

**Board of Health  
Minutes**

**October 20, 2021  
9:15 am - 12:00 pm  
Zoom Meeting**

Board Members Present: S. Cairns, R. Cipolla, L. Dollin, G. Harvey, P. Koetsier, R. Milne, F. Pinto, S. Warnock, P. Willmott, L. Oehm, S. Kinsella, A. Kungl

Regrets: A. Dubeau

Staff Present: C. Gardner, K. Ellis-Scharfenberg

**1. Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:15am.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

**Motion 2.0**

**MOVED BY** S. Cairns

**SECONDED BY** L. Dollin

THAT the Board of Health approve the agenda as presented.

**CARRIED**

**3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

**4. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

4.1 Approval of Minutes from September 15, 2021.

**Motion 4.1**

**MOVED BY** G. Harvey

**SECONDED BY** S. Kinsella

THAT the Board of Health approve the minutes from the September 15, 2021 Board of Health meeting.

**CARRIED**

## 5. Business Arising

- 5.1 Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 and Immunization Update. Presentation. Dr. Charles Gardner and Mary Ann Holmes presenting.

C. Gardner provided an update on the current COVID-19 statistics noting that there have been almost 5 million deaths internationally to date. In Canada, Saskatchewan is currently the province with highest per capita incidence with ICU patients being transferred out of province for care, including to Ontario.

It was noted that modeling had predicted a large 4th wave in October and to date this has not occurred, however reducing public health measures still result in a surge in transmission. Caution is needed as the province proceeds with lifting capacity limits.

Transmission in Simcoe Muskoka was noted to be decreasing and are similar to the provincial incidence. There has been a predominance of outbreaks in elementary schools as this is a population that is not yet eligible for vaccination.

The most recent Letter of Instruction (LOI) issued by the SMDHU medical officer of health requires owners, operators, and persons responsible for any indoor facilities used for sports and recreational fitness activities in Simcoe Muskoka to obtain proof of vaccination for coaches, volunteers, instructors and trainers (as a means of protection against transmission to children and youth in sports). Several other health units have issued similar LOIs throughout the province.

MA Holmes provided an immunization update noting that SMDHU is preparing for an announcement regarding 3rd doses and immunization of 5–11-year-olds. Recent successes were highlighted such as pop-up clinics, use of the GO-VAXX bus, as well as meetings with primary care leads, pharmacies and OHTs to integrate planning.

The current vaccine coverage rates by age group in Simcoe Muskoka were presented, with the lowest coverage being males aged 18-29. Vaccination coverage including for young males continues to increase. There is also increasing equity in vaccine coverage with no gap between neighbourhoods based on ethnic diversity, and a reduction in the gap between neighbourhoods based on income / material deprivation.

C. Gardner also provided an update on the implementation of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) COVID-19 vaccination policy, noting that 97% of SMDHU staff have provided their proof of vaccination to date, with the remaining requests for medical and human rights-based exemptions being considered. Also discussed was the Premier's consultation regarding provincially mandated COVID-19 vaccination for health care workers (specifically those working in hospitals) and the response of Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health (under C. Gardner's signature as chair) strongly supporting such provincially mandated vaccination for all health care workers.

### **Motion 5.1**

**MOVED BY P. Koetsier**  
**SECONDED BY A. Kungl**

THAT the Board of Health receive this update as information.

**CARRIED**

- 5.2 Public Health Recovery Planning. Briefing Note. Dr. Chibuike Chizea and Natalie Riewe presenting.

C. Chizea presented this item discussing the need for SMDHU to effectively recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and resume public health programs. It is anticipated that the recovery phase will occur during ongoing health system transformation activities initiated by the Ontario government and a recovery framework will provide structure and guidance for this planning.

Consultations have occurred with various internal committees and working groups. The recovery assumptions were reviewed including COVID-19 transmission, recovery process and learnings from our response to the pandemic.

The activities currently in progress and next steps were reviewed including the resumption of OPHS programs and services, planning for the return of staff to our offices, COVID-19 Health and Safety requirements, staff wellness and finance.

**Motion 5.2**

**MOVED BY R. Milne**  
**SECONDED BY L. Oehm**

THAT the Board of Health receive this briefing note as information and approve the COVID-19 Recovery Framework in Appendix A.

**CARRIED**

- 5.3 2022 Budget Development. Briefing Note. Dr. Charles Gardner and Karen-Ellis Scharfenberg presenting.

C. Gardner discussed the very complex budget year due to the COVID-19 pandemic noting that resources will be required as the pandemic continues, and the uncertainty with funding from the province.

Board members reviewed the approach being taken by management in the development of the 2022 budget, and specifically the cost elements that may impact on levy decisions.

K. Ellis-Scharfenberg provided highlights including the draining of the reserves to maintain cash flow which is a factor in building the 2022 budget as well as the

potential impacts of the upcoming immunization of 5–11-year-olds and 3<sup>rd</sup> dose boosters.

**Motion 5.3**

**MOVED BY** F. Pinto

**SECONDED BY** S. Warnock

THAT the Board of Health receive the 2022 Budget Development briefing note as information;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Health write to the Ontario Minister of Health urging that Boards of Health immediately receive the COVID-19 Extraordinary Costs and COVID-19 Vaccine Extraordinary Costs funding noted in their 2021 - Q2 financial statements and that the Ministry of Health commit in writing to;

- extend COVID-19 funding to 2022;
- establish funding in 2022 for public health recovery activities; and
- increase provincial funding for public health base budgets proportional to the municipal levy increase needed in 2022 to maintain capacity for public health program delivery.

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this letter be provided to the boards of health throughout Ontario, the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and to the obligated municipal councils and MPPs in Simcoe Muskoka.

**CARRIED**

- 5.4 Financial Commitments, Pressures & Risks - Budget 2022. Briefing Note. Dr. Charles Gardner and Karen-Ellis Scharfenberg presenting.

K. Ellis-Scharfenberg discussed the considerations for the 2022 budget which includes COVID-19 recovery, extraordinary and immunization expenses and the assumption that COVID-19 will exist in 2022. A detailed schedule will be presented to the Board following the budget submission to the province.

**Motion 5.4**

**MOVED BY** P. Willmott

**SECONDED BY** S. Cairns

THAT the Board of Health receive the Financial Commitments, Pressures and Risks briefing note as information and reference in the deliberation of the budget proposals for 2022.

**CARRIED**

## 6. New Business

- 6.1 Provincial Cooling Tower Registry for Mitigating the Risk of Legionella Outbreaks. Briefing Note. Steven Rebellato, Brenda Armstrong and Nicolas Sheppard-Jones presenting.

S. Rebellato presented this item noting that cooling towers can contribute to significant community outbreaks of Legionella infections via spread of contaminated water particles. The lack of a provincial requirement for a cooling tower registry means public health units must deploy considerable time and resources to identify potential cooling tower sites, delaying public health action when clusters of cases of Legionnaires disease require investigation.

This issue was a concern prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and SMDHU is now ready to submit an alPHa resolution on this topic to mitigate the risk of Legionella.

N. Sheppard-Jones provided background on Legionella in Simcoe Muskoka discussing that in 2019 there were 20 cases reported, which is the most cases on record for the region in a single year. Fifteen of these cases were tied to two clusters investigated by SMDHU in the cities of Barrie and Orillia. Both clusters were thought to be caused by aerosolization of contaminated water particles originating from cooling towers (a cooling tower origin was confirmed for Orillia via genetic sequencing). A combined 67 sites were investigated for possible cooling tower presence across both municipalities.

It was noted that the City of Hamilton is the only jurisdiction in the province that requires registration of all cooling towers with local authorities. Board members requested that SMDHU staff follow up with Hamilton to determine the responsibility for enforcement with their approach.

### **Motion 6.1**

**MOVED BY** L. Dollin

**SECONDED BY** G. Harvey

THAT the Board of Health support the submission of the resolution in Appendix A for the alPHa 2022 Annual General Meeting;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Health write to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing recommending the creation of a province-wide mandatory cooling tower registration system and mandating a risk management plan for cooling towers to operate;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this letter be sent to the Minister of Health, the Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks, the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, and the MPPs, municipal councils of Simcoe Muskoka and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

**7. Announcements**

A board member inquired about the proposed Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) site application specifically regarding the current placement of the needle exchange program and if there is a recommendation to change the proposed CTS site to coincide with this program. C. Gardner is to inquire further on this with SMDHU staff.

A board member inquired on the status of the purchase of a generator for 15 Sperling Drive. K. Ellis-Scharfenberg noted that this is in progress and an RFP has been sent out with at least one bid being received at this time.

**8. Items of Education**

8.1 aPHa 2021 Fall Symposium: Ontario's Public Health System: Response and Recovery - November 19th 2021

**9. Items of Information**

9.1 Email from Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development to Anita Dubeau, Chair of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit re Paid sick leave for Ontario workers.

9.2 Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Press Release and Letter of Instruction to the owners, operators, and persons responsible for any indoor facilities used for sports and recreational fitness activities in Simcoe Muskoka.

9.3 Email from Dr. Lisa Simon, Associate Medical Officer of Health to Mayor Jeff Lehman, City of Barrie re CMHA and SMDHU roles in SCS application.

9.4 Letter from Doug Elmslie, Board of Health Chair for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit to the Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier, Minister of Health re Advocacy for Funding.

9.5 Letter from Fred Eisenberger, Mayor for the City of Hamilton to the Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier, Minister of Health re Support for a local Board of Health.

9.6 Letter from Mayor Andy Mitchell, Board of Health Chair for Peterborough Public Health to the Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier, Minister of Health re Wastewater Surveillance.

9.7 aPHa Information Break - September 20, 2021.

**10. Date of Next Meetings**

- November 17, 2021 (platform will be via Microsoft Teams – tutorial to be provided)
- December 15, 2021

**11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 am.

**Motion 11.0**

**MOVED BY** S. Kinsella

**SECONDED BY** P. Koetsier

THAT the Board of Health meeting be adjourned at 11:22am.

**CARRIED**

**ORIGINAL Signed By:**

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Ralph Cipolla

Vice-Chair, Board of Health

**ORIGINAL Signed by:**

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Dr. Charles Gardner

Medical Officer of Health