

May 23, 2019

To our Community Partners and Clients:

As you have likely heard, public health in Ontario is in transition. The modernization of public health was announced as part of the Ontario government's budget on April 11, 2019. At this time, I would like to provide you with the highlights of what we at the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) have been told by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), and how this has, or will, impact on the delivery of public health programs and services moving forward.

Here is what we know to date:

- The number of public health units in Ontario will be reduced from 35 to 10 public health entities by April 1, 2020.
- Ten new autonomous boards of health will be created with strong regional and local representation.
- There will be continued local public health presence in communities and continued planning with local municipalities.
- The funding formula for public health entities will change, with the municipal portion increasing and the provincial portion decreasing, depending on the size of the population served by the new public health entities.

Last week, the borders of these new public health entities were revealed. We were verbally notified by the MOHLTC that the province is proposing that SMDHU be split, with public health services for the District of Muskoka provided by a regional public health entity that will also include Sudbury, North Bay, Parry Sound, Algoma, Porcupine, Timiskaming, and the northern portion of Renfrew. Public health services for Simcoe County would be provided by a regional public health entity what would also provide service to the population of York Region. These changes would take effect April 1, 2020, although the MOHLTC did indicate that the province is willing to receive and consider feedback from boards of health, municipalities and other stakeholders on this proposed boundary change.

In response to this announcement, the Board of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit approved the following motion at its May 15, 2019 meeting:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Board of Health communicate with the Ontario Minister of Health, recommending that the full territory of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit remain intact and join with York Region to form a new regional public health entity on April 1, 2020;

AND FURTHERMORE THAT the municipalities, the MPPs and Local Health Integration Networks of Simcoe Muskoka, as well as the Boards of Health for York Region, Sudbury, North Bay, Parry Sound, Algoma, Porcupine, Timiskaming, and Renfrew, the Association of Local Public Health Agency and the Chief Medical Officer of Health receive a copy of this communication.

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At [this link](#) you will find a letter to this end that has been distributed to all of our municipal councils for their consideration.

It would be very helpful if our clients, community partners and stakeholders could communicate support for this motion to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I, or a member of our staff, would be pleased to discuss this with you further or answer any questions you may have.

SMDHU has started to plan for this transition. On May 15, 2019 the Board of Health approved a 2019-2020 Strategic Transition Plan which replaces our 2019-2022 SMDHU Strategic Plan. This new plan focuses on key components of the old plan that we hope will be positioned as SMDHU priorities for possible adoption by the two new public health entities. The revised plan allows us to manage the impacts of the restructuring and transition into the new entities.

As we work through these significant changes to public health in Ontario, our Board of Health, our staff and I are committed to continue to provide our communities and residents with the excellent public health programs and services that you have come to expect from us over the years. At this point our programs and services remain the same, however, we anticipate that there may be some changes over time as the impacts of this transition are felt.

We are grateful for the on-going relationships we have developed with you. As a client of the health unit, we will continue to support your health and well-being needs. As a community partner we will continue to work in partnership with you towards achieving our vision of: Health People. Healthy Places.

Sincerely,

**ORIGINAL Signed By:**

Charles Gardner, MD, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health