

Date: November 5, 2021
To: Huron Perth Public Health Board of Health
From: Dr. Klassen, Medical Officer of Health & CEO, in collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team
Subject: Municipal Support of HPPH COVID-19 Vaccine Programs

DECISION

Staff recommend that the Board of Health receive this information

Staff recommend that the Board of Health continue to share with municipalities that:

- The global COVID-19 pandemic remains a serious threat
- HPPH, as the lead agency for the COVID-19, response must continue to ensure a strong comprehensive response including, but not limited to:
 - Case and Contact Management, Outbreak Management
 - Enforcement of the Reopening Ontario and the Health Protection and Promotion Acts
 - COVID-19 vaccination (the largest such program undertaken in Ontario)
- Accordingly, HPPH is not yet able to move forward with recovery and will continue to:
 - pause or decrease many other public health programs and services
 - redeploy staff to the COVID-19 response
 - employ additional temporary staff for the COVID-19 response
 - depend on partnerships and collaboration to successfully provide a response in Huron Perth

Staff recommend that this report be shared with municipal partners as one way to acknowledge and express our appreciation for their significant contributions to the success of the pandemic response, and especially COVID-19 vaccination, in Huron Perth.

CURRENT ISSUE

The winter of 2021/2022 will hopefully be a turning point in the COVID-19 pandemic, as vaccination demonstrates its effectiveness in reducing transmission, severe outcomes and death from COVID-19. In the meantime however, the focus of pandemic response efforts will be locally driven, which will require a coordinated response by local partners. HPPH, as the local public health agency, is considered the lead agency in the local pandemic response. It is important to note that continued control over case growth requires high vaccination rates in the eligible population, continued public health measures (including strong Case and Contact Management), and a flattening of growth in mobility (Science Advisory and Modelling Consensus Tables).

On November 3, the province announced that it was expanding COVID-19 third doses to several additional higher risk populations, and signalled the likelihood that all Ontarians would be considered for third doses, starting in January of 2022. In addition, increased case and contact management, outbreak management and COVID-19 enforcement efforts must continue. **This represents an ongoing**

Increased demand on HPPH resources, and we will continue to need the support of local partners, in order to ensure that transmission remains controlled while vaccination efforts continue.

On behalf of HPPH, at this time, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous support we have received from local partners including but not limited to HP & Area Ontario Health Team (and all participating agencies), hospitals, paramedic services, primary care, and volunteers who have all worked together to support the pandemic response, including staffing of vaccine clinics.

HPPH also recognizes the critical role our municipalities have played in supporting the HPPH pandemic response, including providing physical space for Huron Perth residents to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Municipal government is on the frontline every day, protecting residents, providing essential services, and safeguarding local economies. See below Appendix A for a more fulsome description of all the municipal supports provided to HPPH.

HPPH is incredibly proud of the work completed together with our partners; 81.6% of eligible individuals in Huron-Perth are fully vaccinated as of Oct. 31. We remain committed to providing vaccines to the large groups of Huron-Perth residents who will become eligible in the months ahead, and look forward to the ongoing successful collaboration.

When it is safe to do so, HPPH plans to acknowledge the amazing work done by all our partners in a celebration befitting this achievement. In the meantime, we want to pause at this time, and thank everyone as we also seek continued support for the next phase of the pandemic response.

BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Health has communicated that, “Overall, while PHUs will coordinate planning, a broad health system response is needed to ensure coverage for all immunization programs and populations throughout the fall. We are still in a pandemic context, and immunization remains the best prevention tool available. PHUs are expected to work closely with all relevant partners (pharmacy, primary care, hospitals, school boards, OHTS, etc.)” (Memo from MOH)

The pandemic has required collaboration among all levels of governments and across sectors. Locally, we have been pleased with the collaborative and flexible approach taken by all partners and stakeholders building on existing structures and processes, with the goal to best serve the communities of Huron and Perth. As part of Fall Planning, in accordance with Ministry direction, HPPH has engaged with healthcare and municipal partners.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The COVID-19 response has resulted in significant extra costs to HPPH. The Ministry has approved the one-time grants requested by HPPH in 2020 and 2021, and it is anticipated that additional costs incurred by HPPH to provide the vaccine program will also be approved for 2022. The Ministry has also provided direct financial supports to the municipal and healthcare sectors for their COVID-19 pandemic response work.

REFERENCES

Fall/Winter Vaccine Planning: Collaboration across Ontario Health Teams and Public Health Units (Oct 1, 2021). Memo to Approved Ontario Health Teams and Public health units from Melanie Fraser (Associate Deputy Minister, Health Services), Alison Blair (Associate Deputy Minister, Pandemic Response and Recovery), Dr. Kieran Moore (Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health), Dr. Sacha Bhatia (Executive Lead, Population Health and Value Based Care, Ontario Health)

Update on COVID-19 Projections. Science Advisory and Modelling Consensus Tables (Sept 28, 2021.)
https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Update-on-COVID-19-Projections_2021.09.28_English-2.pdf

Appendix A: Municipal Supports Provided

- 1) Comply with, model, and communicate Public Health Measures
- 2) Provide staff resources to help plan mass vaccination clinics; membership on *Huron Perth Mass Vaccination Committee* and/or *Clinic Logistics Working Group*
- 3) Provide staff resources to help support mass vaccination clinics
- 4) Provide physical space for Vaccination Clinics

Under the guidance of the *Huron Perth Mass Vaccination Advisory Committee*, the *Vaccine Logistic Group* worked with municipal partners to identify the best locations for Huron Perth vaccine clinics, based on criteria which included suitability for the provision of clinics and population needs. HPPH is grateful to all willing municipalities. While the Town of Goderich and the City of Stratford were chosen as the main clinic sites, 49 mass vaccination clinics were held in multiple municipal sites across Huron-Perth as part of our plan to make vaccine as accessible as possible. This includes municipalities who hosted clinics, as well as municipalities who provided support to help their neighbouring municipality host for mutual benefit of area residents.

Huron Perth Municipalities:

City of Stratford (Mayor Dan Mathieson, CAO Joan Thomson, CEMC Neil Anderson)

Huron County (Warden Glen McNeil, CAO Meighan Wark, CEMC David Clarke)

- Municipality of Bluewater (Mayor Paul Klopp, CAO Laurie Spence Bannerman)
- Municipality of Central Huron (Mayor Jim Ginn, CAO Steve Doherty)
- Municipality of Howick (Reeve Doug Harding, Clerk Carol Watson)
- Municipality of Huron East (Mayor Bernie MacLellan, CAO Brad McRoberts)
- Municipality of Morris-Turnberry (Mayor Jamie Heffer, CAO/Clerk Trevor Hallam)
- Municipality of South Huron (Mayor George Finch, CAO Dan Best)
- Town of Goderich (Mayor John Grace, CAO Janice Hallahan, CEMC Michaela Johnston)
- Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh
- Township of North Huron (Mayor Bernie Bailey, CAO Dwayne Evans)

Perth County (Warden Jim Aitchieson, CAO Lori Wolfe, CEMC formerly Todd McKone, now David Clarke)

- Municipality of North Perth (Mayor Todd Kasenberg, CAO Kriss Snell)
- Municipality of West Perth (Mayor Walter MacKenzie, CAO Jeff Brick)
- Township of Perth East (Mayor Rhonda Ehgoetz, CAO Theresa Campbell)
- Township of Perth South (Mayor Robert Wilhelm, CAO Rebecca Clothier)

Town of St. Marys (Mayor Al Strathdee, CAO Brent Kittmer, CEMC Neil Anderson)

In addition, we want to extend our thanks to **all** elected officials and **all** municipal staff for their support of the pandemic response, and especially of HPPH programs and services.