

Ottawa Public Health 2017 Budget Briefing Note

Description

The Ottawa Board of Health through Ottawa Public Health (OPH) seeks to improve and advocate for the health and wellbeing of Ottawa residents and ensure the effective delivery of public health programs and services. The core functions of the public health unit are surveillance, health promotion, disease prevention and health protection. The Board of Health is established by the Ontario *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (R.S.O 1990, c.H.7, s.2) and is accountable for compliance with the Ontario Public Health Standards (2008), the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards (2011) and for reporting on the 2014-2016 Public Health Funding Accountability Agreement's performance indicators and targets. In addition, OPH applies principles of best practice in governance to promote organizational excellence and contributes to a public health sector with a focus on performance, accountability and sustainability.

Programs/Services Offered

In partnership with stakeholders, OPH uses population health assessment, surveillance, research, and evaluation to identify public health priorities and to plan, implement and refine services in the mandatory program areas:

The Infectious Disease Program prevents and reduces the burden of infectious diseases, such as measles, invasive group A streptococcal, meningococcal disease and sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections. The program's work includes harm reduction services for people affected by substance use, case and contact management, outbreak response, and community outreach and education. The programs also reduces the burden of vaccine preventable diseases in Ottawa by conducting vaccine surveillance; providing publicly funded school-based vaccinations for all eligible students; and increasing community access to publicly funded influenza vaccines. Direct clinical services are provided through the Sexual Health Centre and its community clinics across the city for diseases such as HIV, gonorrhoea, herpes, chlamydia and syphilis. The program gives treatment and ensures follow-up for every case of active tuberculosis.

Education and support for infection prevention and control are provided to community facilities such as long-term care and retirement homes.

The Chronic Diseases and Injuries Prevention programs work towards reducing the burden of preventable chronic diseases and reducing the frequency, severity and impact of preventable injury. The program also seeks to mitigate the harms of substance misuse. This program area focuses on an upstream approach by promoting active living, healthy eating, smoke-free living, safety, optimal mental health, healthy workplaces, and low risk drinking. Chronic diseases and injuries of public health importance include, but are not limited to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, respiratory diseases, Type II diabetes, falls across the lifespan, suicide and drowning. An upstream approach includes surveillance, monitoring and reporting, awareness raising, healthy public policy and collective action with partners.

The Family Health Program supports healthy pregnancies, breastfeeding, optimal growth and development of children, oral health, and positive parenting. Services are delivered through online resources including the ParentinginOttawa.ca website and Facebook page, telephone support, group education, peer supports, drop-ins located across the city, dental clinics and home visits. As well, the program works in collaboration with partners including local school boards, child care centres and community partners.

The Environmental Health Program focuses on protecting the community through education, regular inspections, and prompt mobilization of OPH staff to assess and mitigate public health hazards. The program inspects food premises including festival and outdoor events, spas, pools and personal service settings such as tattoo parlours to ensure safety and minimize the risk of transmission of infection. The program coordinates surveillance and prevention efforts against vector borne diseases such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus, along with ensuring the safety of drinking water systems, including promoting the testing of private wells, and of recreational water through routine monitoring of city beaches. The program also responds to emerging concerns related to animal bites such as rabies.

The Emergency Preparedness Program uses an integrated approach with other City departments and partners to ensure readiness to respond to public health emergencies such as the threat of emerging diseases like Ebola virus disease. The program develops and maintains emergency response plans and protocols, while ensuring staff are appropriately trained to deal with emergencies that could impact the health of Ottawa residents.