



## Board of Health Meeting Summary

November 14, 2022

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### **Drug-Poisoning Update – Local Need for Supervised Inhalation Service**

Jocelyn Qualtrough and Evan Brockest, Health Promoters for the Family and Community Health Team were joined by Donna Rogers, Executive Director of FourCast to provide an update on the drug-poisoning crisis. Jocelyn Qualtrough shared data on drug-poisonings for 2022 to date. 325 opioid poisoning-related calls have been made to 911 services and 420 visits to the emergency department regarding drug-poisonings have occurred. On average, a person dies every six days in our community due to drug-poisonings. In 2021, 45% of drug-related deaths were attributed to inhalation drug use. In March of 2022, the Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS) opened its doors in Peterborough and has had significant success in saving lives and reducing the harms associated with drug use. However, Evan Brockest shared that while the CTS has been successful, drug-poisonings are still occurring at a high rate in the community. Residents are unable to use inhalation drugs at the CTS, a route of use that with the toxic drug supply is contributing to high rates of poisonings. Brockest shared that the CTS is unable to serve these individuals due to barriers in provincial funding. Legislative and policy changes are required to ensure those who are using inhalation drugs can use the lifesaving services of the CTS. The Board of Health moved to write the Minister of Health to request provincial support for Supervised Inhalation Services in Peterborough.

### **Proposed Fee Increases for Safe Sewage Disposal Program**

Julie Ingram, Manager of Environmental Health explained proposed increases to the Safe Sewage Disposal Program. Effective January 1, 2023, some increases will be in effect for sewage system building permits. The purpose of these fees is to cover the cost of the work required to inspect the sewage system.

### **2023 Cost Shared Budget Approval**

Dr. Thomas Piggott, Medical Officer of Health and Larry Stinson, Director of Operations shared the proposed cost-shared budget for 2023. The proposed budget reflects the potential shortfall of \$608,000 for the upcoming year. The shortfall has built up over previous years where zero or minimal increases have been received in the provincial share of the budget. This shortfall has hidden since 2020 with staff redeployment to COVID and provincial funding for these positions. Shortfalls have led to challenges in meeting the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) which has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic response. The province also still intends on making changes to the provincial/local budget split, increasing the local share after 2023. Under the OPHS, the Board of Health is unable to approve an annual budget that forecasts an unfunded deficit. Moving into 2023, it is anticipated that the province will not increase their funding and additional programs cannot be cut as OPHS must be met. The board therefore approved a budget that increases local funders contributions by \$608,000.

## COVID-19 and Respiratory Viruses Update

Donna Churipuy, Director of Health Protection provided an update on the status of respiratory viruses in the community. On Wednesday, November 9, the COVID-19 Risk Index moved to moderate risk after 6 weeks of being high or very high risk. This reflects the trend being observed in the province as 27 other health units are reporting a decrease in weekly cases. Locally, the B5 omicron variant continues to be the dominant strain. However, 4 cases are now being reported locally who tested positive for the BQ1 variant. Churipuy shared cautious optimism that COVID-19 cases may be decreasing. Unfortunately, in the region, cases, outbreaks, and hospitalizations due to influenza are increasing. Peterborough Public Health (PPH) continues to emphasize the importance of mask use and staying home when ill for any respiratory infection. Churipuy shared that PPH is advocating to local workplaces to implement paid sick days for employees to reduce illness in the workplace. Dr. Piggott has shared a letter with local employers and will be evaluating uptake.