

Ministry of Health

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March 25, 2021

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Linda Rothstein
Chair (A), Board of Directors
Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion
480 University Avenue, Suite 300
Toronto ON M5G 1V2

Dear Ms. Rothstein:

I would first like to acknowledge the extraordinary and continuing efforts of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, operating as Public Health Ontario (PHO), to monitor, detect, and contain COVID-19 in the province. Ontario's public health system continues to demonstrate remarkable responsiveness to COVID-19, as the outbreak has evolved locally and globally.

As you begin planning for 2021-22, I am pleased to write to you in your capacity of Chair of PHO to provide you with a letter setting out expectations and direction for PHO in the year ahead. Pursuant to the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, this letter sets out my expectation for PHO for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Ontario's board-governed agencies are vital partners in ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to Ontarians. The work that you and your fellow board members undertake to establish the goals, objectives, and strategic direction for PHO ensures that objectives under the *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act (OAHPPA)* are met. It is important that this direction is consistent with government priorities, your agency mandate, key policies and directives, and my directions, where appropriate. I thank you for your willingness to serve.

As part of the government of Ontario, agencies are expected to act in the best interests of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value for money to taxpayers. This includes:

1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

- Operating within your agency's allocations.
- Identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation, innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability.
- Identifying and pursuing efficiencies and savings.
- Complying with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization, Realty Interim Measures, and Agency Office Location Criteria.

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2. Transparency and Accountability

- Abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting.
- Adhering to requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, and responding to audit findings, where appropriate.
- Identifying appropriate skills, knowledge, and experience needed to effectively support the board's role in the agency governance and accountability.

3. Risk Management

- Developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment, and mitigation of risks, including planning for and responding to emergency situations such as COVID-19.

4. Workforce Management

- Optimizing your agency's workforce to enable efficient and effective fulfilment of government priorities, while enhancing customer service standards.
- Streamlining back office functions to ensure that all available resources are redirected towards the critical front-line services that Ontarians depend upon.

5. Data Collection

- Improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information sharing and reporting, including leveraging available or new data solutions to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery.
- Supporting transparency and data sharing with the Ministry of Health, as appropriate.

6. Digital Delivery and Customer Service

- Exploring and implementing digitization or digital modernization strategies for the provision of services online and continuing to meet and exceed customer service standards through transition.
- Using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations, including COVID-19.

In addition to these government-wide priorities, I expect PHO to focus on:

1. Continuing to provide the Ministry of Health with support to monitor, detect, and contain COVID-19 in the province, including:
 - Public health leadership and scientific support for the COVID-19 laboratory testing network (scientific leadership and standards, test development and validation, input into testing, etc) and performance of testing volumes as identified as part of Ontario's testing strategy;
 - COVID-19 data collection, monitoring, analysis, and reporting;
 - COVID-19 case and contact management (i.e., resource support for public health units, training and coordination of staffing support), including expansion of current support to include coordination of staffing resources and training for case investigation and management as well as contact follow-up, partnering with the ministry;
 - Support the Ministry of Health in the provincial roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine;
 - Development of evidence-informed products to inform government policy; and,
 - Providing scientific and technical advice and guidance to public health units and other parts of the health care system.

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2. Continuing to work with the Ministry of Health to develop and implement strategies for modernizing Ontario's public health laboratory system.
3. Ensuring continuity of operations and that the London Public Health Laboratory is operational in a timely manner, which is critical for the COVID-19 response and the overall effectiveness of the PHO Laboratory network.
4. Continuing to represent and contribute the voice of public health at Ministry of Health and Ontario Health tables, and to the laboratory network to ensure that the public health practice perspective is included in decision making.
5. Continuing strong partnerships across PHO, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and the Ministry of Health, and continuing to be a strong presence and providing expert public health advice and recommendations to the Health Coordination Table, various working groups, and expert panels.
6. Continuing to provide day-to-day support for public health, including those that support direct patient care or provide critical information and knowledge to the Chief Medical Officer of Health, so that other important public health concerns in Ontario are not compromised due to the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Through these measures, we can continue to ensure that PHO is continuing to provide scientific and technical advice and support for those working to protect and promote the health of Ontarians, in accordance with its legislative mandate under the OAHPPA.

I thank you and your fellow board members for your continued support, and for your valuable contributions. Should you have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams, directly.

Sincerely,



Christine Elliott
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health

c: Colleen Geiger, President and Chief Executive Officer (A), PHO
Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health