

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 3111



The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health
Report: #2024-INFO-08
Date: March 1, 2024

Subject:

Update to the Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability

Recommendation:

Receive for information

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 To provide an update on changes to the [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability](#) (OPHS).

2. Background

2.1 The updated OPHS came into effect in June 2021. Updated protocols and guidelines under the OPHS are released as required.

2.2 In August 2023, the Ministry of Health (MOH) announced its [Strengthening Public Health Strategy](#). The MOH's goal is to optimize capacity, stability and sustainability in public health and deliver more equitable health outcomes for all Ontarians.

2.3 Desired outcomes related to the MOH's goal include clarified and refined public health roles and responsibilities and improved frontline programs and services at the local level.

3. Updates to the OPHS

3.1 As part of the Strengthening Public Health Strategy, the MOH is reviewing and revising the OPHS and incorporated documents. On December 15, 2023, the MOH communicated short-term opportunities to refine, refocus and relevel specific requirements as well as additional areas where releveling or centralizing supports

will ease local resources for program and service delivery. It is anticipated that the full revised OPHS will be implemented beginning January 1, 2025.

- 3.2 In follow-up to the December 2023 memo, the MOH updated and posted two documents on the [OPHS](#) website, on February 14, 2024.
 - a. The [Menu Labelling Protocol, 2024](#) includes a shift to complaint-based inspections to decrease inspection and data burden for Local Public Health Agencies (LPHAs).
 - b. The [Emergency Management Guideline, 2024](#) includes revisions to better align with national and international approaches and best practices to emergency management.
- 3.3 The MOH announced that the following supports will be implemented in the coming weeks:
 - a. The Food Handler Training Course and Exam will include translations into additional languages to improve consistency.
 - b. The Small Drinking Water Systems program will include updated educational materials to support consistent delivery.
- 3.4 The MOH has begun its initial engagement phase with the public health sector through existing Standards Review Groups to provide feedback on how to relevel, refocus and refine the OPHS and incorporated documents ahead of the planned, broader sector consultation in Spring 2024.
- 3.5 The MOH will be establishing an OPHS Review Table in early 2024 to provide leadership and guidance, input into the broader consultation plan and advice on implementation supports for LPHAs.
- 3.6 The MOH will continue to leverage opportunities to engage with other partners and stakeholder groups for input into the OPHS review, including Indigenous and Francophone partners through existing advisory and technical groups.

4. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 4.1 This report aligns with the following strategic goal and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:
 - a. Goal 5: Service Excellence
 - 5.1 Optimize resources and partnerships to deliver exceptional quality services and value.
 - 5.2. Collaborate for a seamless service experience.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Durham Region Health Department (DRHD) will respond to OPHS review engagement opportunities and will contribute to the OPHS review process as requested.
- 5.2 DRHD is working to ensure that its policies and procedures are in compliance with the updated OPHS protocol and guideline.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

R.J. Kyle, BSc, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC, FACPM
Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health