

Public  
Health  
Ontario

PARTNERS FOR HEALTH

Santé  
publique  
Ontario

PARTENAIRES POUR LA SANTÉ



# Strategic Plan 2014–2019

Evidence, knowledge and action for a healthier Ontario



**Ontario**

Agency for Health  
Protection and Promotion

Agence de protection et  
de promotion de la santé



# Introduction

## How can we truly improve the health of Ontarians?

That's the question that health providers and the public health system strive to answer every day.

Addressing that question requires a foundation of sound information, knowledge and evidence. With it, the public health and health care community can make informed decisions and take informed action.

Public Health Ontario (PHO) is dedicated to providing that solid foundation.

We are committed to protecting and promoting the health of Ontarians and reducing inequities in health. We remain vigilant for current and emerging threats to health. We study and evaluate what makes people healthy and how we can help Ontarians live healthier lives. We inform policy, action and decisions of government, public health practitioners, front-line health workers and researchers by linking them to the best scientific intelligence and knowledge.

PHO was created by legislation in 2007 as a Crown operational service agency. We emerged as part of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's (MOHLTC) plan to renew Ontario's public health system following the SARS outbreak in 2003. MOHLTC's Operation Health Protection committed to creating a public health agency, and made significant program investments in public health renewal, the public health laboratories, infection prevention and control, and public health emergency preparedness. In 2006, the Agency Implementation Task Force set the blueprint for our organization in its final report *From Vision to Action*.



Our first strategic plan focussed on building our new organization. Since then, PHO has grown substantially, integrating and revitalizing a number of programs, and recruiting a diverse and talented workforce.

It's time for a new strategic plan to set the course for PHO's next five years and beyond.

Our strategic planning journey was a comprehensive and inclusive process. We engaged our clients, stakeholders and employees, and conducted a thorough evaluation of our programs and services. The result is a shared vision for how PHO can contribute to a healthier Ontario.

Our new 2014–19 Strategic Plan builds on PHO's many accomplishments to date. It proposes a renewed Vision, Mission, Mandate and Values and outlines five strategic directions and our goals for the next five years. And it's aligned with Ontario's Public Health Sector Strategic Plan, which the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) released earlier this year.

With a clear strategic plan, our strong mix of programs and services, and our dedicated people, PHO will continue to protect and promote the health of Ontarians.

# Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019

Evidence, knowledge and action for a healthier Ontario

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### Fulfilling our Mission

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Cover image: global airline transportation network highlighting flight patterns into Ontario, produced by and provided courtesy of BioDiaspora Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Public Health Ontario Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019: Evidence, knowledge and action for a healthier Ontario. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2013.

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# Who We Are

## What We Do

Public Health Ontario provides expert scientific and technical advice and support to government, local public health units and health care providers. We generate timely, relevant and reliable information, results and guidance, and the tools to use them. In doing so, we help to ensure effective and responsive health care delivery, promote health, and prevent or manage public health events.

Our laboratory, clinical, scientific and public health experts deliver services throughout Ontario, working from regional and Toronto-based sites.

## Areas of Expertise

- ▶ Chronic Disease Prevention
- ▶ Environmental Health
- ▶ Infectious Disease
- ▶ Microbiology
- ▶ Emergency Preparedness
- ▶ Health Promotion
- ▶ Injury Prevention
- ▶ Occupational Health

## PHO Services

- ▶ Advice, Consultation and Interpretation
- ▶ Information Management
- ▶ Library Services
- ▶ Professional Development and Education
- ▶ Research, Ethics and Evaluation
- ▶ Communication and Knowledge Exchange
- ▶ Knowledge Synthesis, Tool and Best Practices Development
- ▶ Public Health Laboratory Services
- ▶ Surveillance and Population Health Assessment

PHO is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Government of Ontario. As an integral part of Ontario's revitalized public health sector, PHO works closely with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and local public health units.

# Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019

## Evidence, knowledge and action for a healthier Ontario

### PHO's Impact

PHO maintains vigilance, working to protect and promote the health of Ontarians by:

- ▶ Evaluating and understanding health risks
- ▶ Monitoring new and emerging pathogens
- ▶ Assessing factors that increase risk of disease
- ▶ Investigating outbreaks of infectious disease
- ▶ Monitoring and reporting on health and patterns of disease, and
- ▶ Supporting infection control efforts and clinical decision-making.

Our work sheds light on what affects health, and quantifies the burden of disease. Ultimately, we find ways for more Ontarians to be healthier longer, and to live active and productive lives.

### Information and Knowledge

We produce more than 200 surveillance reports a year to track and identify emerging health issues across the province. PHO publishes knowledge syntheses, best practice documents, original research reports such as the *Burden of Illness* series (in collaboration with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences), and technical reports on key public health issues. Our work focusses on topics such as chronic disease risk factors, tobacco control, mental illness and addictions, environmental health, measuring child and youth health, and infectious diseases.

PHO accelerates the uptake and clinical application of new knowledge. We also advise professionals and institutions on how to manage health care issues, often bringing unique and multi-disciplinary expertise to the task. PHO contributes significantly to a growing body of public health knowledge with research that crosses the Canadian Institute for Health Research's four health research pillars: biomedical; clinical; health systems and services; and social, cultural and environmental factors that affect the health of populations.

“Public Health Ontario is a highly effective organization. It should be considered a potential jewel in the crown of the public health system of Ontario, with the potential for international recognition.”

*Report of the Peer Review Panel on PHO, 2012*

## Services

PHO performs more than five million laboratory tests a year, providing timely results to inform clinical work and health care decisions. The laboratories field over 300 calls a day from health care practitioners looking for results, interpretation and advice.

PHO's modernized laboratories with new information systems and automated testing methods ensure: more efficient testing, faster communication of test results to physicians, and data needed for better surveillance of infectious diseases.

Library services at PHO and within health unit hubs across Ontario give public health professionals access to knowledge and evidence. Health promotion services support program planning, design, development and evaluation, skills development and capacity building.

PHO's professional development and continuing education programs, and annual convention, are other key vehicles to exchange knowledge on public health issues.

## Support

Our experts provide support across Ontario, through our Regional Infection Control Networks, laboratories, website with comprehensive resources and online tools, laboratory call centre, telephone, email and in-person consultations.

We provide scientific leadership during events like 2009's H1N1 pandemic, including guidance documents, advice to MOHLTC and the field, laboratory testing and reporting, and real-time research. PHO has enhanced capability to identify new emerging pathogens. With an eye to infection control and occupational health, we strive to help protect the public and health care workers.

Our infection prevention and control experts across the province help reduce the spread of hospital-acquired infections, often relying on best practices within our Provincial Infectious Disease Advisory Committees' documents. PHO also supports emergency preparedness and response, through scientific response teams, incident management, and training.

Our environmental and occupational health team helps government and local public health units respond to a variety of issues (e.g. radon, exposure to health hazards, and the potential health effects of wind turbines). We help quantify and communicate health risks to the population.



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## Growing the Organization

As we've established the agency, we've created solid corporate structures, systems and services. Such foundations are essential to the operations of any organization, and depend on the commitment, ingenuity and skills of our people.

We've also enhanced our professional capacity across the laboratory science and public health domains to meet our mandate. We've established an infrastructure to support our activities, including core corporate areas: finance; human resources; information technology and facilities; legal; privacy; public affairs; and mission-specific services around research and educational activities.

Measuring our progress matters to us. A comprehensive performance measurement framework monitors our success, including a balanced scorecard, annual Ontario Laboratory Accreditation and client and stakeholder satisfaction surveys. External reviews have assessed aspects of our performance, culminating with an international Peer Review Panel that evaluated PHO's first five years of operation. Consistent positive results demonstrate that PHO has solid foundations on which to build continued success.



## PHO across Ontario

## Vision, Mission and Mandate

Vision, Mission and Mandate statements are integral to any organization. PHO's Mission describes what we do best every single day: our purpose. Our Vision is our aspirational statement of what the future will be like because we deliver on our Mission. Our Mandate articulates our role and services in pursuit of our Mission.

### Vision

Internationally-recognized evidence, knowledge and action for a healthier Ontario.

### Mission

We enable informed decisions and actions that protect and promote health and contribute to reducing health inequities.

### Mandate

We provide scientific and technical advice and support to clients working in government, public health, health care, and related sectors.

We build capacity, assemble expertise and guide action through:

- ▶ advice, consultation and interpretation
- ▶ continuing education and professional development
- ▶ health emergency preparedness
- ▶ information management
- ▶ knowledge and best practices generation
- ▶ laboratory services
- ▶ library services
- ▶ research, ethics and evaluation
- ▶ support to policy and program development
- ▶ surveillance and population health assessment.

In meeting our Vision, Mission and Mandate, our primary clients include:

- ▶ Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health
- ▶ Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and other ministries
- ▶ local public health units
- ▶ health system providers and organizations across the continuum of care.

In addition to these clients, our *Partners for Health* can also include academic, research, not-for-profit, community-based and private sector organizations and government agencies working across sectors that contribute to Ontarians achieving the best health possible.

# Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019

Evidence, knowledge and action for a healthier Ontario



## Our Values

Our values are critical to shaping PHO's shared organizational culture. They underpin the way people approach their work, make decisions and interact with each other.

PHO is committed to acting in accordance with our values, which are connected and inter-dependent. No one value stands above the others or alone in isolation. We live our values as a shared promise to each other, our clients and our partners.

### **Credible** — Trusted in what we do

Through a commitment to excellence, we are a trusted source of expert knowledge and quality service. Relying on the best available information, methodologies and research, we take pride in providing objective advice, relevant results and high quality evidence.

### **Innovative** — Creative solutions

We continually seek novel approaches – in our thinking, our research and our service delivery. Building a culture of creativity together, we explore new possibilities and pursue innovative solutions to complex operational and public health challenges.

### **Responsive** — Taking action

We anticipate and meet the needs of our clients and partners, acting in a timely and decisive fashion. We are proactive, anticipating change and taking relevant actions that make a difference and achieve positive results. We demonstrate a passion for engaging, understanding and responding to those we serve, and asking how we can do even better.

### **Collaborative** — Stronger together

Our best work and results come from applying our collective experience and knowledge together with our partners. We develop and leverage partnerships that respond to shared challenges and goals. In each relationship, we seek the best from each other, and engage a broad network to share the best of PHO and advance the field of public health.

### **Integrity** — Acting honestly and ethically

We consistently act in the best interests of Ontarians, with impartiality and transparency. We live by the highest standards of integrity in our professional and scientific endeavours. We stand behind our work and our people. We act honestly and ethically, delivering on our commitments.

### **Respect** — Valuing others

We welcome and respect a broad range of ideas and perspectives. We build trust through our commitment to open communications, valuing everyone's unique background and contributions, and celebrating and sharing successes. We achieve greater impact by leveraging the diversity of our people, clients and partners.

# Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019

## Evidence, knowledge and action for a healthier Ontario

### Our Plan for the Future

Any strategic plan looks ahead, but is also a product of its time. The world in which PHO operates continues to evolve. We have to respond to the changing environment, anticipate needs, and remain a leader in promoting optimal health and preventing disease.

Many trends and considerations helped to inform the plan's development. The Ontario government set provincial priorities for health care in the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's *Action Plan for Health Care*. The CMOH, in collaboration with the Public Health Leadership Council, released *Make No Little Plans: Ontario's Public Health Sector Strategic Plan*, which sets a long-term course for the sector.

With the explosion of available information, we strive to collect and supply the most useful and credible data. There is a growing demand for evidence-based decisions and policies. Strong inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaborations create new ways of improving health, and clinical and public health practice.

From new technology to integrated approaches, we see opportunities. There are challenges too. Economic circumstances demand that all publicly-funded services, and the health system in particular, demonstrate value for money. Health service providers need to show both improved health outcomes and economic sustainability. Demographic changes are transforming health human resources. The work-force must continually adapt to rapid technological innovations as well as the current economic context.

We also see opportunities to better ensure our clients can access the right services in a form and location that best meets their needs, to better align programs, explore partnerships to meet PHO's mandate, and renew components of Ontario's public health system.

#### **Our five strategic directions focus on our alignment with the sector, our mandate to transform data into knowledge, our enabling role, our research agenda, and our people:**

1. Provide scientific and technical expertise to strengthen Ontario's public health sector and support the achievement of its goals
2. Accelerate integrated population health monitoring
3. Enable policy, program and practice action
4. Advance public health evidence and knowledge
5. Great people, exceptional teams building a stronger PHO.

## Strategic Direction #1

Provide scientific and technical expertise to strengthen Ontario's public health sector and support the achievement of its goals

### Why It Matters

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, in collaboration with the Public Health Leadership Council (PHLC), released a strategic plan for the sector in April 2013. PHO is an integral component of the public health sector that includes the CMOH, MOHLTC, and 36 local public health units. PHO will work with the sector to achieve the plan's long-term vision – that Ontarians are the healthiest people in the world, supported by the best public health system in the world.

#### The Public Health Sector Plan – Five Goals

The sector plan centres around five strategic goals, and defines areas of collective focus to guide priorities for the next 3-5 years:

1. Optimize healthy human development: focus on early childhood development, including mental wellness and resilience
2. Improve the prevention and control of infectious diseases: focus on immunization
3. Improve health by reducing preventable diseases and injuries: focus on physical activity and healthy eating, tobacco and alcohol
4. Promote healthy environments – both natural and built, with a focus on the built environment
5. Strengthen the public health sector's capacity, infrastructure and emergency preparedness: focus on information and knowledge systems, collaborative mechanisms, and a highly competent workforce.

Consistent with our mandate and our role within the sector, PHO will provide scientific and technical advice and support to our public health sector partners as they work to achieve these goals. PHO will generate new public health knowledge, support population health monitoring, and drive policy and practice action. Our expertise will support the sector in taking actions to achieve its goals through activities that include developing appropriate tools, knowledge products and professional development programs and collaborative opportunities.

### How We Will Measure Success

In taking action, we will be guided by the implementation strategies set out by the CMOH and PHLC. As the public health sector develops specific actionable targets, we will map and measure our activities to each of the goals and targets.

## Strategic Direction #2

### Accelerate integrated population health monitoring



## Why It Matters

Monitoring a population's health status and the factors determining health is a longstanding and essential public health function. Science and technology are evolving rapidly, creating many exciting opportunities to combine traditional and emerging sources of data and enable more complete health monitoring.

The wide range of factors that influence our health do not work in isolation. Increasingly, we are called upon to understand the dynamic relationships between them, and their individual and collective impacts. This requires a greater degree of integration in our approaches to population health monitoring.

We're seeing exciting opportunities to monitor health more comprehensively. We have the potential to access data from across society – digital history of consumer behaviour, social interactions, environment, work and play. At the same time, the rapid expansion of genetic and molecular testing has created a virtual explosion of data in laboratory science.

We can consider these data in new ways to protect and promote health. This may shift how we monitor population health and its complex determinants. We increasingly recognize the differences in our health, or in the potential for health, across our society. Integrated analytic approaches may allow us to examine health inequalities in more sophisticated ways.

Information and knowledge that are derived from data can spur individuals, communities or governments to action. PHO can:

- ▶ Integrate data from diverse sources and sectors
- ▶ Build enhanced models of collaboration
- ▶ Increase accessibility of data, at a level relevant to public health needs
- ▶ Leverage our innovation and creativity to analyze health data
- ▶ Serve as a provincial resource to capture and describe Ontario's health status.

Ultimately, that will provide decision-makers and practitioners the information needed to take actions that can improve health and reduce inequities.

## Where We Will Focus

### **Goal 2.1**

Accelerate the development of a data hub, in collaboration with our health system partners, that enables integrated population health monitoring

- ▶ Continue to work with partners (e.g., ICES) who are well positioned to create a secure and robust environment to assemble, organize, manage, and integrate data, including data from PHO's laboratories.
- ▶ Maintain our trusted partner status by upholding strong privacy and confidentiality principles.
- ▶ Assess gaps in current data, contribute our own data, support the acquisition of new data sources, and incorporate data from areas traditionally unavailable to public health and the health care system to understand the complexity of factors influencing the population's health.
- ▶ Establish innovative and effective processes to organize, integrate, analyze and interpret this data.

### **Goal 2.2**

Produce and disseminate tools and resources which transform data to information and knowledge that guide public health action

- ▶ Analyze and interpret data, transforming it into knowledge products that support decision-making and action.
- ▶ Create standardized tools and methodologies to support policy and practice at local and provincial levels across sectors.
- ▶ Find innovative ways to introduce genomic data into public health practice.
- ▶ Identify health inequities through measuring, collecting, analyzing, and reporting data, including the health data about understudied and priority populations.

## Strategic Direction #2

### Accelerate integrated population health monitoring

#### Goal 2.3

Develop and apply analytic and presentation methodologies that inform population health monitoring

- ▶ Use centralized analytic approaches to achieve system-wide efficiencies in the collection and analysis of aggregated data. This will allow clients to monitor population health in their own jurisdictions, and compare themselves to others using well-accepted and generally-available technology.
- ▶ Maintain the capacity to analyze data at the biologic and individual levels, to investigate the complex linkages between health determinants.
- ▶ Evolve web-accessible analytic and presentation methodologies for population health assessment and surveillance that give policy makers and health professionals summary information at-a-glance to enable just-in-time decisions.
- ▶ Employ effective data visualization strategies to ensure complex information and interactions are understandable to lay audiences.

## How We Will Measure Success

We will continue to focus on bringing together traditional public health and health care data with emerging sources to create a strong base of information and deepen our understanding of health status and what affects health in Ontario.

**In five years, PHO will have accelerated integrated population health monitoring by:**

- ▶ Creating a hub of public health information that synthesizes data from multiple sources and reflects the complex interactions between determinants of health
- ▶ Enabling more consistent access to quality data for assessing the health of the population and health inequalities and leading to improved identification of priority populations
- ▶ Improving methodologies for data collection and analytics to reduce resource costs and allow more efficient use of time, human and financial resources
- ▶ Producing analytic tools and compelling representations of data — ones that are easily understood, and can be used to interpret/understand data and support real-time action
- ▶ Supporting more consistent data collection, analytics and communication throughout the public health sector.

## Strategic Direction #3

Enable policy, program and practice action



### Why It Matters

Several decades of research show a gap between the emergence of new knowledge and its implementation as best practice by health professionals. We need more research to better understand how knowledge is adopted and practice improved. However, we must not wait to complete this research to act on what we already know.

We have to:

- ▶ Synthesize and evaluate existing evidence to influence current and future programs, practice and policy
- ▶ Resolve conflicting information, and recognize uncertainties in evidence
- ▶ Look at risk assessments and the local context
- ▶ Understand what can be accomplished through practice, programming or policy, as different audiences have different goals
- ▶ Help researchers understand what research is needed to support a policy agenda
- ▶ Provide professional development and continuing education to enable better use of evidence
- ▶ Empower public health providers to apply their knowledge with confidence.

## Strategic Direction #3

### Enable policy, program and practice action

As a trusted source of high quality, relevant and credible information, PHO can be a catalyst for action. PHO can guide decisions with the latest evidence and decrease the time between discovery and implementation. We will look to various sources — practitioners and policy makers, as well as the evidence and knowledge base — to understand, evaluate, integrate and disseminate practice-based innovations. In short, we will help turn knowledge into action.

## Where We Will Focus

### Goal 3.1

Synthesize and disseminate knowledge and leading practices in public health to accelerate their application into practice

- ▶ Provide expert advice, consultation and interpretation of results, data and evidence to support clinical and public health practice.
- ▶ Develop knowledge products that synthesize and appraise the best evidence with the Ontario context, epidemiology and practice.
- ▶ Provide a comprehensive suite of tools and supports that are appropriate to different audiences, settings and contexts.
- ▶ Foster change in individual practice, in organizations and at the system-level with innovative approaches, supportive leadership and collaborative problem-solving.

### Goal 3.2

Provide evidence and tools to influence policy and program development

- ▶ Identify potential policy and programs that support healthier Ontarians and reduce inequities.
- ▶ Support policy makers and advocates for healthy public policy by contextualizing and packaging evidence for policy and program consideration and by fostering policy and program change.

### Goal 3.3

Build skills, capacity and competencies in Ontario's health workforce to face tomorrow's public health issues

- ▶ Champion leadership development among Ontario's public health workforce.
- ▶ Inspire and develop the next generation of professionals.
- ▶ Be a leader in professional development and continuing education.
- ▶ Collaborate with other organizations on innovative delivery and content.



## How We Will Measure Success

With our expert staff and continuing focus on knowledge and evidence, we will guide policy and program development and support practice change. By engaging and supporting our partners and clients, we will continuously learn how to better enable informed decisions and informed actions.

In five years, PHO will have enabled policy, program and practice action by:

- ▶ implementing a strategic professional development and continuing education plan that provides a roadmap to increase knowledge and skills
- ▶ empowering decision-making and change management at all levels of the sector
- ▶ demonstrating measurable change in practice
- ▶ influencing policy and program development.

## Strategic Direction #4

### Advance public health evidence and knowledge



## Why It Matters

Today's public health issues are increasingly complex. So many factors are at play: our individual biology, the family we grew up and live in, our communities and society, the geographic and environmental features where we live and work, the stressors we experience, our lifestyle; and our education and role models.

We need new systematic approaches to explain the intricacies, connections and interactions between the many variables that contribute to health.

There are many gaps in our knowledge, and many challenges on the path from knowledge to policy action and practice change. Research and development will allow us to better apply existing knowledge in public health policy and practice. New discoveries will advance knowledge where there are outstanding questions and lead to improved disease prevention, detection, management and control.

Meeting these challenges requires innovations in research across many disciplines, and integration of many perspectives. PHO's interdisciplinary scientific staff and depth of partnerships bring a breadth of expertise and opportunities unique in Ontario, and with few peers globally — to address these challenging issues.

## Where We Will Focus

### Goal 4.1

#### Lead the generation of new public health knowledge in priority areas

PHO will leverage its strengths and opportunities across public health's many disciplines and topic areas to select major research programs in areas of focus. Our research program will capitalize on our resources and facilities across Ontario, as well as our head office and the new public health laboratory at MaRS in Toronto's Discovery District. Our proximity to major teaching hospitals, research institutes and universities and our infrastructure will advance methods in key areas — diagnostics, pathogen discovery, managing outbreaks, detecting drug resistance, environmental assessment, and public health genomics.

Our partnership with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and its University of Toronto site (ICES@UoT) is an important alliance that allows PHO to conduct population-wide studies of health patterns, determinants and outcomes. Our interdisciplinary collaborations support innovative population studies of disease determinants, including biological, environmental, behavioural and social factors (e.g., Ontario Health Study and Ontario Birth Study).

PHO will lead, conduct and support research that contributes to the body of public health knowledge. We will identify public health research priorities by applying criteria related to relevance, impact and likelihood of success, including:

- ▶ Potential for significant benefit to the health of Ontarians
- ▶ Potential for excellence, innovation and originality
- ▶ Opportunities offered by PHO's unique role and capacity that bridge diverse scientific and operational domains (e.g., from molecules to populations)
- ▶ Strategic advantages that enable PHO to build on and leverage existing partnerships, expertise, facilities and infrastructure.

**Implementation science** seeks to identify and evaluate methods to promote the uptake and adoption of research findings and evidence into routine practice in clinical, community and policy contexts. The goal is to identify key factors that will support the sustainable uptake, adoption, and implementation of evidence-based interventions. It is a broad term that embraces activities such as knowledge translation and exchange, knowledge dissemination and knowledge mobilization.

## Strategic Direction #4

### Advance public health evidence and knowledge



#### Goal 4.2

Develop innovative approaches and methodologies for public health implementation science

Ontario has some of the leading scholars in implementation science. Collaborating with them, PHO can leverage its expertise to advance public health practice, program and policy development:

- ▶ Develop and demonstrate the use of a broader conceptualization of evidence.
- ▶ Evaluate existing models of knowledge translation and use of evidence, and develop new frameworks for evidence-informed decision-making.
- ▶ Develop, evaluate and demonstrate innovative methods for the rapid and reliable assessment of diagnostic and risk information.
- ▶ Study the application of new methods and technologies for disseminating and exchanging information.

### **Goal 4.3**

#### **Evaluate and enhance complex population health interventions**

Population health interventions are policies, programs and resource distribution approaches that impact a large number of people by changing the underlying conditions of risk and reducing health inequities. Such interventions require broad action across sectors and disciplines, across society (individual, family, community) and across levels of government. This type of research and evaluation depends on methods that are more comprehensive than those used to address clinical interventions.

#### **PHO will:**

- ▶ Produce knowledge about population health policy and program interventions that operate within or outside the health sector.
- ▶ Conduct research that fills knowledge gaps in areas that are fundamental to the success of high-impact population health interventions.
- ▶ Integrate diverse domains of evidence while working with partners and multi-sectoral teams to advance population health interventions.
- ▶ Develop new approaches, and apply existing methods in innovative ways, to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of multi-level and multi-sectoral population and public health interventions.

## How We Will Measure Success

#### **In five years, PHO will have advanced public health evidence and knowledge by:**

- ▶ Establishing and contributing to innovative methods and approaches for inquiry of high relevance to public health
- ▶ Achieving academic excellence by traditional peer review metrics of scientific and academic performance
- ▶ Improving understanding of complex public health issues, inter-sectoral collaboration and participation in solving public health problems
- ▶ Producing highly-regarded and utilized research and knowledge products, which contribute to the emerging field of implementation science and improve population health interventions.

## Strategic Direction #5

Great people, exceptional teams building a stronger PHO



### Why It Matters

Since beginning operations in the summer of 2008, PHO has evolved rapidly. From a small start-up agency, we've grown into a large and diverse organization of more than 1,000 employees. Through a series of program and functional transfers, PHO has inherited a diverse set of organizational cultures. This strategic plan represents a significant opportunity to create a cohesive workplace aligned with PHO's mandate.

A key strategic focus will be on what joins us together as an organization, through a shared understanding of our Vision, Mission, Mandate and Values. Supported by our Human Resources strategy, these efforts will help us attract and retain great people, boost employee engagement, increase organizational efficiency, and improve service for our internal and external clients.

Aligning our strategic directions, operational goals and performance will benefit our clients and partners. It will ensure more consistent knowledge and awareness of PHO programs and services across the organization, facilitate referrals within the organization, and bring a broad perspective of PHO's strengths and assets together in response to client needs. A stronger PHO will allow a more seamless client experience, bringing the best of PHO to meet clients' needs.

## Where We Will Focus

### **Goal 5.1**

Increase connectedness and enhance communication to cultivate a strong and cohesive organizational culture

- ▶ Instill organizational values into PHO's policies, programs and processes to guide acceptable behaviours and build alignment across the organization.
- ▶ Create a cohesive culture that integrates, aligns and connects the organization – one PHO that is greater than the sum of its parts.
- ▶ Implement innovative organizational processes and technologies to achieve efficiencies.
- ▶ Clarify roles and responsibilities across the organization, ensuring that all employees see themselves as part of realizing PHO's Vision, Mission, Mandate and strategic directions.
- ▶ Enhance internal communication to reduce silos, improve alignment across the organization and build trust.

### **Goal 5.2**

Support learning, individual and team development, and build leadership capacity

- ▶ Establish a leadership framework and development strategy.
- ▶ Embed a culture of learning to enhance individual, team and organizational performance.
- ▶ Develop and implement a proactive approach to workforce and succession planning to improve continuity and consistency of services.

### **Goal 5.3**

Foster a culture of health, safety and wellness that enhances the quality of work life and organizational performance

- ▶ Expand the reach of our wellness strategy to inspire our people to be the healthiest they can be by providing comprehensive health information and promoting healthy choices.
- ▶ Continue to build a preventative safety culture where we identify and act on risks before incidents occur.

## Strategic Direction #5

Great people, exceptional teams building a stronger PHO

### How We Will Measure Success

A clear, consistent focus on our people and our organization will result in better service and support to our *partners for health*. In five years, PHO will have great people and exceptional teams building a stronger PHO by:

- ▶ Improving employee engagement levels across the organization
- ▶ Increasing talent attraction and retention levels
- ▶ Improving staff health and cost savings
- ▶ Fostering an energized and productive workforce that shares information and enables effective and efficient decision-making
- ▶ Improving client satisfaction with our services.



## Enablers for Success

What will it take to realize our Strategic Plan? As we continue to evolve our organizational culture, implement change and advance toward our goals, we will rely on our people, our infrastructure and the following enablers to remain agile and responsive.

### **Governance, accountability and performance**

We adhere to the highest standards of good governance, accountability and careful management of public funds. We ensure that PHO has the right systems and oversight, and gives careful consideration to the use of its resources and assets to advance its Mission. We continuously measure our performance, seeking to demonstrate success, find value for money and improve quality.

### **Change management**

Our early years brought considerable growth and change. Looking ahead, we will apply the tools of change management to improve our foundations and deepen our connections. We will draw on our roots and our histories while also deepening ties, strengthening relationships, aligning structures and processes and influencing/affecting culture change.

### **Privacy and information management**

Our information technology infrastructure ensures that data is accurate, secure and available. Our privacy framework is founded on internationally-recognized practices and legislation to protect the data we use and hold.

### **Strategic partnerships and alliances**

We partner with a broad range of organizations and governments in Ontario and beyond. Our collaborative approach seeks to build capacity, mutual benefit and innovative solutions to complex public health challenges. We rely on partnerships to gather the best knowledge, and bring the collective expertise to problem-solving while avoiding duplication of effort and cost.

### **Better integration of regional perspectives and diverse capacity**

We must draw on the expertise and expanse of the organization as we develop new approaches and solutions. Our reach across Ontario's regions and diverse health sectors positions us to succeed. Our ability to enrich, integrate and align with local, regional and provincial perspectives will be key to success.

### **Organizational capacity, systems and infrastructure investments**

Realizing our Strategic Directions and our Vision, Mission, Mandate and Values will require alignment of our human, physical and virtual assets. We will bring the right mix of people, systems and infrastructure together to meet our ambitious agenda.



## Fulfilling Our Mission

As we look ahead to our next five years, Public Health Ontario will build on our foundations and achievements, relying on our partnerships and the incredible talents of our people. Our evidence and knowledge will enable **informed decisions and actions** by those working in public health, health care and government – the very Mission of our agency and the purpose for which we were created. Our partners will design, deliver and evaluate their practice, programs and policy, drawing on our advice, research, best practices, data, tools, and evidence. The health of Ontarians will improve and inequities will be reduced as they have access to evidence-informed public health and health care services, accompanied by healthy public policy at local and provincial levels.

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