined over the last 10 years, and decreased in 2019/20 just prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Ministry has increased base funding subsequent to 2020/21, it still has not restored it to pre-pandemic levels.

2.5 Other Jurisdictions

In Canada, British Columbia's BC Centre for Disease Control and Quebec's Institut national de santé publique are close comparators to Public Health Ontario. The federal government's Public Health Agency of

Figure 8: Public Health Ontario Expenditures, 2018/19–2022/23 (\$000)

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% of Total Expenditures (2018/19–2022/23)
Public health labs	102,889	108,399	199,562	198,741	150,495	71
Science and public health programs	38,802	37,757	36,597	38,537	39,843	18
General and administrative	14,007	13,148	17,024	19,098	19,102	8
Amortization of capital assets	6,547	5,464	7,428	11,655	12,539*	3
Total	162,245	164,768	260,611	268,031	221,979	100

* Increased 92% over five years due to increase in capital acquisitions starting in 2020/21 due to COVID-19.

Figure 9: Public Health Ontario Funding, 2018/19–2022/23 (\$000)

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% of Total Funding (2018/19–2022/23)
Base operations¹	152,703	156,151	250,480	252,612	205,324	94
Base funding	152,703	153,114	148,563	151,282	150,683	60²
COVID-19 one-time funding ³	n/a	3,037	101,917	101,331	54,641	34²
Amortization of deferred capital asset contributions	6,547	5,464	7,428	11,655	12,539	4
Other grants	1,781	2,207	1,377	1,867	2,003	1
Miscellaneous recoveries	1,214	946	1,326	1,897	2,113	1
Total	162,245	164,768	260,611	268,031⁴	221,979	100

1. Increased revenue from 2019/20 to 2021/22 corresponds to increased operating expenditures due to Public Health Ontario's increased services to respond to COVID-19.
2. Covers fiscal years 2020/21 to 2022/23 only, as this represents the most significant time period for COVID-19 expenses, and represents three-year base funding and COVID-19 one-time funding as a percentage of base operations expenditures.
3. Public Health Ontario recognized COVID-19 revenue in its accounting records as related expenses were incurred.
4. Numbers do not add up due to rounding.

Canada, while similar to Public Health Ontario, is not governed by a board but rather overseen by the federal Minister of Health. **Appendix 3** shows a comparison of mandates and reporting relationships among these agencies.

3.0 Audit Objective and Scope

Our audit objective was to assess whether Public Health Ontario has effective systems and procedures in place to:

- deliver its mandate as set out in the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*, which includes providing scientific and technical advice and support to identified clients, including the Ministry of Health and other relevant ministries and agencies, public health units, and health-care providers; delivering public health laboratory services; undertaking public health research; and advancing and disseminating knowledge, best practices and research, with the goal of protecting and promoting the health of the people in Ontario and reducing health inequities; and

- measure and publicly report on the quality and effectiveness of these activities.

In planning for our work, we identified the audit criteria (see **Appendix 4**) we would use to address our audit objective. These criteria were established based on a review of applicable legislation, policies and procedures, internal and external studies, previous reports from our Office, and best practices. Senior management at Public Health Ontario reviewed and agreed with the suitability of our objectives and associated criteria.

We conducted our audit between January 2023 and August 2023. We obtained written representation from Public Health Ontario management that, effective November 10, 2023, it had provided us with all the information it was aware of that could significantly affect the findings or the conclusion of this report.

At Public Health Ontario, we:

- reviewed applicable legislation and regulations as well as documents consisting mainly of financial information, contracts and agreements, policy and procedure manuals, annual business plans, annual reports, strategic plans and meeting minutes;
- interviewed senior management and program staff responsible for all program areas, selected former agency management staff, as well as the Board Chair;
- obtained and analyzed financial and operational data from Public Health Ontario systems; and
- observed laboratory operations and met with staff at four of the 11 public health laboratory sites, located in London, Orillia, Sudbury and Toronto.

At the Ministry of Health, we conducted the majority of our work at the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, where we interviewed staff and senior management, and reviewed documents consisting mainly of briefing notes, agreements, funding letters and external review reports of Public Health Ontario conducted since 2016.

We interviewed medical officers of health or their delegates from eight of the province's 34 public health units, consisting of Eastern Ontario; Grey Bruce;

Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington; Niagara; Peel; Sudbury; Timiskaming; and Toronto, to better understand local interactions with and perspectives on Public Health Ontario. We selected these public health units based on their size, geographic location and issues identified through our research. We reached out to 18 public health units to obtain more information on their courier routes for laboratory samples and specimens that would be delivered to Public Health Ontario, of which 16 responded. We selected these public health units based on factors including their geographic location and whether they used the agency's or their own couriers. We also reviewed public-facing websites for all 34 public health units to identify locally developed knowledge products.

To assess the cybersecurity risks to Public Health Ontario, we met with and obtained data from the Cyber Security Division of the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery, which provides certain services to the agency.

To gain familiarity with emerging public health issues, we attended The Ontario Public Health Convention in March 2023. This conference was organized by Public Health Ontario for public health professionals.

In addition, we researched similar organizations in British Columbia and Quebec to identify best practices for public health agencies.

We conducted our work and reported on the results of our examination in accordance with the applicable Canadian Standards on Assurance Engagements—Direct Engagements issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada. This included obtaining a reasonable level of assurance.

The Office of the Auditor General of Ontario applies Canadian Standards on Quality Management and, as a result, maintains a comprehensive system of quality management that includes documented policies and procedures with respect to compliance with rules of professional conduct, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

We have complied with the independence and other ethical requirements of the Code of Professional Conduct of the Chartered Professional Accountants of

Ontario, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour.

4.0 Detailed Audit Observations

4.1 Ministry of Health Has Not Leveraged Public Health Ontario Effectively to Achieve Its Full Intended Capacity and Potential to Improve the Health of Ontarians

4.1.1 Public Health Ontario Has Been Left Out of the Province's Decision-Making with Major Public Health Implications

Despite the mandate of Public Health Ontario to provide scientific and technical advice and support to clients working in government, public health, health care and related sectors, the agency was not consulted when the government made some of its decisions affecting public health, such as those relating to increased access to alcohol and gambling. As well, upon observing recent government decisions on increased access to alcohol and gambling, Public Health Ontario has not conducted independent research in these areas.

Increased Access to Alcohol and Gambling

The government's decision to increase access to alcohol in various settings, such as grocery stores and convenience stores, was first announced in 2015 and saw expansion in 2019 and 2023. In addition, the new legal Internet gaming market in Ontario has grown by an average of more than 50% in total wagers and gaming revenue each quarter since its launch in April 2022. According to iGaming Ontario, a total of 1.65 million player accounts were active over the course of the 2022/23 fiscal year; these players on average spent about \$70 per month.

Public Health Ontario representatives confirmed with us that government decision-makers have not consulted them on the health impacts of either of these decisions, which have implications on addictions and

mental health on a population level. We asked the Ministry of Health (Ministry) why it did not consult Public Health Ontario, and Ministry representatives explained that the Ministry of Finance made both of these decisions. It did not seek an assessment of the impacts on public health from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, which also did not conduct a health impact assessment on increased access to alcohol and gambling. The Ministry informed us that, instead, the Ministry of Finance, working with other partner ministries, engaged and consulted stakeholders, for example, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, to understand the potential impacts.

In these cases, the government did not fully leverage Public Health Ontario to provide expert advice on the potential population health impacts of policy decisions made. One of the legislated responsibilities of Public Health Ontario according to the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007* (Act) that created it, is “to inform and contribute to policy development processes across sectors of the health care system and within the Government of Ontario through advice and impact analysis of public health issues.” Our 2017 audit on Public Health: Chronic Disease Prevention highlighted the Health in All Policies approach, defined by the World Health Organization as an approach that considers how government decisions affect population health so that more accountability is placed on policy-makers. Our 2017 report recommended that the Ministry develop a process to integrate this approach into policy settings where appropriate, but this had not yet been fully implemented as of the time of this audit.

While these provincial policy changes affecting public health were occurring, Public Health Ontario did not prioritize publishing the state of the evidence in these areas. To illustrate, in relation to alcohol, a public health unit in October 2018 requested Public Health Ontario to answer a research question on the impact of increasing alcohol availability. However, instead of publishing an independently researched knowledge product that could establish Public Health Ontario's position on the state of the evidence, the agency compiled a list of existing journal articles and sent the

completed list directly to the public health unit in May 2019.

Similarly, we found that Public Health Ontario has not published any research on the health impact of problem gambling. In 2012, the agency published a knowledge product on the burden of mental illness and addictions in Ontario, but that product did not discuss problem gambling. We researched whether public health units had to independently develop knowledge products on problem gambling and found that six public health units—North Bay and Parry Sound, Ottawa, Peterborough, Sudbury, Toronto, and Windsor—had developed such research independently. Toronto Public Health explained in its report that studies have suggested an increase in problem or pathological gambling rates after gambling expansion, such as in Niagara where the rate increased from 2.2% to 4.4% one year after a casino opening. It also went on to note a consistent social impact from problem gambling, such as suicide and personal bankruptcy rates, with direct or indirect impacts on individuals and families.

We found that, unlike Public Health Ontario, other provinces have centrally developed knowledge products on problem gambling. For example, Quebec has made available centrally developed resources and knowledge products on the population health impact of problem gambling. Specifically, the Institut national de santé publique du Québec has on its website an interactive map that allows the public to quantify and visualize exposure and vulnerability to gambling in Quebec, and to support development of preventive initiatives and interventions to address these issues. Similarly, we found that British Columbia's Centre for Disease Control had included problem gambling on its website on substance use, indicating that a report was forthcoming.

Decisions Made During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Public Health Ontario was also not consistently consulted by the Province to provide scientific and technical advice in certain key decisions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Act, one of the roles of Public Health Ontario is to provide scientific and technical advice, and operational support, to any person or entity in an emergency or outbreak situation that has health implications, as directed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Our 2020 audit on COVID-19 preparedness and management, Outbreak Planning and Decision-Making, noted that Public Health Ontario played a diminished role in the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the agency being created in response to the SARS outbreak in 2003. Even when Public Health Ontario provided advice, such as on the recommended indicators and threshold triggers for lockdown, the Ministry of Health either did not fully follow this advice, or implemented the agency's advice much later than suggested.

Similarly, our 2022 audit on the COVID-19 Vaccination Program noted that Public Health Ontario was not represented on the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force, where it felt that it could have contributed more scientific or technical expertise and support on vaccine distribution decisions.

4.1.2 Public Health Ontario's Role Has Continued to Diminish in the Public Health System, with Increased Reliance on One-Time Annual Funding

Public Health Ontario Could Not Fully Deliver Its Mandate, Citing Capacity and Funding Constraints

As noted in **Section 2.4**, in 2019/20, the Ministry reduced Public Health Ontario's base funding, replacing it with one-time annual funding. This was done because the Ministry at that time had assumed that its laboratory modernization plan would be implemented and that Public Health Ontario would be consolidated as part of Ontario Health. One-time funding makes it challenging for Public Health Ontario to plan for activities, as such funding is susceptible to being withdrawn. While the Ministry has increased base funding since 2020/21, it has still not restored it to pre-pandemic levels.

We found that, while the Ministry reduced Public Health Ontario's base funding assuming implementation of the laboratory modernization plan, the Ministry has not yet implemented this plan. We discuss this plan in greater detail in **Section 4.2.1**.

The Ministry also eventually did not consolidate Public Health Ontario into Ontario Health, as it had assumed it would. The government announced in 2019 that it would consolidate multiple health-care agencies and organizations, including Cancer Care Ontario, Trillium Gift of Life Network and all 14 Local Health Integrated Networks, within a single agency, known as Ontario Health. Ontario Health is responsible for planning and funding the health-care system, primarily in clinical settings, and ensuring health service providers have the tools and information to deliver quality care.

Despite both of these assumptions resulting in reduced base funding for Public Health Ontario, the Ministry has still not restored the agency's base funding to pre-pandemic levels, even though neither assumption was realized.

Our 2020 audit on COVID-19 preparedness and management, Outbreak Planning and Decision-Making, noted that, due to resource constraints, Ontario Health performed some tasks that were outlined in the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic as the responsibility of Public Health Ontario. These included co-ordinating laboratory testing for COVID-19 and analyzing provincial surveillance data.

Public Health Ontario explained to us that its budget has been flatlined for over 10 years, and has repeatedly raised this concern in its annual business plan, which it has submitted to the Ministry. While the Ministry provided Public Health Ontario with one-time COVID-19 funding between 2019/20 and 2022/23, this was strictly for use in the laboratory for COVID-19 testing, and little was added to fund the rest of the agency's mandate to support its growth, such as in environmental health, health promotion, and chronic disease and injury prevention.

As explained in **Section 2.3.2**, the relationship between Public Health Ontario and the Ministry is governed by provincial legislation and directives, but also

by a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that has not been updated since 2015. The Ministry and Public Health Ontario have continued to affirm the existing MOU since 2015 when new Board chairs and ministers have taken office. They informed us at the time of our audit that they were working on refreshing the MOU, with expected completion by the end of 2023.

Lack of Consistent Funding Puts the Continuation of Advisory Committee for Public Health Emergencies at Risk

In July 2020, the Province created the COVID-19 Science Advisory Table to provide emerging evidence and advice to the Ministry of Health to inform Ontario's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of the impetus for this Table was that Public Health Ontario could not fully support the Province in providing synthesized evidence relating to the COVID-19 pandemic due to capacity constraints. The Table was external to Public Health Ontario, though one of the then vice-presidents of the agency was a co-chair. In July 2022, following direction from the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario became the permanent home of this Table. In September 2022, Public Health Ontario, building on the work of the Table, announced the establishment of the Ontario Public Health Emergencies Science Advisory Committee, an external advisory committee whose mandate is to enhance provincial capacity to respond to public health emergencies with the best available evidence.

The Ministry provided one-time funding of \$1.2 million in 2022/23 to the agency to establish and oversee this committee, but did not continue this funding in 2023/24. Public Health Ontario informed us that, as a result of the Ministry no longer providing funding, it was exploring options to scale back or dismantle the operations of this committee.

RECOMMENDATION 1

To enhance the clarity, relevance and value of Public Health Ontario's role in Ontario's public health system, we recommend that Public Health Ontario work with the Ministry of Health (Ministry) to:

- develop and implement a process to include Public Health Ontario's review of evidence when developing provincial policy decisions that impact public health; and
- clarify the agency's roles and responsibilities in the memorandum of understanding between the agency and the Ministry, especially with respect to Public Health Ontario's role in relation to Ontario Health's role.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation, and will work with the Ministry of Health to enhance and clarify our role within the public health system. While there are existing mechanisms in place for the Ministry to request support and advice from Public Health Ontario as needed, we recognize that there may be opportunity for improvement by formalizing a process specific to supporting provincial policy decisions. We also recognize the importance of clarifying the agency's roles and responsibilities in the memorandum of understanding between Public Health Ontario and the Ministry, which, as noted in the report, is currently in the process of being refreshed.

RECOMMENDATION 2

To ensure that Public Health Ontario has sustainable resources required to deliver on the agency's mandate effectively, we recommend that Public Health Ontario work with the Ministry of Health to develop a business case that addresses reallocation of one-time annual funding to base funding.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation to work with the Ministry of Health to reallocate its one-time annual funding to base funding for the agency.

4.1.3 Lack of Information Sharing on Priority Areas of Public Health Units Limits Public Health Ontario's Ability to Centralize and Co-ordinate Work

Public Health Ontario obtains input from the Ministry and public health units, often through regular meetings, to inform its work. However, it does not have established information-sharing processes on what Ontario's 34 public health units plan to do in terms of their program priorities and what research they would require that is best done centrally. Public health units report planned activities to the Ministry on an annual basis, but the Ministry does not share this information with Public Health Ontario. As a result, we found instances of fragmented responses to key public health issues and duplication of effort.

According to the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*, the agency is tasked with the responsibility to "undertake, promote and coordinate public health research in cooperation with academic and research experts as well as the community." About half of the requests made to Public Health Ontario between 2018/19 and 2022/23 to conduct consultations, answer scientific questions and deliver presentations came from public health units, and the number of these requests ranged from 413 to 1,023 requests per year. Despite this, Public Health Ontario does not receive important summarized information on public health units' planned program activities for the upcoming year so as to proactively prepare and direct its own efforts.

In contrast, every year, the Ministry of Health requires all 34 public health units to submit an annual service plan that outlines how each public health unit plans on satisfying the Ontario Public Health Standards, which we explain in **Section 2.1**. This includes planned activities, such as seasonal flu clinics, and the vaccine clinics in schools that public health units deliver as part of their programs. However, as the Ministry does not share the priorities in these annual service plans with Public Health Ontario, the agency

cannot synthesize information from these annual service plans to effectively identify areas where it can provide the most value across all public health units, such as co-ordinating research efforts and developing knowledge products, including evidence briefs and literature reviews. One of the purposes of these is to give users synthesized and easy-to-understand evidence to help them design programs and support advancing public health policy, knowledge and best practices in Ontario.

We found that public health units had duplicated efforts in producing resources on public health topics. For example, as noted in **Section 4.1.1**, six public health units individually developed resource materials on problem gambling, with Public Health Ontario not having published any such materials centrally. Similarly, between 2016 and 2020, eight public health units individually developed local resources on mental health and made these resources public. While five of these public health units referenced Public Health Ontario materials for either data or publications, the remaining three did not reference the agency at all. Public Health Ontario last conducted a full literature review on the burden of mental health problems and addictions in 2012, over 10 years ago.

With respect to the agency-developed resource on mental health from 2012, we further found that Public Health Ontario's research did not cover some important areas that public health units needed and therefore had to produce on their own. This led to public health units duplicating efforts amongst themselves, a missed opportunity to have Public Health Ontario prepare one central report covering all these common topics. Specifically, public health units individually compiled data on the use of mental health services, suicide rates, emergency department visits, and community belongingness in the context of their own regions, while comparing these to the provincial scale. Public Health Ontario's knowledge products on mental health did not discuss any of these topics for public health units to reference and adapt to their communities.

A successful example of this type of centralization has been seen in the topic of alcohol consumption. Seven public health units created knowledge products

on low-risk alcohol consumption guidelines, and six out of the seven referenced the agency for either data or publications. In this instance, the majority of data references were taken from Public Health Ontario's snapshot of self-reported rates of exceeding the low-risk consumption guidelines, where individual public health units pulled the centralized data and informational pieces for use in their local context.

Nevertheless, Public Health Ontario has demonstrated the ability to partner with public health units and other stakeholders to produce knowledge products:

- In 2013, one year after its literature review on mental health, Public Health Ontario released a report in partnership with Toronto Public Health and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, which discussed how Ontario public health units were addressing child and youth mental health.
- Since 2012, Public Health Ontario has partnered with four public health units to become hub libraries, which provide library services to 22, or 65%, of the province's 34 public health units. Public health units may use the services of a hub library to promote knowledge exchange, which may be used for a variety of purposes, including to search for peer-reviewed journal articles and research done on a topic that a public health unit would want to build local resources on.

Agency representatives informed us that, as part of their strategic planning consultations in 2023, they heard feedback from some public health units that there is an interest in Public Health Ontario developing more centralized and shared services to avoid overlap and duplication of effort. Such services may include a repository of resources on topics of mutual interest. They added that the agency would be considering its role in this. In the meantime, librarians performing the search through this partnership are encouraged to check to see if any other librarians have done a similar search already. Neither Public Health Ontario nor the partnered libraries receive copies of completed health unit knowledge products, limiting the potential for information sharing and reduction of duplication of efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 3

To improve the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of generating public health research in Ontario, we recommend that Public Health Ontario work with the Ministry of Health and public health units to:

- evaluate the feasibility of a formal process to centralize public health research across all three pillars of the public health system in Ontario; and
- if the current process is kept, create a searchable research repository consisting of all public health journal articles and research products prepared by Public Health Ontario as well as individual public health units and share access to this repository with all public health units.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation, and recognizes that there are opportunities to gain efficiencies through centralized public health research activities. While Public Health Ontario already routinely produces knowledge products, including scientific reports and research publications, on a variety of public health topics, we will engage with the Ministry of Health and public health units to evaluate the feasibility of further centralization. With respect to the potential creation of a central research repository, Public Health Ontario will also explore this idea with the Ministry and our public health unit clients to determine if this would be a valuable resource to support their work.

4.1.4 Multiple Recommendations of the Agency's 2016 Mandate Review Still Not Implemented

In 2016, the Ministry commissioned a review of Public Health Ontario's mandate, as is required for board-governed agencies every six years under the Agencies and Appointments Directive (Directive), described in

Section 2.3.2. However, we found that the Ministry never shared the final report of this mandate review with Public Health Ontario, despite some of the recommendations being directed to the agency; many of the recommendations are still outstanding seven years later. When we asked the Ministry why it has withheld the final report, it informed us that it is common practice to not share final mandate review reports with provincial agencies. The Ministry noted that the recommendations in the final report directed toward Public Health Ontario were shared through other mechanisms and processes, including through the issuing of mandate letters. However, this did not give Public Health Ontario an opportunity to provide input into the mandate review process or address specific recommendations from this review.

The mandate review noted areas for improvement that spanned different areas including revising Public Health Ontario's mandate and refining the agency's activities and operations. Notably, the review recommended the following, which remain outstanding more than seven years later:

- the Ministry to update the MOU to incorporate the respective roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of Public Health Ontario with Ministry communications with the public;
- the Ministry to decide whether or not to amend the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007* or develop a new regulation to clarify how the agency's services will be directed; and
- Public Health Ontario and the Ministry to confirm alignment of the agency's functions for supporting Ministry priorities and programs for health promotion and reducing health inequities.

Furthermore, as per the Directive, Public Health Ontario should have undergone another mandate review in 2022. However, the Ministry indicated to us that this was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with no expected date for completion.

Mandate Letters Either Provided Late or Not Provided at All to Public Health Ontario, Contrary to Government Directive Requirement

Every year for the last six years (2018/19–2023/24), the Ministry has not complied with the Agencies and Appointments Directive requirement to provide Public Health Ontario with a mandate letter 180 days before the start of its fiscal year. The mandate letter is issued by the Minister of Health, and lays out the focus, priorities, objectives, opportunities and challenges that the Minister has set for the agency for the coming year. The Ministry transmitted Public Health Ontario's mandate letters as late as six days before the start of the next fiscal year in 2021/22, making it difficult for the agency to set priorities for its annual business and strategic plans, and not providing sufficient time to plan activities prior to the start of the fiscal year. When we asked the Ministry why it had not complied with this requirement, the Ministry acknowledged that the timing to issue mandate letters to Public Health Ontario had not always met the 180-day requirement due to competing public health demands and priorities. The Ministry also indicated that the Chief Medical Officer of Health routinely shares Ministry priorities with Public Health Ontario through Board and committee meetings to help inform the agency's development of its annual business plan.

As well, the Ministry did not provide a mandate letter to Public Health Ontario in 2019/20 or 2020/21. The Ministry's explanation was that it was planning for public health modernization (explained in **Section 2.1.1**), and the public health system could have potentially changed.

RECOMMENDATION 4

To allow Public Health Ontario to more effectively plan its activities, we recommend that the Ministry of Health:

- share any review reports with Public Health Ontario and follow up on the implementation of any outstanding recommendation at least on an annual basis; and

- provide annual mandate letters to the agency on a timely basis in accordance with the Agencies and Appointments Directive.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry of Health agrees with this recommendation and will continue to work closely with Public Health Ontario to ensure that agency goals, objectives and strategic directions align with government's priorities and direction. This includes, but is not limited to, providing annual mandate letters to the agency in accordance with the Agencies and Appointments Directive and sharing any relevant review recommendations with Public Health Ontario and following up on the implementation on any outstanding recommendations on a timely basis.

4.2 Public Health Ontario Laboratory Not Operating Efficiently

4.2.1 Streamlining of 11 Public Health Ontario Laboratory Sites Not Yet Implemented

In addition to its main Toronto laboratory, Public Health Ontario has 10 regional laboratory sites across Ontario to provide regional coverage for public health units and hospitals. However, we found that some regional laboratory sites are unable to perform a large proportion of the tests on the samples and specimens they receive. The agency provided the Ministry with the recommendation to consolidate some of these laboratory sites, in 2017 and again in early 2023, based on factors that included test volume and productivity, stating that the consolidation can save \$6 million in its budget. Although a 2020 consultant report had reached similar conclusions, the Ministry had not approved the consolidation of these sites at the completion of our audit.

According to an internal agency document, from September 2021 to September 2022, three public health laboratory sites transferred out more than 90% of the non-COVID-19 tests they received. We expanded this analysis to include all laboratory tests, including

COVID-19, that Public Health Ontario laboratory sites received and performed from 2018/19 to 2022/23. As shown in **Figure 10**, we found that:

- regional laboratory sites were completing wide ranges of between 9% and 80% of the tests they received and transferring the remainder to other laboratory sites;
- three laboratory sites—Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury—transferred between 80% and 91% of all tests to other sites; and
- Toronto was the largest receiver of these transfers, receiving about 19 million tests from regional laboratory sites, with the London site receiving the next most tests, at over four million tests.

The three laboratory sites that transferred between 80% and 91% of the tests they received each had operating costs ranging from \$5 million to \$10 million over the last five years.

Public Health Ontario explained to us that the reasons for these transfers could include capacity issues, lack of expertise or sufficient volume to maintain competency of laboratory personnel in a specific test, lack of equipment to conduct certain tests, or

efficiencies to achieve economy of scale. For example, only one of the 11 public health laboratory sites has the equipment necessary to test for *H. pylori*, a bacterium that affects the stomach.

In 2017, Public Health Ontario proposed a joint modernization plan to update its public health laboratory, collaboratively with Ministry staff at the request of the Deputy Minister, that would have resulted in:

- gradually closing six of its 11 public health laboratory sites (Hamilton, Kingston, Orillia, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins), while maintaining coverage across the province through five geographic areas; and
- changing the types of tests offered at the Public Health Ontario laboratory that would remove 20 tests and restrict eligibility for 12 additional tests, as well as the gradual discontinuation of private drinking water testing.

According to the agency, this plan was needed to mitigate rising costs of repairs and upgrades in existing laboratory sites, and would result in a more efficient operating model to address issues such as sites needing to reroute the majority of samples and specimens they receive to other sites.

Figure 10: Number of Tests Received, Completed and Transferred Out by Public Health Ontario Laboratory Sites, 2018/19–2022/23

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

Laboratory Site	# Received ¹	# Completed	# Transferred Out	% Transferred Out
Sudbury	670,052	57,935	612,994	91
Sault Ste. Marie	251,953	87,116	223,915	89
Peterborough	839,389	192,579	668,436	80
Ottawa	3,163,981	1,578,148	2,034,978	64
Timmins	415,938	276,814	203,773	49
Hamilton	2,769,143	1,484,913	1,301,497	47
Thunder Bay	1,027,948	603,753	433,203	42
London	4,211,543	3,224,316	1,199,701	28
Kingston	1,695,958	3,240,155 ²	366,121	22
Orillia	1,044,555	1,599,189 ²	213,330	20
Toronto	19,040,243	22,785,785 ²	233,173	1

1. Refers to the laboratory location that originally logged the sample or specimen in the laboratory information system; includes those tests that hospital and community laboratories and public health units send to this location.

2. Number of laboratory tests completed is greater than number of laboratory tests received mainly due to additional tests that other regional laboratory sites transferred to these laboratory sites.

The most recent iteration of this modernization plan, presented by Public Health Ontario to the Ministry in January 2023, included the same plan to consolidate sites, but instead focused on discontinuing its testing for *H. pylori*, which is not a disease of public health significance, and again recommended the gradual discontinuation of private drinking water testing. This updated plan also showed that current test volumes per full-time-equivalent staff ranged widely between all 11 existing sites, from 775 in Timmins to 13,523 in Hamilton.

A 2020 laboratory facilities report by a private-sector consultant commissioned by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (now the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery) and Infrastructure Ontario had findings consistent with Public Health Ontario's proposed plan, and made identical recommendations with respect to Public Health Ontario laboratory sites. Our 2020 audit on COVID-19 preparedness and management, Laboratory Testing, Case Management and Contact Tracing, recommended that the Ministry of Health immediately review Public Health Ontario's laboratory modernization plan, and consult with the agency to determine and provide the level of base funding that would allow the agency to fulfill its mandate.

Despite this, at the time of our audit, the Ministry of Health was still in the process of obtaining necessary internal approvals for the plan. We asked the Ministry why the plan was not yet implemented; it informed us that in the 2019 Ontario Budget, the government committed to modernize Ontario's public health laboratory system by developing a regional strategy. However, implementation of this plan was put on hold due to the construction of the new London public health laboratory, as well as increased capacity required from all Public Health Ontario laboratory sites for COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATION 5

To more efficiently deliver public health laboratory services, we recommend that Public Health Ontario, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, update and implement a plan within 12 months to streamline public health laboratory operations.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation, and will continue to work in conjunction with the Ministry of Health to update the plan to streamline and modernize the agency's laboratory operations. Upon receipt of Ministry approval to proceed, Public Health Ontario will commence the phased implementation of the plan. We will work closely with our stakeholders throughout the implementation process to communicate changes in service delivery and minimize service disruptions.

4.2.2 Courier Services That Deliver Samples and Specimens Do Not Cover All Regions of the Province

Primary-care clinicians, hospitals and public health units are just some examples of places that send specimens (such as blood, phlegm and stool) to Public Health Ontario laboratory sites across the province for testing. Private citizens also send samples (such as well water) to these sites. Public Health Ontario co-ordinates courier services that pick up and deliver samples and specimens, most of which are sensitive to time and temperature during transit, to and from these locations as well as among its own network of 11 public health laboratory sites. For example, in the five-year period between 2018/19 and 2022/23, 21% of the tests received by public health laboratory sites were transported to other public health laboratory locations for testing.

Over the last five years, Public Health Ontario has relied on a roster of up to 18 courier companies to transport samples and specimens, and has established formal contracts with four of them. Currently, there are two contracted couriers providing the majority of these services to the agency. One company covers the Greater Toronto Area, southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario; the other company focuses on Northern Ontario. Public Health Ontario engaged the other courier companies on its roster only when needed, such as to supplement any shortfalls of the two contracted courier companies.

Public Health Ontario's spending on courier services has increased by \$1.6 million, or 99%, in the last five years. The majority of this increase is attributable to the change in market pricing for this specialized service, and the remainder is attributable to an 8% increase in overall test volumes over the same period. In 2022/23, Public Health Ontario spent about \$3.8 million on courier services for samples and specimens, up from \$1.9 million in 2018/19, as shown in **Figure 11**.

We could not determine whether Public Health Ontario's courier services fully cover all primary-care clinician offices and hospitals that send samples and specimens to the public health laboratory, because the total number of these collection sites is not readily available. We found, however, that Public Health Ontario does not provide courier services to nine, or 26%, of the 34 public health units. We surveyed these nine public health units, and another random sample of nine geographically dispersed public health units that use Public Health Ontario's contracted courier, of which seven responded. We noted the following:

- Five of the nine public health units that do not use Public Health Ontario's courier were not even aware that this service exists; these public health units therefore had to co-ordinate their

own couriers to send samples and specimens to the public health laboratory.

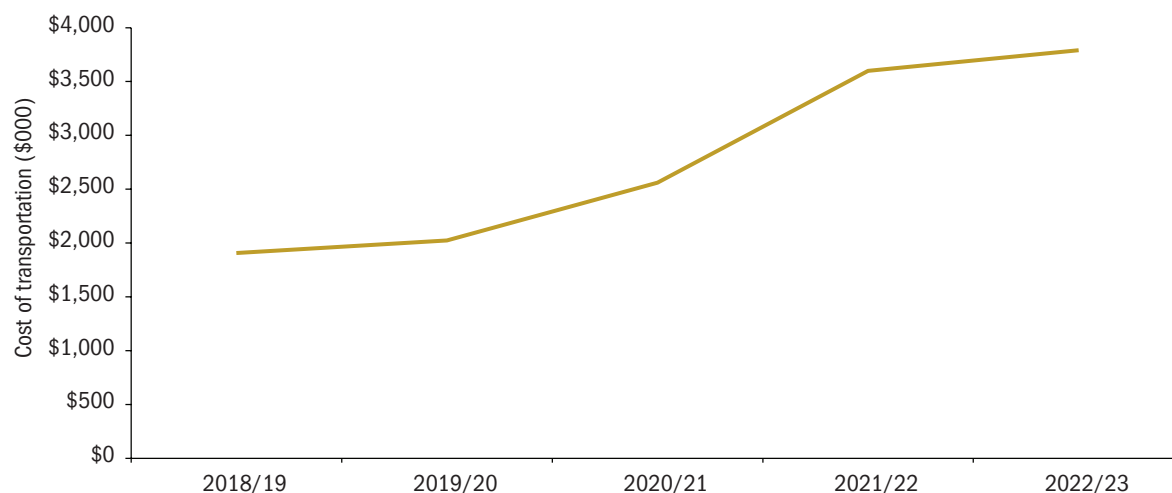
- Of the public health units that use the agency's courier, some cited challenges with the courier services including delayed, missed and/or infrequent pickups; this can sometimes result in samples and specimens being rejected by the public health laboratory as they did not arrive within the time frame required for testing. Public Health Ontario and some public health units also have had to use external couriers to cover the shortfalls of the current courier routes so that samples and specimens can be delivered on time to be suitable for testing.

RECOMMENDATION 6

To achieve better value for money for the province's use of couriers for the public health laboratory, we recommend that Public Health Ontario, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, consult with all public health units to determine whether centrally procured courier services for laboratory samples and specimens would be beneficial, and make centrally co-ordinated courier services available to all public health units.

Figure 11: Public Health Ontario Courier Expenses for Transportation of Laboratory Samples and Specimens, 2018/19-2022/23

Source of data: Public Health Ontario



PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation, and recognizes the importance of better value for money with respect to laboratory courier services across the public health sector. We will work with the Ministry of Health, public health units and other partners, including the Ontario Laboratory Medicine Program, to determine the feasibility of making centrally co-ordinated courier services available to all public health units, including a collaborative procurement approach.

4.2.3 Some Laboratory Tests for Diseases of Public Health Significance Not Offered at the Public Health Laboratory

Public Health Ontario provides surveillance of communicable diseases based on data it collects through its laboratory or obtains from other sources. It provides over 270 tests, and is often the only laboratory in Ontario to test for certain diseases, for example, HIV. Providing comprehensive laboratory tests to detect and identify diseases of public health significance in its role as the provincial public health laboratory is therefore critical to effectively protect the health of Ontarians. We compared testing menus from Public Health Ontario to those of other provincial health agencies, and found some examples of tests not done through public health laboratories for diseases of public health significance, such as certain types of testing for latent tuberculosis, and wastewater testing that can identify COVID-19 transmission in geographic areas.

Interferon Gamma Radiation Assay for Latent Tuberculosis

One of Public Health Ontario's legislated responsibilities is "to provide scientific and technical advice and support to the health care system and the Government of Ontario in order to protect and promote the health of Ontarians and reduce health inequities." Despite this, we found that the Public Health Ontario laboratory does not offer a test that is specifically beneficial for the

detection of latent tuberculosis in at-risk populations such as Indigenous communities and foreign-born populations.

Latent tuberculosis is a dormant form of tuberculosis, meaning the person does not feel sick or have symptoms, but has the potential to progress to active tuberculosis later in life due to weakened or compromised immune systems. Approximately 15% of people with latent tuberculosis progress to the active disease, which is preventable, as latent tuberculosis can be treated with antibiotics, through shared decision-making between the health-care providers and patients. Statistics from the Government of Canada showed that in 2020, there were 1,772 cases of active tuberculosis in Canada, with more than 80% of these cases found in foreign-born individuals and Indigenous people.

In Ontario, the only publicly funded test to detect latent tuberculosis is a skin test, which public health units and other health-care clinics conduct. Another testing method—interferon gamma release assay (IGRA)—involves blood testing done by laboratories. The last Ministry guidelines on tuberculosis, from 2018, stated that Ontario was assessing the use of IGRA in select communities. However, at the time of our audit, this test was still not publicly funded across Ontario. IGRA is currently available in Ontario at one children's hospital under specific eligibility, as well as selected private laboratories at a cost of around \$90 per test to the patient. Public Health Ontario's laboratory currently does not perform any laboratory tests to detect latent tuberculosis.

Public Health Ontario published a report in 2019 that looked at testing for tuberculosis infection using IGRA as compared to the conventional skin testing method. The report did not look into the estimated costs of delivering IGRA versus the skin test method, but noted the pros and cons of each method as follows:

- The conventional skin test method requires a second clinic visit 48 to 72 hours after the first, which may result in patients, especially those living in rural and northern communities, not making that follow-up visit.

- IGRA is more specific to obtain the right diagnosis but also costlier due to the need for new equipment, training and processing time.
- IGRA requires specimens to be processed within a specific window of time after collection; Public Health Ontario's laboratory does not have co-located facilities to support timely blood specimen collection and submission for assay testing, though one commercially available test can be processed up to 53 hours after specimen collection.

The agency has not more recently analyzed the full costs and benefits of IGRA versus the skin test to detect latent tuberculosis, and does not have plans to do so in the near future. Such an analysis could include the potential impact of not diagnosing and treating someone with latent tuberculosis. For instance, a recent study, using data obtained at a treatment centre in Ontario as well as two other centres in Canada, found that the median cost to treat patients with tuberculosis infection was \$804 for the most easily treatable varieties and ranged as high as \$119,014 for highly drug-resistant tuberculosis infections.

In contrast, the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control has co-ordinated with hospitals to offer IGRA for the diagnosis of latent tuberculosis. It controlled for some of the limitations of this test, such as time from sample collection to processing, by co-ordinating sample collection times with lab availability, to ensure that samples will be tested before spoiling.

Wastewater Testing

Public Health Ontario does not perform wastewater testing in Ontario, which can identify COVID-19 transmission in geographic areas and supplement other clinical data sources. Currently, wastewater testing is led by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, through its Wastewater Surveillance Initiative. Through this initiative, laboratory tests are conducted through 13 different Ontario universities, as well as the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory.

In contrast, the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control collects samples two to three times a week for testing from wastewater treatment plants in urban

regions across British Columbia, to identify respiratory pathogens such as influenza and COVID-19. At the time of our audit, the Ministry of Health informed us that it was working collaboratively with Public Health Ontario to develop a proposal for a public health model for wastewater surveillance in Ontario.

RECOMMENDATION 7

To help ensure the public health laboratory in Ontario applies current and best practices to conduct surveillance on diseases of public health significance, we recommend that Public Health Ontario, together with the Ministry of Health:

- perform a jurisdictional scan to compare public health laboratory test menus;
- conduct a cost/benefit analysis on the tests not conducted by the public health laboratory in Ontario to determine whether the alternative tests would yield more accurate and timely results; and
- develop a plan to incorporate new tests into the Ontario public health laboratory test menu.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation, and will work with the Ministry of Health to ensure that our test menu supports the evolving public health needs and ensures fiscal responsibility. We will continue our work to finalize the public health laboratory test menu for Ontario, which will be informed by a jurisdictional scan of other public health laboratory test menus in Canada and the findings of test cost/benefit analyses.

4.3 Weaknesses in Corporate Procurement Policy and Lack of Enforcement, Resulting in Poor Procurement Governance

The Ontario Public Service Procurement Directive (Directive), developed by the Management Board of Cabinet in March 2019, sets out the responsibilities of organizations throughout the procurement process. The purpose of the Directive is to ensure that goods

and services are acquired through an open, fair and transparent process, to reduce purchasing costs, and to ensure consistency in the management of procurement. Public Health Ontario's internal corporate procurement policy, originally drafted in July 2010 and last updated in November 2022, is based on this Directive.

During our audit, we reviewed details of procurement projects that were active as of May 31, 2023, and examined a sample of them. We found that Public Health Ontario did not always follow its own corporate procurement policy, which contributed to weaknesses in procurement governance and could have prevented the agency from achieving value for money. From 2018/19 to 2022/23, Public Health Ontario spent, on average, \$207 million per year in goods and services to operate its laboratory and deliver its science and public health programs.

4.3.1 Agency Staff Purchased Goods and Services from Vendors Using Purchasing Cards Rather than Procuring Them Competitively

We found that Public Health Ontario's laboratory staff were using purchasing cards (P Cards) in ways that are contrary to their intended purposes. As a result, we found instances where the agency did not acquire goods or services through an open, fair and transparent process.

According to the agency's procurement policy, P Cards are "primarily used for low value purchases" and may only be used for individual purchases valued under \$5,000 (or \$10,000 for senior staff) that are "not recurring transactions with a single vendor." The policy further clarifies that "a series of reasonably related transactions shall be considered as a single transaction for purposes of determining the required approval and authority levels." At the time of our audit, the agency had issued P Cards to 126 of its staff, 68 of whom were responsible for laboratory operations.

The corporate procurement policy further states that program areas are required to work with the procurement team "to assist in the planning and coordination of all procurement activities." However, the agency has not been enforcing this requirement. In fact, laboratory staff at Public Health Ontario can

procure goods and services on their own without having to go through the procurement team.

We found that staff from various laboratory sites at Public Health Ontario were using their P Cards to make recurring purchases of laboratory and health-care supplies from the same vendor between 2018/19 and 2022/23. Although the individual purchases were under \$5,000, the cumulative value of the recurring transactions exceeded \$25,000—the amount above which purchases must be procured competitively according to procurement policies. As shown in **Figure 12**, we found that from 2018/19 to 2022/23, Public Health Ontario staff made almost 17,000 transactions on their P Cards with 30 different vendors, for a combined purchase value of over \$11 million over five years. Over \$4 million of this amount related to purchases from two vendors. According to Public Health Ontario, the use of P Cards is required for purchases below \$5,000 in the User Guide for the Vendor of Record arrangement with the top vendor. The User Guide was prepared by the then Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (now Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery), Ontario Shared Services and Supply Chain Ontario. As a result, its staff have to follow this User Guide, resulting in recurring transactions using their P Cards. Regarding the second vendor, agency staff told us that, until recently, it accepted only P Cards as payment. Excluding the top two vendors, annual transaction values ranged from \$25,133 to \$222,283. Agency staff purchased laboratory equipment and supplies on a recurring basis from these vendors using their P Cards, when they should have instead procured these supplies and equipment competitively.

Our review of the individual transactions found that this practice, although limited to the agency's laboratory operations, was widespread across several laboratory sites. For example, in 2022/23, 35 staff across various laboratory sites cumulatively made 1,339 recurring purchases of medical laboratory and health-care supplies from a single vendor totalling over \$554,000. This is equivalent to an average of 39 recurring transactions per staff member for that year alone. According to Public Health Ontario, these recurring P Card transactions were done in accordance

Figure 12: Top 10 Vendors by Total Value of Recurring Transactions Charged to Purchasing Cards (P Cards) and Totals for All 30 Vendors, 2018/19–2022/23

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

Vendor #	# of Years with P Card Charges >\$25,000	Value of Charges (\$)		# of Charges	
		Total	Avg. per Year	Total	Avg. per Year
Top 10 Vendors					
1	5	2,789,087	557,817	6,669	1,334
2	3	1,381,694	460,565	1,349	450
3	5	1,037,100	207,420	1,955	391
4	3	666,848	222,283	882	294
5	5	622,895	124,579	1,350	270
6	5	485,805	97,161	294	59
7	5	475,601	95,120	963	193
8	4	408,235	102,059	523	131
9	4	360,486	90,121	387	97
10	5	352,095	70,419	479	96
All 30 Vendors					
1-30	1-5	11,104,934	3,286,409	16,961	4,111

with the User Guide for the agency's arrangement with this vendor. We noted that the agency's P Card guidelines state that they are used to acquire goods and services that are not required frequently. According to Public Health Ontario, it has to follow this User Guide as opposed to its own procurement policy. This practice was also not limited to a single year. As shown in **Figure 12**, recurring P Card purchases exceeded \$25,000 in all the five years we analyzed.

The agency's finance team explained that for low-dollar and low-risk routine purchases, laboratory operations used P Cards instead of going through competitive procurement in these circumstances either because they needed to acquire the goods urgently, or, in cases where a contract existed between the agency and the vendor, because the contract did not cover the goods they needed. Additionally, they used P Cards for low-dollar and low-risk routine purchases when they needed to source from an alternative vendor if there were unforeseen supply shortages with the existing vendor. The dollar value of these recurring purchases, whether taken per year or cumulatively over the five years, should have required staff to

procure the goods and services competitively, either by soliciting quotes from at least three vendors or requesting bids from vendors. In either process, the procurement would have resulted in formal contracts with the chosen vendors, stipulating deliverables, payments and performance monitoring. However, because these transactions were made through P Cards, the agency's procurement team was not involved in these procurements, even though the team is responsible for monitoring the agency's compliance with both internal and public-sector procurement policies. At the time of our audit, the finance team did not periodically review P Card use across the agency to identify recurring transactions for which central procurement might be used without the need to use P Cards.

Our review of individual P Card limits noted that six of the cards have spending limits that range from \$35,000 to \$60,000, and one card has a limit of \$200,000 specifically for urgent COVID-19 pandemic-related purchases. According to Public Health Ontario, these exceptions were granted to meet operational needs resulting from the pandemic.

4.3.2 Vendor Progress and Performance Not Measured or Monitored

We found that Public Health Ontario does not have a formal process to track vendor performance and non-compliance, and does not always evaluate whether vendors have accomplished deliverables before it makes payment. As a result, procurement staff cannot easily verify, as part of their responsibilities to manage contracts, whether the vendor's work has been completed satisfactorily and whether the vendor met agreed upon terms before making payments.

Public Health Ontario's corporate procurement policy does not outline how to periodically monitor vendor performance and how to resolve matters of poor performance or non-compliance, even though the Directive outlines that vendor performance must be managed and documented, and any performance issues must be addressed.

Nonetheless, over half of the contracts we reviewed included requirements for the vendor to submit mandatory quarterly activity reports to Public Health Ontario that reflect all activities pertaining to the provision of goods and services. We requested copies of these reports submitted to Public Health Ontario for all contracts we reviewed, but the agency could not provide these reports for any contracts in our sample.

We also found that over half of the contracts we reviewed required the creation of a Contract Management Committee with representatives from Public Health Ontario and the vendor. The contract terms require the committee to meet regularly and conduct quarterly or semi-annual reviews of the vendors' fulfillment of the deliverables. We requested minutes of committee meetings; the agency informed us that the committees, though mentioned in the contracts, were never struck or acted upon. As a result, these reviews had not been completed at the time of our audit.

The procurement team told us that they regularly met with program staff to review contracts and discuss procurement issues, and that they had not identified performance issues with any of the vendors in our sample. However, they could not provide us with supporting documentation for 35% of our sample. In all

cases where the agency provided us with documentation, the communication between procurement staff and program area staff centred around clarification about contract terms and renewal options, with no discussion of the vendor's performance.

We noted that, as of May 31, 2023, 43 vendors had between two and seven active contracts with Public Health Ontario, with one vendor accounting for \$32 million in contracts. The value of the contracts with just these 43 vendors totalled \$108 million, which comprised 78% of the total value of all active contracts at the time. The multiple contracts with certain vendors highlight the importance of having a system in place to monitor and document vendor performance across different contracts.

The consequences of not monitoring vendor performance were evident in 2022 when Public Health Ontario paid a consulting firm almost \$50,000 to conduct a survey of staff to assess burnout, and recommend policies and practices to address agency staff burnout resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. At the conclusion of the contract, the vendor recommended that Public Health Ontario develop initiatives to help staff become involved with self-help activities such as exercise and meditation. The vendor also recommended that the agency implement policies that would provide staff with sufficient time off to allow meaningful recovery from work stress. However, the agency already had these initiatives and policies in place at the time; it had provided the consultant with its existing initiatives and policies, but the consultants still made these recommendations. With proper vendor performance monitoring, this lapse would have been identified earlier, thereby preventing the redundant recommendations.

The lack of vendor performance tracking also hinders Public Health Ontario's ability to review its history with vendors to help inform its decision-making process when engaging a vendor for a new project. In our review of a sample of contracts, we noted that in 73% of cases, there was no discussion of the vendors' historical performance with the agency or evidence of reference checks to inquire about other organizations' past experience with the vendors. For example, four

of the contracts we reviewed, with a combined value of over \$32 million, were awarded to one vendor. The contracts had effective dates between March 2020 and April 2022 for terms of three to over six years. None of the documentation for any of the four contracts discussed the vendor's historical performance.

RECOMMENDATION 8

To help ensure that Public Health Ontario is using taxpayer money to procure goods and services in an open and transparent manner and is receiving value for money, we recommend that Public Health Ontario:

- review the use of purchasing cards at least on an annual basis to identify recurring transactions with vendors, and take corrective actions as necessary;
- monitor that payments to vendors are made only when goods and services have been satisfactorily delivered and within the contract ceiling price;
- evaluate vendor progress and performance in accordance with contract terms; and
- develop and implement a process to include evaluation results in the consideration of vendor selection in future projects.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation. Prior to the pandemic, we had initiated a purchasing card (P Card) project to reduce P Card usage in Laboratory Operations. The project, which was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, was restarted in April 2023 and is now expected to be completed by February 2024. Public Health Ontario also plans to augment our procurement practices to ensure that processes are in place to evaluate vendor progress and performance. We will develop and implement a risk-based vendor performance framework to support these processes.

4.4 Public Health Ontario Has No Succession Plan in Place for Specialized Management Roles

Public Health Ontario does not have a formal succession plan in place to identify when key roles may need to be filled, such as in the case of retirement. This leaves Public Health Ontario at risk of being without senior leadership and/or key specialized roles for long periods before the positions are filled, potentially affecting its ability to appropriately respond to public health risks, especially during times of emergency.

The agency employs a wide variety of specialized roles, such as medical laboratory technologists, public health physicians, epidemiologists, clinical microbiologists, scientists and more. The scientific and technical advice Public Health Ontario provides to its clients is dependent on having a skilled workforce and anticipating any changes in these highly specialized roles, so that the agency can continue to carry out its mandate without any setbacks.

The impact of not having a succession plan was felt during the COVID-19 pandemic, when between April 2020 and September 2021, Public Health Ontario lost its President and CEO, Chief Health Protection Officer, and Chief of Microbiology and Laboratory Science all in the span of 17 months. Except for the President and CEO role, which was filled temporarily by an existing executive, these positions were filled by promoting internal senior leaders at a time when Public Health Ontario was looked to for leadership. The position of President and CEO was filled in July 2022, more than two years after its temporary holder took on the role.

In its 2017/18 annual business plan, Public Health Ontario outlined a strategic direction to continue to improve employee engagement, which included piloting a succession planning process for senior leadership positions. Work on this had begun in 2019 prior to the pandemic, specifically with the laboratory, such as developing guiding documents to support the succession planning process. More recently, in its 2020/23 strategic plan, Public Health Ontario outlined a

goal to build leadership capacity, by developing and implementing a proactive approach to workforce and succession planning that enhances diversity and inclusion and improves continuity and consistency of services. At the time of our audit, Public Health Ontario had not fully realized this goal.

Public Health Ontario also does not track which senior leadership or specialized positions have had a successor identified internally, and has not set a target for when a successor should be identified before an anticipated departure. Further, the agency does not have a formal process to identify which staff, including those in senior leadership or specialized positions, are about to retire and therefore would leave a position vacant or without effective leadership. During our audit, in June 2023 the agency's new Chief of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Officer assumed the full responsibilities of the position only after a transition period that had begun with her predecessor's retirement in January 2023. The predecessor's retirement was known from May 2022, at which point a formal public recruitment began. However, this role required an experienced public health physician executive, and there was a limited pool of qualified candidates. Although the successful candidate accepted the position in March 2023, the responsibilities of the position were still being covered by agency executives for an additional three months, during which the successful candidate was transitioning to her new role.

Other jurisdictions have targeted goals in their strategic plans and annual reports for the proportion of prioritized positions they want to have a successor identified for internally. For example, Quebec's Institut national de santé publique has a stated objective to anticipate the retirement of staff members whose expertise plays a key role in the pursuit of the institute's mission, and to develop succession plans to offset the impact of such departures by focusing on the full potential of its personnel. The Quebec institute targeted 60% of its prioritized positions to have an internal successor identified in 2020/21.

RECOMMENDATION 9

To better prepare Public Health Ontario in continuing to deliver its mandate with the support of skilled staff and management, we recommend that Public Health Ontario:

- conduct an analysis to determine when senior positions and specialized roles are expected to become vacant;
- identify and develop potential talent from within the organization, or identify the need to recruit;
- develop and track key performance indicators that support succession planning; and
- develop and implement a succession plan for senior leadership and specialized roles.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation. We are currently in the process of developing a new human resources strategy, which will include a focus on succession planning for the organization and will incorporate the elements described in the recommendation.

4.5 Continuous Improvement Efforts Needed to Collect Better Data on Performance Indicators

4.5.1 Public Health Ontario's Performance Indicators Mostly Measure Output Volume Instead of Client Satisfaction or Service Quality

Public Health Ontario establishes performance indicators as well as targets in its annual business plans; however, these indicators mostly focus on quantifying the output of the agency's operational activities rather than client satisfaction and actual performance of its core activities, making it difficult for the agency to demonstrate that it has been effective in meeting the needs of its clients.

As early as 2018/19, Public Health Ontario acknowledged in its annual report that the performance of public health organizations is often difficult to assess quantitatively. The agency noted that it continued to explore new approaches to performance measurement to incorporate additional impact, value and outcome considerations. Its 2018 peer review also recommended that the current performance indicators could be reoriented to capture service quality rather than focusing largely on volume of services delivered. However, the agency has made little progress on this. It stated in its 2021/22 annual report that it did not advance this work substantively due to focusing on requirements relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the time of our audit, Public Health Ontario was tracking performance indicators that are mostly volumetric. These include the number of knowledge products published on the agency's website, the number of visits to the agency's online data and analytic tools, and the number of scientific and technical support activities and data requests completed in response to clients and stakeholders.

With respect to measuring client satisfaction, the only performance indicator where satisfaction is directly measured is the percentage of professional development sessions achieving a client/stakeholder rating of at least 3.5 out of 5. The agency noted that it also measures the quality of its core activities and services through indicators of the percentage of laboratory tests completed within the target turnaround time that it has established, and the percentage of multi-jurisdictional outbreaks of diseases of public health significance that it assesses for further investigation within one day of being notified. In our view, these are indirect measures of client satisfaction. Public Health Ontario also noted that it frequently receives client feedback; however, these results are not shared publicly.

The agency informed us that, historically, it has conducted client satisfaction surveys via third-party marketing firms on a two-year cycle, with its last survey completed in 2016. Since then, the agency has

not sought these services due to government-imposed expenditure constraints.

In contrast, the Institut national de santé publique du Québec reported on more client-focused performance indicators such as clients' satisfaction with the usefulness of the institute's scientific productions to support them in their work, and satisfaction with its support for intervention with public health departments in the event of a public health threat (for more examples of these indicators, see **Appendix 5**).

Public Health Ontario informed us that it last fully reviewed its performance indicators during the development of its 2014–19 strategic plan. At that time, the agency reframed the performance scorecard reported in its annual reports to better align with its strategic direction. While it continues to review them on an annual basis, it plans to conduct its next full review of organizational performance measurement when it develops its next strategic plan, covering 2024–29.

4.5.2 Public Health Ontario Does Not Track or Report on Performance of Several Key Functions or Programs

Public Health Ontario's suite of performance indicators do not cover all its key functions, for example, the performance of its research ethics committee, environmental and occupational health program consults, or the agency's Locally Driven Collaborative Projects, explained in **Section 2.2.5**.

Public Health Ontario has contracts with 26 public health units to perform ethics reviews for local research these health units plan and conduct. According to the World Health Organization's Tool for Benchmarking Ethics Oversight of Health-Related Research with Human Participants, among the criteria research ethics committees should select to evaluate is time from a project application's submission to its approval. Public Health Ontario confirmed with us that it had not established clear definitions for the submission date of a project application for the purposes of tracking turnaround time.

We reviewed ethics reviews conducted by Public Health Ontario's research ethics committee for public health units from 2017/18 to 2022/23 using the date of receipt or, in lieu of that, the earliest indicated date, and found that on average it completed the reviews in seven weeks, ranging from one week to 18 weeks. When asked why this was not reported as a performance indicator, the agency informed us that it was still in the process of determining an appropriate performance indicator for ethics reviews, as the time it takes to grant approval may vary due to the quality of the application, including missing information or necessary follow-up with the applicants.

We looked to other public health agencies, and found that the joint ethics review board for Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada reported on its review board turnaround time, citing an average of 42 days (six weeks) in 2021/22 from time of application submission to approval, and this was reported in its ethics review board's annual report. Tracking this metric and publicly reporting on it may allow Public Health Ontario to identify education opportunities for the agency to train public health units on best practices relating to the development of project applications, and a demonstrated record of efficiency will help as the agency works toward bringing the remaining public health units into agreements for its services.

4.5.3 Public Health Ontario Does Not Track or Report Uptake of Its Services by Public Health Issue

Between 2020/21 and 2022/23, Public Health Ontario on average received about 1,630 requests annually from all clients, including public health units, which represent about 50% of those requests. The agency internally tracks the number of requests by the responsible lead program areas that handle them, but not by public health issue. Tracking and reporting on incoming requests by public health issue, such as alcohol, cannabis, dental health, food safety and healthy eating, could help the agency better inform and advise the Ministry on the most topical issues on which public health units require assistance from Public Health Ontario throughout the year, which would in turn provide the Ministry with a more complete picture of public health events that require intervention throughout the year across all three pillars of the public health system.

As shown in **Figure 13**, between 2020/21 and 2022/23, Public Health Ontario's "health protection" was assigned as the lead program area for most of these requests, which includes communicable diseases, emergency preparedness and response. The high volume of requests in this program area likely corresponded with the COVID-19 pandemic and can

Figure 13: Lead Program Areas Where Public Health Ontario Received Requests from All Clients, 2020/21-2022/23

Source of data: Public Health Ontario

Lead Program Area	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Health Protection ¹	1,540	1,441	980
Environmental and Occupational Health	216	120	122
Health Promotion, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention	77	35	57
Laboratory ²	126	115	49
Other ³	11	7	14
Total	1,970	1,718	1,222

1. Includes communicable diseases, emergency preparedness and response, infection prevention and control and antimicrobial stewardship.

2. Reflects the requests made primarily by public health units and the Ministry of Health; separate from support requests to the laboratory customer support centre.

3. Includes knowledge exchange and communications, strategy stakeholder relations, and legal and privacy.

be readily linked to that public health issue. However, program areas such as “environmental and occupational health” and “health promotion, chronic disease and injury prevention” cover a wide range of potential public health issues and yield less specific information to inform the full scope of issues raised by requestors. Public Health Ontario noted that the title and description of the request can be filtered for key words. However, this is not done regularly, and can result in inconsistency.

In addition, the agency reports publicly only on total volume of outputs but does not break down the total into program areas. For example, one of its performance indicators is “responses to client and stakeholder requests,” which includes all program areas.

RECOMMENDATION 10

To increase its value and impact on public health units and other clients, we recommend that Public Health Ontario:

- conduct a jurisdictional scan of key performance indicators used by other public health agencies, focusing on those that measure client satisfaction;
- establish and collect data on key performance indicators that are focused on client satisfaction and outcomes;
- update the request tracking database to categorize requests according to public health issue, and report on this in its annual report; and
- publicly report on key performance indicators, including those that relate to client and stakeholder requests, broken down by program areas.

PUBLIC HEALTH ONTARIO RESPONSE

Public Health Ontario accepts the recommendation. As described in the report, we intend to complete a fundamental review of organization-wide performance measurement as part of the implementation of our new Strategic Plan for 2024–29. We will use that review as an opportunity to introduce additional performance indicators that are focused on client satisfaction and outcomes, informed by a jurisdictional scan of performance indicators used by other public health agencies. We also plan to make updates to our request tracking database at the start of the next fiscal year, which will enable reporting on client request performance indicators broken down by the lead program area and public health issue.

4.6 IT Governance and Operations of Public Health Ontario

We examined Public Health Ontario’s information technology (IT) controls and processes related to user account management, cybersecurity and software management. Due to the nature of these findings and so as to minimize the risk of exposure for Public Health Ontario, we provided relevant details of our findings and recommendations directly to Public Health Ontario. Public Health Ontario agreed with the recommendations and committed to implementing them.

Appendix 1: Diseases of Public Health Significance under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

Disease	Communicable ¹	Virulent ²
Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)	✓	
Acute flaccid paralysis		
Amebiasis	✓	
Anaplasmosis		
Anthrax	✓	
Babesiosis		
Blastomycosis	✓	
Botulism	✓	
Brucellosis	✓	
<i>Campylobacter</i> enteritis	✓	
Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae infection or colonization	✓	
Chancroid	✓	
Chickenpox (varicella)	✓	
<i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> infections	✓	
Cholera	✓	✓
<i>Clostridium difficile</i> infection outbreaks in public hospitals	✓	
Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, all types	✓	
Cryptosporidiosis	✓	
Cyclosporiasis	✓	
Diphtheria	✓	✓
Diseases caused by a novel coronavirus, including severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and coronavirus disease (COVID-19)	✓	
<i>Echinococcus multilocularis</i> infection	✓	
Encephalitis, primary, viral	✓	
Encephalitis, post-infectious, vaccine-related, subacute sclerosing panencephalitis, unspecified		
Food poisoning, all causes	✓	
Gastroenteritis, outbreaks in institutions and public hospitals	✓	
Gonorrhea	✓	✓
Group A streptococcal disease, invasive	✓	
Group B streptococcal disease, neonatal		
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> disease, all types, invasive	✓	
Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome	✓	
Hemorrhagic fevers, including Ebola virus disease, Marburg virus disease, Lassa fever, and other viral causes	✓	✓
Hepatitis A, viral	✓	
Hepatitis B, viral	✓	
Hepatitis C, viral	✓	

Disease	Communicable ¹	Virulent ²
Influenza	✓	
Legionellosis	✓	
Leprosy	✓	✓
Listeriosis	✓	
Lyme disease		
Measles	✓	
Meningitis, acute, including bacterial, viral and other	✓	
Meningococcal disease, invasive	✓	
Mumps	✓	
Ophthalmia neonatorum		
Paralytic shellfish poisoning	✓	
Paratyphoid fever	✓	
Pertussis (whooping cough)	✓	
Plague	✓	✓
Pneumococcal disease, invasive	✓	
Poliomyelitis, acute	✓	
Powassan virus		
Psittacosis/ornithosis	✓	
Q fever	✓	
Rabies	✓	
Respiratory infection outbreaks in institutions and public hospitals	✓	
Rubella	✓	
Rubella, congenital syndrome	✓	
Salmonellosis	✓	
Shigellosis	✓	
Smallpox and other orthopoxviruses, including monkeypox	✓	✓
Syphilis	✓	✓
Tetanus	✓	
Trichinosis	✓	
Tuberculosis	✓	✓
Tularemia	✓	
Typhoid fever	✓	
Verotoxin-producing <i>E. coli</i> infection, including hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS)	✓	
West Nile virus illness		
Yersiniosis	✓	

1. An illness caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; can spread from the environment or from one person to another.
2. A pathogen's or microorganism's ability to cause damage to a host, such as a human.

Appendix 2: Mandatory Requirements for Board-Governed Agencies per Agencies and Appointments Directive

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

Requirement	Details
Directives	Must comply with all Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet (TB/MBC) directives whose application and scope cover board-governed agencies, unless exempted
Mandate reviews	Required once every six years
Mandate letter	Provided to the agency in time to influence business plan, no later than 180 calendar days prior to the start of the agency's next fiscal year
Business plan	- Must be submitted to Minister no later than one month before the start of the provincial agency's fiscal year - Must be Minister approved - Must be submitted to Chief Administrative Officer or executive lead three months prior to the beginning of the agency's fiscal year
Annual Report	- Must be submitted to Minister: - no later than 120 calendar days after the provincial agency's fiscal year-end, or - where the Auditor General is the auditor of record, within 90 calendar days of the provincial agency's receipt of the audited financial statement - Minister must approve within 60 calendar days of the Ministry's receipt of the report - The Ministry must table an agency's annual report in the Legislative Assembly within 30 days of Minister's approval of the report
Compliance attestation	- Chairs of board-governed agencies must send a letter to the responsible Minister, at a date set by annual instructions, confirming their agency's compliance with legislation, directives and accounting and financial policies - To support the Chair, Chief Executive Officers of provincial agencies should attest to the Chair that the provincial agency is in compliance with mandatory requirements
Public posting	- MOU, business plan and annual report must be made available to the public on a government or provincial agency website within 30 calendar days of Minister's approval of each - Agency mandate letter must be made available to the public on a government or provincial agency website at the same time as the agency's business plan - Expense information for appointees and senior executives must be posted on a government or provincial agency website
Memorandum of understanding (MOU)	- Must have a current MOU signed by the Chair and Minister - Upon a change in one of the parties, an MOU must be affirmed by all parties within six months
Risk assessment evaluation	- Ministries are required to complete risk assessment evaluations for each provincial agency - Ministries must report high risks to TB/MBC on a quarterly basis
Financial audit	Financial statements must be audited and reported based on meeting audit threshold criteria

Appendix 3: Jurisdictional Scan of Public Health Agencies in Canada

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

	Canada: Public Health Agency of Canada	British Columbia: BC Centre for Disease Control	Quebec: Institut national de santé publique du Québec
Mandate and function	• Contributes to disease and injury prevention and health promotion. • Enhances sharing of surveillance information and knowledge of disease and injury. • Provides federal leadership and accountability in managing public health events. • Strengthens intergovernmental collaboration and facilitates national approaches to public health policy and planning. • Serves as a central point for sharing public health expertise across Canada and with international partners, and for using this knowledge to inform and support Canada's public health priorities.	Provides surveillance, detection, prevention, treatment, policy development, and health promotion programming to promote and protect the health of British Columbians.	Offers expertise and support to Quebec's Ministre de la Santé and the health sector.
Governing document(s)	<i>Public Health Agency of Canada Act, 2006</i> <i>Department of Health Act, 1996</i> <i>Quarantine Act, 2005</i> <i>Human Pathogens and Toxins Act, 2009</i>	<i>Societies Act, 2015</i> Provincial Health Services Authority (Authority) Constitution and By-Laws	<i>The Act respecting Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 1998</i>
Organization type	Agency	Non-profit/Agency	Agency
Governed by Board	No	Yes—part of the Authority	Yes

	Canada: Public Health Agency of Canada	British Columbia: BC Centre for Disease Control	Quebec: Institut national de santé publique du Québec
Reporting relationship	The President is the deputy head of the agency and reports to the Minister of Health. As part of the agency, the Chief Public Health Officer provides the Minister of Health and the President of the agency with scientific public health advice.	The Vice President, Population and Public Health, is the lead for the agency and reports to the CEO of the Authority. The CEO of the Authority reports to the Authority's Board Chair. The Board Chair of the Authority is the interface between the CEO and the Minister. The Provincial Health Officer reports to the Ministry of Health and is external to the agency but works with it on disease control, health protection and population health.	All Board members, including the Président-directeur général and Chair of the Board, are appointed by the government. The Board reports to the Minister. The province's Directeur national de santé publique reports to the sous-ministre à la Santé et aux Services sociaux and is external to the agency.
Board appointment process	Governor-in-Council appointment	Appointed by the government	Appointed by the government
# of full-time- equivalent employees	4,565	444	666

Appendix 4: Audit Criteria

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

1. Effective governance and accountability structures are in place and operating to ensure Public Health Ontario operates cost-effectively.
2. Public Health Ontario's role in Ontario's public health system is clearly defined, and understood by its clients, stakeholders and the public.
3. Public Health Ontario has access to and collects relevant data and provides timely and objective data analyses and advice to its clients that meet their needs.
4. Public Health Ontario has effective processes in place to support public health units in developing programs and capacity to help deliver public health services locally, and seeks to identify opportunities for minimizing duplication of efforts in the public health system and achieving efficiencies in the laboratory system.
5. Public Health Ontario has resources available to fulfill its mandate and allocates and uses them efficiently and effectively.
6. Performance measures and targets are established, monitored and compared against actual results to ensure that the intended outcomes are achieved, and are publicly reported.
7. Processes are in place to identify areas of improvement and to operate more efficiently and effectively, and changes are made on a timely basis.

Appendix 5: Institut national de santé publique du Québec Examples of Strategic Objectives Performance Measures, 2021/22

Source of data: Institut national de santé publique du Québec

	Indicators	Target (%)
Participate in relevant legislative and governmental processes	Rate of participation in parliamentary committees and selected public consultations	80
Support public departments in their regional partnerships	Response rate to requests for support from public health departments in health impact assessment	90
Support public health actors in integrating knowledge into their practices	Client satisfaction rate on the usefulness of scientific productions to support clients in their work	95
Continuously capture the needs of regional partners	Satisfaction rate regarding support for intervention with public health departments in the event of a threat to the health of the population	90
Deliver scientific products in a timely manner for decision-makers	Rate of compliance with the deadlines set out in the charter of prioritized projects	80



Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

20 Dundas Street West, Suite 1530
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2C2
www.auditor.on.ca

Thursday, May 15, 2024

VIA EMAIL

RE: Resolution – Well-Water Testing

At its Regular Meeting of Council and Committee of the Whole held on Tuesday, May 7, 2024, the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Council approved the following resolution:

Resolution 2024-172

Moved by: Councillor Dykie

Seconded by: Councillor Verkaik

WHEREAS private water systems (e.g., wells) are not protected through legislated requirements under *The Safe Drinking Water Act 2002* and *The Clean Water Act 2006*, but are more likely to contribute to cases of gastrointestinal illness than municipal systems; and

WHEREAS the 2023 Ontario Auditor General's value-for-money audit of Public Health Ontario (PHO) recommended that PHO, in conjunction with the Ontario Ministry of Health, begin the gradual discontinuance of free private drinking water testing; and

WHEREAS, in Bradford West Gwillimbury, approximately 3200 households do not receive water from municipal systems, with many relying on a private drinking water system, including wells; and

WHEREAS the Walkerton Inquiry Report Part II, concluded the privatization of laboratory testing of drinking water samples contributed directly to the E. coli outbreak in Walkerton, Ontario in May 2000; and

WHEREAS all Ontarians deserve safe, clean water, and free well-water testing is a way to help ensure that residents on private wells continue to have barrier-free access to well water testing.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED Council call on the Province to not phase out free well-water testing as part of the proposed streamlining efforts of public health laboratory operations in the province; and

THAT this resolution be circulated to the Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health; Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Hon. Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, York—Simcoe's MPP; and all Ontario Municipalities.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Valerie Vicary'.

Valerie Vicary
Deputy Clerk, Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury
(905) 775-5366 ext: 1105
vVicary@townofbwg.com

CC:

Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health;
Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs;
Hon. Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, York—
Simcoe's MPP; and
All Ontario Municipalities



374028 6TH LINE • AMARANTH ON • L9W 0M6

May 16, 2024

Sent Via Email

Re: Resolution on Water Testing Services for Private Drinking Water

At its regular meeting of Council held on May 15, 2024, the Township of Amaranth Council passed the following resolution concerning Water Testing Services for Private Drinking Water.

Resolution #: 5

Moved by: G. Little

Seconded by: A. Stirk

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Whereas the Ontario Auditor General's annual report on public health from December 2023 indicates that Public Health Ontario is proposing the phasing-out of free provincial water testing services for private drinking water; and

Whereas free private drinking water testing services has played a pivotal role in safeguarding public health, particularly in rural communities, including the entire Township of Amaranth, that rely predominantly on private drinking water; and

Whereas the removal of free private drinking water testing could lead to a reduction in testing, potentially increasing the risk of waterborne diseases in these vulnerable populations; and

Whereas the tragic events in Walkerton, Ontario underscored the critical importance of safe drinking water.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that The Township of Amaranth hereby requests that the Province reconsider and ultimately decide against the proposed phasing-out of free private drinking water testing services.

Further Be It Resolved that this resolution be sent to all Ontario municipalities, Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks, Minister of Health, Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health Unit, and MPP Sylvia Jones.

CARRIED

Please do not hesitate to contact the office if you require any further information on this matter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Martin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nicole Martin, Dipl. M.A.
CAO/Clerk

CC:
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Minister of Health
Wellington Dufferin Public Health Unit
MPP Sylvia Jones
All Ontario Municipalities



Phone: 613-584-2000
Fax: 613-584-3237
Email: townmail@deepriver.ca
deepriver.ca |  

May 16, 2024

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford,

Please be advised that at the Regular Meeting of Council on April 24, 2024, Council of the Corporation of the Town of Deep River passed the following resolution in support of the County of Renfrew Council resolution regarding Rural and Small Urban Municipalities – Affordability of Water and Wastewater Systems:

6.1.1 Rural and Small Urban Municipalities - Affordability of Water and Wastewater Systems
Renfrew County Council

RESOLUTION 2024 117

MOVED BY: Councillor Hughes
SECONDED BY: Councillor Giardini

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the correspondence from the County of Renfrew Council regarding the affordability of Water and Wastewater Systems of rural and small urban municipalities, be received,

THAT Council of the Town of Deep River endorses the motion, and

THAT it be forwarded to the same persons as listed in the County of Renfrew distribution list.

CARRIED



Kind Regards,



Jackie Mellon, on behalf of the Council of the Town of Deep River
Clerk
Town of Deep River

cc: The Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure
The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions
and Intergovernmental Affairs
The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Cheryl Gallant, MP, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke
John Yakabuski, MPP, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and Parliamentary Assistant to
the Minister of the Energy
Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO)
Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA)
Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)
All Ontario Municipalities



Office of the
County Warden



9 INTERNATIONAL DRIVE
PEMBROKE, ON, CANADA
K8A 6W5
613-735-7288
FAX: 613-735-2081
www.countyofrenfrew.on.ca

January 31, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

RE: Rural and Small Urban Municipalities – Affordability of Water and Wastewater Systems

Dear Premier Ford,

Please be advised that at the Regular Council Meeting on January 31, 2024, The County of Renfrew passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) (Section 1.6.6.2) states that municipal sewage services and municipal water services are the preferred form of servicing for settlement areas to support protection of the environment and minimize potential risks to human health and safety and that intensification and redevelopment within these settlement areas should be promoted; and

WHEREAS the PPS (Section 2.2.1 (f)) states that planning authorities shall protect, improve, or restore the quality and quantity of water by implementing the necessary restrictions on development and site alternation to protect all drinking supplies and designated vulnerable areas, and protect, improve, or restore vulnerable surface and ground water, sensitive surface water features and sensitive groundwater features, and their hydrologic functions; and

WHEREAS the PPS (Sections 2.2.1(h) and (i)) states that there is consideration of environmental lake capacity as well as stormwater management practices; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of the Environment, Protection and Conservation (MECP) Procedural Guideline B-1-5 Policy 2 provision states that water quality which presently does not meet the Provincial Water Quality Objectives shall not be further degraded and all practical measures shall be undertaken to upgrade the water quality to the Objectives; and

WHEREAS in 2014 the Township of Whitewater Region authorized Jp2gConsultants Inc. to undertake a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for the purpose of evaluating viable options to upgrade the 1979 Cobden Wastewater Treatment Plant. This plant did not meet guidelines for effluent flow into Muskrat Lake and Cobden Wetland being highly sensitive, at-capacity, inland lake, and Provincial Significant Wetland (PSW) and acknowledged as one of

the most eutrophic in the province. The plant had ongoing seasonal overflow events, and was operating at maximum capacity; and

WHEREAS in 2018 the Council of the Township of Whitewater Region approved the construction of a new parallel mechanical system that would meet all provincial environmental and regulatory requirements including accommodating future growth. Federal and provincial contributions only covered 50% of the final construction costs, as there was no ability to renegotiate with federal and provincial partners once real costs were known. As a result, the balance of costs (\$6M) was debentured over 30 years at interest rates that are slightly punitive to rural and small urban municipalities; and

WHEREAS in 2019 the Council of the Township of Whitewater Region conducted a Water and Wastewater Rate Study that demonstrated the need for rate increases of over 100% to fund the new wastewater treatment plant construction debenture and the significantly increased operating costs for a parallel mechanical system. Rural and small urban municipalities experience very limited growth as federal and provincial policies heavily support growth in urban centers. As there are no other sources of available operational funding, rural and small urban municipalities are expected to fund the construction and operation of these state-of-the-art systems from existing property owners and nominal forecasted growth; and

WHEREAS in 2023 the Township of Whitewater Region combined water and wastewater rates have risen to almost \$3,000/year for its five hundred and eleven (511) users and are among the highest in the County of Renfrew and across the Province of Ontario. There are similarly high user rates in the Township of Madawaska Valley as a result of Provincial regulations and a small number of users. Other examples of rapidly increasing rates include the Towns of Deep River, Renfrew, Arnprior, Laurentian Hills, and Petawawa, and the Townships of Bonnechere Valley, Laurentian Valley and Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards, where significant upgrades in short periods of time are making rates unaffordable even with an increased number of users.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the County of Renfrew:

Advocate to the provincial and federal levels of government to make them aware that rural and small urban water and wastewater systems are financially unsustainable; and Advocate to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to examine if the unaffordability of water and wastewater system operational costs is systemic provincially and nationally.

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be circulated to The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; the Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure (Ontario); the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities (Canada); the Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (Ontario), Cheryl Gallant, MP, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, John Yakabuski, MPP, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; AMO; ROMA; FCM; and all Municipalities in Ontario.

May 9, 2024

Please be advised that during the regular Council meeting of May 7, 2024 the following resolution regarding seeking support for the Province and Federal Government to work together to help end the national housing affordability crisis.

RESOLUTION NO. **2024-224**

DATE: **May 7, 2024**

MOVED BY: **Councillor Branderhorst**

SECONDED BY: **Councillor Roberts**

WHEREAS there is an unprecedented national housing affordability crisis and substantial investments in new affordable social housing are required to address the overwhelming need;

WHEREAS substantial investments in revitalizing existing affordable social housing are required to maintain existing housing stock so as not to make the national housing affordability crisis worse;

WHEREAS social support expansions are required to prevent families choosing between housing and other basic necessities of life;

WHEREAS the national housing affordability crisis is most acute in Ontario, and unlike most Provinces and Territories in Canada, 47 Service Managers and District Social Service Administration Boards (SM/DSSAB) are responsible for delivering social supports, including housing affordability supports in this Province;

WHEREAS many of these 47 SM/DSSABs in Ontario are larger than many provinces and territories in other provinces in the country, but lack the revenue, policy tools and powers of the Provincial and Federal governments to end the housing affordability crisis on their own;

WHEREAS on March 25, 2024 our local SM/DSSAB (Prince Edward Lennnox and Addington Social Services) was notified by the Province that the Federal Government would be cutting \$355 million in funding intended to support affordable social housing across the province, due to a disagreement about how community housing units are counted as part of the National Housing Strategy Action Plan;

WHEREAS any reductions in funding from the Federal and Provincial governments risks the termination of critically needed housing and social supports for some of the most vulnerable across Ontario;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the County of Prince Edward requests that the funding dispute between the Federal and Provincial governments be resolved to limit mounting harms to some of Ontario's most vulnerable people;

THAT the Federal and Provincial governments to continue to fund SMs/DSSABs in an amount equivalent to the monies under the CMHC-Ontario Bilateral agreement in the National Housing Strategy until a new funding agreement can be reached;

THAT the Council of the County of Prince Edward advocate to the Federal and Provincial governments to establish a trilateral table including the SMs/DSSABs, to negotiate the final 3 year tranche of funding under the National Housing Strategy;

THAT Council direct the Mayor to write to the Provincial and Federal Ministers of Housing urgently requesting confirmation that financial support will continue for vulnerable households across Ontario currently in receipt of the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit prior to May 31, 2024; and

THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, Prince Edward Lennox and Addington Social Services, the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus, and all Ontario Municipalities.

Yours truly,



Catalina Blumenberg, **CLERK**

cc: Mayor Steve Ferguson, Councillor Branderhorst, and Marcia Wallace, CAO



Hon. Doug Ford premier@ontario.ca
(sent via e-mail)

May 10th, 2024

Re: Provincial Regulations Needed to Restrict Keeping of Non-native ("exotic") Wild Animals

Please be advised that the Council of the Town of Plympton-Wyoming, at its meeting on May 8th, 2024, passed the following motion supporting the resolution from St. Catharines regarding the need of Provincial regulations to restrict the keeping of non-native ("exotic") wild animals.

Motion #21

Moved by Councillor Bob Woolvett

Seconded by Councillor Kristen Rodrigues

That Council support correspondence item 'g' from St. Catharines regarding Provincial Regulations needed to Restrict Keeping of Non-Native (exotic) Wild Animals.

Carried.

If you have any questions regarding the above motion, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email at eflynn@plympton-wyoming.ca.

Sincerely,

Ella Flynn
Executive Assistant – Deputy Clerk
Town of Plympton-Wyoming

Cc: The Honourable Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General
The Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Local MPPs
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO)
Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association of Ontario (MLEAO)
All Municipalities of Ontario

April 23, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
1 Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Sent via email: premier@ontario.ca

**Re: Provincial Regulations Needed to Restrict Keeping of Non-native ("exotic") Wild Animals
Our File 35.11.2**

Dear Premier Ford,

At its meeting held on April 8, 2024, St. Catharines City Council approved the following motion:

WHEREAS Ontario has more private non-native ("exotic") wild animal keepers, roadside zoos, mobile zoos, wildlife exhibits and other captive wildlife operations than any other province; and

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has of yet not developed regulations to prohibit or restrict animal possession, breeding, or use of non-native ("exotic") wild animals in captivity; and

WHEREAS non-native ("exotic") wild animals can pose very serious human health and safety risks, and attacks causing human injury and death have occurred in the province; and

WHEREAS the keeping of non-native ("exotic") wild animals can cause poor animal welfare and suffering, and poses risks to local environments and wildlife; and

WHEREAS owners of non-native ("exotic") wild animals can move from one community to another even after their operations have been shut down due to animal welfare or public health and safety concerns; and

WHEREAS municipalities have struggled, often for months or years, to deal with non-native ("exotic") wild animal issues and have experienced substantive regulatory, administrative, enforcement and financial challenges; and

WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) and the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association (MLEOA) have indicated their support for World Animal Protection's campaign for provincial regulations of non-native ("exotic") wild animals and roadside zoos in letters to the Ontario Solicitor General and Ontario Minister for Natural Resources and Forestry;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of St. Catharines hereby petitions the provincial government to implement provincial regulations to restrict the possession, breeding, and use of non-native ("exotic") wild animals and license zoos in order to guarantee the fair and consistent application of policy throughout Ontario for the safety of Ontario's citizens and the non-native ("exotic") wild animal population; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution will be forwarded to all municipalities in Ontario for support, the Premier of Ontario, Ontario Solicitor General, Ontario Minister for Natural Resources and Forestry, MPP Jennie Stevens, MPP Sam Oosterhoff, MPP Jeff Burch, AMO, AMCTO, and MLEAO.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at extension 1524.



Kristen Sullivan, City Clerk
Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk
:av

cc: The Honourable Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General
The Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Local MPPs
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO)
Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association of Ontario (MLEAO)
All Municipalities of Ontario

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

HELD
May 14th, 2024

2024-106

Moved by Councillor Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Champagne

THAT Council for the Municipality of East Ferris support the resolution from the City of St. Catharines regarding petitioning the provincial government to implement provincial regulations to restrict the possession, breeding, and use of non-native (“exotic”) wild animals and license zoos in order to guarantee the fair and consistent application of policy throughout Ontario for the safety of Ontario’s citizens and the non-native (“exotic”) wild animal population;

AND FUTHER THAT that this resolution will be forwarded to all municipalities in Ontario for support, the Premier of Ontario, Ontario Solicitor General, Ontario Minister for Natural Resources and Forestry, MPP Anthony Rota, MPP Vic Fedeli, AMO, AMCTO, and MLEAO.

Carried Mayor Rochefort

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of
Resolution No. 2024-106 passed by the
Council of the Municipality of East Ferris
on the 14th day of May, 2024.



Kari Hanselman, Dipl. M.A.
Clerk

April 23, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
1 Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Sent via email: premier@ontario.ca

**Re: Provincial Regulations Needed to Restrict Keeping of Non-native ("exotic") Wild Animals
Our File 35.11.2**

Dear Premier Ford,

At its meeting held on April 8, 2024, St. Catharines City Council approved the following motion:

WHEREAS Ontario has more private non-native ("exotic") wild animal keepers, roadside zoos, mobile zoos, wildlife exhibits and other captive wildlife operations than any other province; and

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has of yet not developed regulations to prohibit or restrict animal possession, breeding, or use of non-native ("exotic") wild animals in captivity; and

WHEREAS non-native ("exotic") wild animals can pose very serious human health and safety risks, and attacks causing human injury and death have occurred in the province; and

WHEREAS the keeping of non-native ("exotic") wild animals can cause poor animal welfare and suffering, and poses risks to local environments and wildlife; and

WHEREAS owners of non-native ("exotic") wild animals can move from one community to another even after their operations have been shut down due to animal welfare or public health and safety concerns; and

WHEREAS municipalities have struggled, often for months or years, to deal with non-native ("exotic") wild animal issues and have experienced substantive regulatory, administrative, enforcement and financial challenges; and

WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) and the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association (MLEOA) have indicated their support for World Animal Protection's campaign for provincial regulations of non-native ("exotic") wild animals and roadside zoos in letters to the Ontario Solicitor General and Ontario Minister for Natural Resources and Forestry;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of St. Catharines hereby petitions the provincial government to implement provincial regulations to restrict the possession, breeding, and use of non-native ("exotic") wild animals and license zoos in order to guarantee the fair and consistent application of policy throughout Ontario for the safety of Ontario's citizens and the non-native ("exotic") wild animal population; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution will be forwarded to all municipalities in Ontario for support, the Premier of Ontario, Ontario Solicitor General, Ontario Minister for Natural Resources and Forestry, MPP Jennie Stevens, MPP Sam Oosterhoff, MPP Jeff Burch, AMO, AMCTO, and MLEAO.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at extension 1524.



Kristen Sullivan, City Clerk
Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk
:av

cc: The Honourable Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General
The Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Local MPPs
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO)
Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association of Ontario (MLEAO)
All Municipalities of Ontario

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LARDER LAKE

69 Fourth Avenue, Larder Lake, ON

Phone: 705-643-2158 Fax: 705-643-2311



MOVED BY:

- ☐ Thomas Armstrong
☐ Patricia Hull
☒ Paul Kelly
☐ Lynne Paquette

SECONDED BY:

- ☒ Thomas Armstrong
☐ Patricia Hull
☐ Paul Kelly
☐ Lynne Paquette

Motion #: 8

Resolution #:

Date: May 14, 2024

WHEREAS Ontario has more private non-native ("exotic") wild animal keepers, roadside zoos, mobile zoos, wildlife exhibits and other captive wildlife operations than any other province;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has of yet not developed regulations to prohibit or restrict animal possession, breeding, or use of exotic wild animals in captivity;

AND WHEREAS exotic wild animals can pose very serious human health and safety risks, and attacks causing human injury and death have occurred in the province;

AND WHEREAS the keeping of exotic wild animals can cause poor animal welfare and suffering, and poses risks to local environments and wildlife;

AND WHEREAS owners of exotic wild animals can move from one community to another even after their operations have been shut down due to animal welfare or public health and safety concerns;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have struggled, often for months or years, to deal with exotic wild animal issues and have experienced substantive regulatory, administrative, enforcement and financial challenges;

AND WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), and the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association (MLEOA) have indicated their support for World Animal Protection's campaign for provincial regulations of exotic wild animals and

Recorded vote requested: ☐

	For	Against
Tom Armstrong		
Patricia Hull		
Paul Kelly		
Lynne Paquette		
Patty Quinn		

I declare this motion

☐ Carried
☐ Lost / Defeated
☐ Deferred to: _____ (enter date)
Because:
☐ Referred to: _____ (enter body)
Expected response: _____ (enter date)

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest*

Chair: _____

*Disclosed his/her (their) interest(s), abstained from discussion and did not vote on this question.

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LARDER LAKE

69 Fourth Avenue, Larder Lake, ON

Phone: 705-643-2158 Fax: 705-643-2311



MOVED BY:

___ ☐ Thomas Armstrong
___ ☐ Patricia Hull
___ ☐ Paul Kelly
___ ☐ Lynne Paquette

SECONDED BY:

___ ☐ Thomas Armstrong
___ ☐ Patricia Hull
___ ☐ Paul Kelly
___ ☐ Lynne Paquette

Motion #: 9

Resolution #:

Date: May 14, 2024

roadside zoos in letters to the Ontario Solicitor General and Ontario Minister for Natural Resources and Forestry;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Corporation of the Township of Larder Lake hereby petitions the provincial government to implement provincial regulations to restrict the possession, breeding, and use of exotic wild animals and license zoos in order to guarantee the fair and consistent application of policy throughout Ontario for the safety of Ontario's citizens and the exotic wild animal population;

AND FINALLY THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, Ontario's Solicitor General, Ontario's Minister for Natural Resources and Forestry, MPP Timiskaming-Cochrane, AMO, AMCTO, MLEAO, Timiskaming Municipal Association (TMA), the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, (FONOM), and all municipalities within the District of Timiskaming.

Recorded vote requested: ☐

	For	Against
Tom Armstrong	✓	
Patricia Hull	✓	
Paul Kelly	✓	
Lynne Paquette	✓	
Patty Quinn	✓	

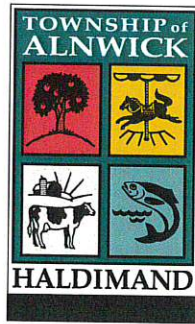
I declare this motion

☒ Carried
☐ Lost / Defeated
☐ Deferred to: _____ (enter date)
Because:
☐ Referred to: _____ (enter body)
Expected response: _____ (enter date)

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest*

Chair:

*Disclosed his/her (their) interest(s), abstained from discussion and did not vote on this question.



May 13, 2024

Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and
Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO)
AMCTO Advocacy Team
(advocacy@amcto.com)

Dear Sir/Madam:

RE: MFIPPA Modernization

This is to advise that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand at their Special Council Meeting on January 25th, 2024, passed the following resolution:

RES:20240125-11

Moved by Deputy Mayor Joan Stover, seconded by Councillor Greg Booth;

"Whereas the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990 (MFIPPA) has not been comprehensively reviewed in over 30 years; and

Whereas municipalities consider transparency an important tool for building and maintaining public trust and recognize the importance of continuously improving; and

Whereas municipal administrators need legislation that supports effective local program delivery, is responsive to current technology and reflects its original intent of open and accountable government; and

Whereas MFFIPA presents a number of challenges for municipal staff which can hinder its effectiveness and efficiency when it comes to serving the public; and

Whereas municipalities should have updated legislation that ensures municipal resources are best allocated; increases trust in public institutions through strengthening

accountability, transparency and responsiveness; and addresses the needs of the digital era; and

Whereas the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) has comprehensively reviewed MFIPPA and put forward recommendations in their submission "Looking Ahead: A Proactive Submission to Modernize the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act";

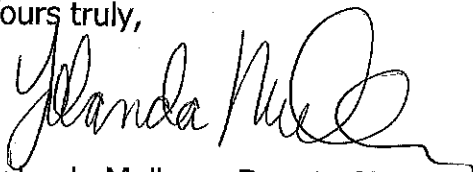
Be it resolved that the Ministry of Public Business and Service Delivery be requested to review MFIPPA and consider recommendations as outlined by AMCTO within their submission, "Looking Ahead: A Proactive Submission to Modernize the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act"; and

Further be it resolved that Council direct the Deputy Clerk to send a copy of this resolution to AMCTO's Advocacy Team, the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and all Ontario municipalities."

CARRIED

We respectfully submit the resolution supporting the review and reform of MFIPPA.

Yours truly,



Yolanda Melburn, Deputy Clerk
Township of Alnwick/Haldimand
905-349-2822 ext. 32
ymelburn@ahthwp.ca

Cc: Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery
All Ontario Municipalities

May 14, 2024

Via email: minister.mah@ontario.ca

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Attention: Paul Calandra
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Mr. Calandra:

RE: Request for Royal Assent of Administrative Monetary Penalty System in the Ontario Building Code Act.

The Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS) is an enforcement tool approved by the Provincial Government in August of 2009 and was originally used for parking offences to free up court time and cost.

A large number of municipalities have adopted an AMPS program and have applied AMPS to other Municipal enforcement by-laws as a replacement to the standard Part 1 Provincial Offences Act (POA) ticket system, as it provides the alleged offender with a flexible appeal system and the municipality the ability to apply unpaid penalties on to the property taxes. AMPS frees up valuable Provincial Offences Court time saving the province and the municipalities valuable resources and funds.

AMPS was written into the Building Code Act in December of 2017 however it has not received Royal Assent. AMPS has proven to be a valuable tool for education and enforcement of other Municipal by-laws. On behalf of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Lake of Bays, we ask that AMPS receive Royal Assent. In doing so this would free up time for Building Officials to conduct their primary job (building inspections) instead of having to attend court normally a full day to hear an appeal to Part 1 ticket, at the same time providing the offender a more streamlined appeal system.

Sincerely,



Carrie Sykes, *Dipl. M.A., CMO, AOMC*,
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk.

TG/iv
Copy to:

MPP, Graydon Smith
Association of Ontario Municipalities
Association of Municipal Clerk and Treasurers of Ontario
All Area Municipalities



**MUNICIPALITÉ DE CASSELMAN
ORDRE DU JOUR
RÉUNION ORDINAIRE**

Réunion Ordinaire

No. du point à l'ordre du jour: 15.1.1.
No. du point 2024-134
Titre: Geneviève Lajoie - Autonomie des offices de protection de la nature
Date: le mardi 7 mai 2024

Proposé par: Genevieve Lajoie

Appuyé par: Paul Groulx

ATTENDU QUE le ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts (MNR) a proposé des modifications réglementaires en vertu de la Loi sur les offices de protection de la nature, telles que détaillées dans l'affichage n°019-8320 sur le Registre de l'environnement de l'Ontario, qui accordent au ministre des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts des pouvoirs sans précédent pour i) empêcher un office de protection de la nature de délivrer un permis et décider d'une demande de permis à la place de l'office de protection de la nature, et ii) réviser une décision de permis d'un office de protection de la nature à la demande d'un requérant, comme l'a notifié Jennifer Keyes, directrice de la planification et du développement des ressources ;

ET ATTENDU QUE ces changements menacent de minimiser l'expertise, l'autonomie et les connaissances locales des offices de protection de la nature, mettant en péril la gestion efficace des ressources naturelles de l'Ontario, comme l'indique la lettre de Geneviève Lajoie, maire de la Municipalité de Casselman et membre dévouée du conseil d'administration de la Conservation de la Nation Sud ;

ET ATTENDU QUE les modifications proposées peuvent conduire à des développements qui compromettent la qualité de l'eau, la santé publique et la biodiversité, et ignorent le rôle essentiel des autorités de conservation dans les stratégies d'adaptation au climat, les droits et les connaissances des populations autochtones, ainsi que la durabilité environnementale et économique ;

QU'IL SOIT RÉSOLU QUE la Municipalité de Casselman soit solidaire, exprimant sa profonde inquiétude et son opposition aux changements réglementaires proposés en vertu de la Loi sur les offices de protection de la nature ;

QU'IL SOIT RÉSOLU que la Municipalité de Casselman soutienne l'appel à respecter les principes d'intégrité scientifique, d'expertise locale et de participation de la communauté aux efforts de conservation, en plaidant pour l'autonomie des autorités de conservation afin de protéger notre environnement contre les décisions qui favorisent le développement au détriment de l'intégrité environnementale ;

ET QU'IL SOIT EN OUTRE RÉSOLU QUE la Municipalité de Casselman encourage toutes les municipalités de l'Ontario à se joindre à cet appel en appuyant la lettre adressée au MRNF par la mairesse Geneviève Lajoie, et à demander au MRNF de reconsidérer les changements réglementaires proposés en faveur de la gestion de l'environnement, de la confiance du public et des droits des générations futures.

Sébastien Dion

Signed with Consigno Cloud (2024/05/08)
Verify with verifio.com or Adobe Reader.



Sébastien Dion, Greffier

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Adopté



**MUNICIPALITY OF CASSELMAN
AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING**

Regular Meeting

Agenda Number: 15.1.1.
Resolution Number 2024-134
Title: Geneviève Lajoie - Autonomy of Conservation Authorities in Ontario
Date: Tuesday, May 7, 2024

Moved by: Genevieve Lajoie
Seconded by: Paul Groulx

WHEREAS the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) has proposed regulatory changes under the Conservation Authorities Act, as detailed in posting #019-8320 on the Environment Registry of Ontario, which grant the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry unprecedented powers to i) prevent a conservation authority from issuing a permit and decide on a permit application in the place of the conservation authority, and ii) review a conservation authority permit decision at the request of an applicant, as notified by Jennifer Keyes, Director, Resources Planning and Development Policy Branch;

AND WHEREAS these changes threaten to undermine the expertise, autonomy, and localized knowledge of conservation authorities, risking the effective stewardship of Ontario's natural resources, as articulated in the letter from Genevieve Lajoie, Mayor of Casselman and dedicated board member of the South Nation Conservation;

AND WHEREAS the proposed changes may lead to developments that compromise water quality, public health, and biodiversity, and ignore the critical role of conservation authorities in climate adaptation strategies, indigenous rights and knowledge, and environmental and economic sustainability;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Municipality of Casselman stands in solidarity, expressing deep concern and opposition to the proposed regulatory changes under the Conservation Authorities Act;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipality of Casselman supports the call to uphold the principles of scientific integrity, local expertise, and community input in conservation efforts, advocating for the autonomy of conservation authorities to protect our environment from decisions that favor development at the expense of environmental integrity;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Municipality of Casselman urges all Ontario municipalities to join in this call by supporting the letter addressed to the MNR by Mayor Genevieve Lajoie, and to advocate for the MNR to reconsider the proposed regulatory changes in favor of environmental stewardship, public trust, and the rights of future generations.

Sébastien Dion

Signed with ConsignO Cloud (2024/05/08)
Verify with verifio.com or Adobe Reader.



Sébastien Dion, Clerk

Carried
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