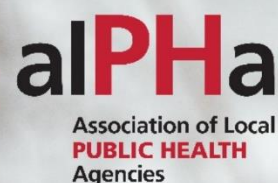


2024 Winter Symposium

Section Meetings and Workshops

FEBRUARY 14 -16, 2024



Continue the important conversations on Ontario’s local public health system’s critical role, value, and benefit.

Boards of Health Section Meeting Agenda February 16, 2024

Note: Meeting is hosted via Zoom Webinar

2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - All times are Eastern Standard Time (EST)

<p>Call to Order Land Acknowledgement Welcoming Remarks Introductions Speaker: Carmen McGregor, Chair, BOH Section, Board of Directors, alPHa</p>	<p>2:00 p.m.</p>
<p>alPHa Update and Section Business Speakers: Carmen McGregor, Chair, BOH Section, Board of Directors, alPHa and Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, alPHa</p>	<p>2:05 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.</p>
<p>alPHa Legal Counsel Update for Boards of Health Speaker: James LeNoury, Legal Counsel, alPHa Moderator: Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, alPHa</p>	<p>2:20 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.</p>
<p>Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Update Speakers: Lindsay Jones, Director of Policy, AMO, and Michael Jacek, Senior Advisor, AMO Moderator: Daniela Spagnuolo, Policy Advisor, AMO</p> <p>AMO works with Ontario’s 444 municipalities to make municipal governments stronger and more effective. Come and hear the latest from AMO with regards to public health issues, including homelessness, from a municipal perspective with a focus on their recent work.</p>	<p>2:50 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.</p>
<p>Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Public Health – What You Need to Know and Why You Need to Be Ready Speaker: Steven Rebellato, Affiliate Representative, Board of Directors, alPHa Moderator: Maureen Wilson, BOH Executive Committee, Board of Directors, alPHa</p> <p>The presentation provides an overview of the risks and benefits of AI for local public health. The presentation will focus on data, ethics, equity, and a human-centred approach to AI applications currently being used in other jurisdictions in North America. Consideration and guiding principles will be discussed to help gauge organizational preparedness for AI solutions.</p>	<p>3:20 p.m. – 3:50 p.m.</p>

<p>Reflections from Southwestern Public Health’s Merger - Continuing the Conversation Speaker: Cynthia St. John, Affiliate Representative, Board of Directors, alPHa Moderator: Carmen McGregor, BOH Section, Board of Directors, alPHa</p> <p>As a follow up to her presentation at alPHa’s Fall Symposium, Cynthia St. John will continue the conversation and her reflections on the successes and on the challenges associated with developing a newly merged public health unit.</p>	<p>3:50 p.m. – 4:20 p.m.</p>
<p>Closing Remarks Speaker: Carmen McGregor, Chair, BOH Section, Board of Directors, alPHa</p>	<p>4:20 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.</p>

This event is hosted by alPHa with generous support from:

Dalla Lana

School of Public Health



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REVISED DRAFT MINUTES
Boards of Health Section Meeting
Friday, November 24, 2023 – 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Chair: Carmen McGregor

1.0 CALL TO ORDER/LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, C. McGregor, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and provided welcoming remarks and introductions to Boards of Health (BOH) Section members, Affiliates, and speakers.

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

The Land Acknowledgement was read by C. McGregor.

2.0 ALPHA UPDATE/SECTION BUSINESS/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

alPHa Update

C. McGregor stated alPHa will continue to actively represent local public health's interests during the province's Public Health Strengthening initiative. She also noted the association will work with its key stakeholders, including the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Section Business

C. McGregor introduced the BOH Section Executive members, noting they provide strong and effective leadership. She provided the BOH Section with an overview of the work the BOH Section Executive does, stating highlights can be found in alPHa's monthly newsletter. C. McGregor also reminded BOH Section members they can contribute to *Information Break*, the newsletter, as there is a dedicated Boards of Health section.

Approval of Minutes

C. McGregor called for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 7, 2023, BOH Section Meeting. The motion to accept the minutes as written was moved by T. Sachowski, seconded by W. Garrod, and carried.

New Boards of Health Section Courses

C. McGregor introduced Monika Turner, Roving Capacity, and Loretta Ryan, alPHa's Executive Director, to discuss two new courses being offered by alPHa regarding public health governance and the Social Determinants of Health. She then turned the meeting over to M. Turner and L. Ryan.

L. Ryan provided an overview of events and meetings that alPHa has held and plans for future activities. L. Ryan reiterated the BOH Section has a dedicated segment of the monthly newsletter, which is continually updated and has many useful resources. She also stated the revised orientation manual for BOH members is available in the newsletter. L. Ryan stated that if anyone had something to add to the newsletter, they should reach out to her.

L. Ryan then turned the meeting over to M. Turner who provided an overview of the courses. M. Turner stated the courses had been developed to assist boards in their continuous learning and that both courses can be done in one day, either in-person or online. She noted the courses can be modified to reflect geography, the population served, and where the boards are in different processes. The courses can also reflect work regarding voluntary mergers. M. Turner encouraged boards to do some work and then have a BOH governance discussion once they are aware of where they are in the merger process.

M. Turner gave an overview of the governance course. She noted the course will look at key governance principles and due diligence and what BOHs must do in terms of governance models. She stated they will talk about public health and the healthcare system, public health legislation, the Ontario Public Health Standards and the accompanying accountability framework, and fiduciary responsibilities. The course also covers the role of the Ministry of Health and how it affects the board and public health funding and challenges.

Additionally, M. Turner discussed the Social Determinants of Health (SDH) course. She noted other members of municipal councils, who may not be part of the board of health, may also want to be involved in taking this course. She stated the more everyone understands SDHs, the better they will understand public health and the system. M. Turner noted the course will explain the population health approach for public health and how SDHs make public health's practices different than the acute healthcare system.

She noted the courses are continually adapted and can be adjusted to what works best for the board of health.

C. McGregor thanked L. Ryan and M. Turner for their time and for their presentation.

3.0 alPHa LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE FOR BOARDS OF HEALTH

C. McGregor introduced James LeNoury, alPHa's Legal Counsel, to BOH Section members, noting he will talk about employment issues related to public health and voluntary mergers.

J. LeNoury stated his presentation will reinforce what Cynthia St. John's presentation covered earlier at the Fall Symposium. He gave BOH Section members an overview of his presentation's topics, noting what he would cover: The government merger mandate; the merger process and legal issues; merger funding.

J. LeNoury provided an overview of the merger mandate from the government, saying it was a three-pronged strategy to optimize capacity, stability, and sustainability in public health and that it is meant to deliver more equitable health outcomes for Ontarians. He also noted voluntary mergers amongst smaller local public health agencies could reduce duplication, saying larger public health agencies will have a greater ability to recruit and retain staff and improve their ability to deliver programs and services.

Additionally, J. LeNoury covered human resources issues, noting there are challenges with recruiting and retaining staff and that mergers are not meant to result in the loss of frontline jobs.

He also discussed the desired outcomes, saying the goal is to ensure all local public health agencies have the skilled personnel and competencies needed to fully deliver core public health services. This is to better align with community and system partners to support progress on improving population health outcomes while reducing health inequities.

J. LeNoury provided BOH Section members with an overview of the merger process and legal issues. He also explained the difference between mergers and acquisitions. Additionally, J. LeNoury covered key issues in the merger process such as communications, organizational culture, and retention of key employees. He also noted three important aspects of due diligence, which were: leadership, preparing a plan, and the parallel process. J. LeNoury discussed non-disclosure agreements, privacy, and having a letter of intent when merging. He covered issues with mergers, saying 70-90 per cent of all mergers and acquisitions fail due to missing their objectives. The implementation of a merger was also discussed. J. LeNoury covered important factors to consider when merging such as: new policies, compensation and benefits, retention and downsizing, employees who are on leaves of absence, termination (including mass termination), constructive dismissal, and unionized workplaces (and what happens if one organization is unionized and the other is not. He also spoke about what happens if employees at both organizations are unionized).

Additionally, J. LeNoury discussed merger funding. He spoke about merger transition funding, saying the Ministry of Health will establish a three-year Merger Transition Fund to support voluntary mergers. He provided BOH Section members with examples of merger/transition costs. He also noted additional funding to support business continuity and to ensure program and service delivery stability during a merger. J. LeNoury stated there should be requests made for one-time funding to support feasibility assessments and the initial planning process if such costs cannot be managed from within the operating budget.

P. Sharma moderated questions from the audience for J. LeNoury and a short question and answer session took place. P. Sharma thanked him for his time and for speaking at the meeting.

4.0 ONTARIO HEALTH TEAMS UPDATE

C. McGregor introduced Ian Cummins, Director of Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) Strategy, Ontario Health.

I. Cummins noted his presentation was an orientation to OHTs, was meant to share data, cover involvement with health units and municipalities, and share updates related to OHTs and strategies, as well as highlight areas where health units can play a role.

I. Cummins provided BOH Section members with an overview of OHTs. He noted they were introduced in 2019 and are a model of integrated care delivery where groups of healthcare providers and organizations work as a team to deliver a full and coordinated continuum of care for patients, even if they're not in the same organization or physical location. He also noted how OHTs are comprised and that they include primary care, home and community care, etc. I. Cummins stated the goal of OHTs is to provide better, more integrated care across Ontario. He also spoke about OHTs' progress thus far, noting partnerships and common areas of focus for initial target populations. I. Cummins stated the focus is on population health management as they work to achieve specific targets related to the care experiences and health outcomes for

their initial target populations. I. Cummins also noted the overall goal is to optimize care and health outcomes for the full population.

He discussed OHT membership, saying in *The Path Forward*, the Ministry of Health had identified groups that must be included in OHT decision-making, including primary care providers, home and community care providers, and mental health and addictions. He also noted OHTs are encouraged to include additional groups, including public health units, municipalities, and long-term care homes in OHT decision-making.

I. Cummins gave an overview of public health unit engagement to BOH Section members. He stated teams were asked to complete an optional self-assessment to identify which partners are represented in the OHT's collaborative decision-making and their collaborative efforts with partners. I. Cummins provided a recent example of collaboration between OHTs and public health units, which was during the pandemic via COVID-19 vaccines. He also noted municipal engagement and provided examples of how that is achieved. He stated it is through municipal leadership in emergency response for new paramedic-led programs through community health and addictions clinics.

I. Cummins spoke about building OHTs through a common structure to progress to full implementation, consistent collaboration in decision-making, sustainable operation capacity, and consistency in OHT-led public communication. He also discussed how OHTs deliver better care through clinical pathways to improve patient care and home care leading projects.

He noted OHTs are being accelerated and stated some key takeaways, which included: funding, 12 OHTs supporting the advance towards maturity and will be considered first for designation under the *Connecting Care, 2019 Act*; the 12 OHTs will also share lessons learned to support continuous learning and readiness for the next phase of implementation for all OHTs. Finally, they will be supported to achieve a set of standardized structural and patient-facing milestones, while having the flexibility to advance local priorities. I. Cummins also provided an overview of how OHTs improve patient outcomes and gave an example of increased early detection of chronic disease.

I. Cummins noted key messages, which included: population health management continues to be at the centre of the OHT model; public health units have a critical role in accelerating OHT priorities, especially in areas around early detection and prevention; Ontario Health is encouraging public health units to engage with their local OHT.

W. Garrod moderated questions from the audience for I. Cummins and a short question and answer session took place. W. Garrod thanked him for his time and for speaking at the meeting.

5.0 PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

C. McGregor introduced Sabine Matheson, Principal, at StrategyCorp. She noted S. Matheson would speak about the current public policy climate and key political issues affecting public health agencies and their local boards of health.

S. Matheson provided BOH Section members with an overview of provincial-municipal relations and how it relates to alPha members. She stated there are three elements of government relations: Who we are (not just us, but whom we serve and what we do for society); this, or

what we are talking about; and them, or what is on their mind, what their constraints are, and how do they see us; In other words: we want this from them. This is also the fundamental logic of intergovernmental relations. S. Matheson noted there are plenty of avenues by which public health is relevant to the government, saying the sector is not just a narrow definition of public health services. She gave an overview of where the public health sector can have an impact, noting issues such as pandemic preparedness, homelessness, and opioid use are all critical to the Government of Ontario.

S. Matheson provided an overview of the evolution of the Ford government. She stated it is significant to think about the change and adjust your thinking to the government of the day, rather than the government of the past. She noted when the Ford government first came into power, they came in with threats of mandatory change, stating the motive was focused on balancing the budget. Now, however, the provincial government has become much less populist and has reversed their position on forced cuts. Additionally, they have turned to a broader approach of consultation before making any changes. S. Matheson noted some parts of the government have been untouched by controversies and scandals. Meanwhile, other parts of the government are in the process of trying to reframe their images. She stated this creates an opportunity for municipal stakeholders to re-establish relationships.

S. Matheson noted the Ministry of Health is facing a reality where they think they're in charge when it comes to public health, but municipalities have their own funding and control. She then gave an overview of the Ford government's polling numbers, saying opposition parties are not a close second. However, S. Matheson conceded that will change when the Ontario Liberal Party elects its new leader. She also pulled data from separate Angus Reid polls and noted health has fallen in terms of public opinion as the most important issue and that the cost of living and housing have taken health's place.

S. Matheson provided BOH Section members with an overview of the fiscal situation and the provincial Fall Economic Statement. She noted key themes such as: housing supply, infrastructure investment, and economic development. She stated Ontario is facing pressure to address both the policy challenges and fiscal pressures facing the City of Toronto as well. S. Matheson noted balancing the budget has been delayed until 2025-2026.

She also stated public health's biggest issue is consolidation. S. Matheson noted the municipal point of view on provincially-imposed governance and structural change is because of history, the process, and substance. She stated when imposed change is being talked about, there is anxiety of whether or not it is better to do it before the government forces it upon you. S. Matheson also noted the top concerns rising from a merger such as: cost for implications for municipalities, loss of focus and service levels, and loss of governance and representation. She noted today's goals are more about improving capacity and ensuring stability. S. Matheson spoke about biases public health must deal with and whether or not they will be able to deliver.

S. Matheson stated a favourable time should be chosen to achieve something where money is offered, saying this is the most opportune time.

Lastly, she provided BOH Section members with an overview of the future, saying the government is approaching the mid-point of its capacity to make and implement decisions. She stated the public health sector should play the long game, while also maintaining relationships.

S. Matheson also noted it is vital to be empathetic, to frame issues in a way that matters to the government, deliver data, and that public health should know how to be a valuable partner.

C. McGregor moderated questions from the audience for S. Matheson and a short question and answer session took place. C. McGregor thanked S. Matheson for her time and for speaking at the meeting.

6.0 ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO (AMO) UPDATE

C. McGregor introduced Lindsay Jones, Director of Policy, Michael Jacek, Senior Advisor, Social and Health Policy, and Daniela Spagnuolo, Policy Advisor at AMO. She noted they would speak about public health issues from a municipal perspective.

The presentation focused on two areas: 1. The Strengthening Public Health initiative; 2. A Social and Economic Prosperity Review.

L. Jones stated AMO sees many opportunities in the process of public health strengthening. She stated that there could be investments in public health and ongoing structural issues could be addressed. L. Jones also noted strides could be made in population health and in making the public health system stronger overall.

M. Jacek noted AMO's main goal is to keep *local* in local public health, to maintain effective service delivery, and ensure the system is sustainable financially. He also spoke about voluntary mergers, saying this could be an opportunity for agencies and municipalities that can benefit communities. He also conceded there are some challenges with parts of the process and noted there is some skepticism and uncertainty amongst municipal members. M. Jacek stated AMO is working with the Ministry of Health on issues to promote membership education about the merger process through a joint webinar and a concurrent session at the ROMA Conference in January. He noted there has been mixed messaging and concerns with regards to the 500,000-population minimum, questions about feasibility of the merger timeline, and general uncertainty regarding the overall funding model. He also asked for input from BOH Section members, saying AMO is interested in perspectives and recommendations about how to make the strengthening public health initiative successful.

L. Jones spoke about AMO's Social and Economic Prosperity Review. She noted municipalities are facing challenges such as homelessness and climate change and do not have the finances to be able to solve these issues. She stated the need for more revenue tools is dominating current municipal fiscal conversations, but conceded there is no perfect solution. L. Jones provided BOH Section members with an overview of the current fiscal picture, saying Ontario municipalities delivered \$54-billion in services in 2022. She noted the problem is a \$3.8-billion "gap," especially when compared to other provinces where those services are subsidized by the provincial government. L. Jones also stated the provincial government's program spending per capita is the lowest in Canada and that they need to spend more money on programs. She provided an overview of the vision, saying there should be an update to the partnership between provincial and municipal governments to build sustainable communities, a foundation for economic growth, and quality of life.

D. Spagnuolo moderated questions from the audience for L. Jones and M. Jacek and a short question and answer session took place. C. McGregor thanked L. Jones, M. Jacek, and D.

Spagnuolo for their time. She also spoke about the close working relationship AMO has with L. Ryan.

7.0 WRAP UP & NEXT MEETING

C. McGregor thanked Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, Karine Hébert, and Andy Morrisson from the Eastern Ontario Health Unit for their event support. She also thanked Obadiah George from the Dalla Lana School of Public Health for his technical support, and L. Ryan and the alpha staff for their work. C. McGregor then turned the meeting over to L. Ryan.

L. Ryan spoke about the 2024 Annual General Meeting & Conference, which is taking place in-person from June 5-7. She noted all of the information will be sent out at a later date and profiled at the Winter Symposium.

C. McGregor noted she is looking forward to seeing everyone at the Winter Symposium, which is taking place online, February 14-16, 2024.

C. McGregor adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m.