

RENEWAL AND TRANSFORMATION

A SHORT-TERM VISION FOR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITIES AND PLANNING IN WINDSOR-ESSEX



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The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically influenced the focus of local public health efforts and resources. COVID-19 has disrupted public health programming, created a backlog of public health services, and impacted established partnerships. As well, the pandemic has furthered existing health inequities and depleted health care capacity, expanding the health disparity gap for those most in need of support. Immediate plans and services will ensure a focus on those disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

While public health must continue to remain vigilant in response to the pandemic, it is necessary for local public health efforts to shift toward other pressing public health concerns. The WECHU will proceed cautiously, balancing the continued COVID-19 emergency response with incremental and strategic steps forward. This will include ongoing assessment of health needs and public health capacity. Longer-term renewal and transformation efforts will require internal capacity building, ongoing assessment and surveillance to ensure that resources align with the needs of residents. This will include addressing organizational readiness and capacity building to achieve community-based goals. This short-term focused set of priorities will direct our planning and actions in specific areas, providing the most value to the community.

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) will work towards re-establishing and catching up on mandated program areas where the WECHU is the sole or a primary service provider. These programs include services such as health inspections, dental services (for qualifying children and adults), new parent supports (for qualifying parents), required school-aged immunizations, and infection prevention and control supports for the community. Beyond these core programs and services, the WECHU has identified mental health, substance use, and healthy growth and development as priorities for immediate response. These priorities will set the direction for the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit for the 2022 year.

GOAL

Renew public health services to address immediate local public health needs and address service backlogs as the COVID-19 pandemic stabilizes. Development of a foundation for sustained long-term support for public health transformation based on local priorities.

SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES



HEALTH ASSESSMENT AND SURVEILLANCE

- Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on local population health outcomes to inform long-term priorities.
- Assessing partner resources and direction to support local public health priorities while the COVID-19 pandemic stabilizes.
- Providing data and support to the community based on assessments to support long-term planning for program renewal and transformation.



ADDRESSING BACKLOG OF SERVICES

- Restart dental health screenings in schools with increased supports for high and moderate risk schools.
- Increasing support for qualifying dental service groups (i.e., children and seniors).
- Routine support for school-age vaccinations.
- Completing all infectious disease investigations in a timely manner.
- Completing all outstanding inspections across the community in a timely manner.
- Enrolling and engaging all qualifying parents in the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program.
- Providing community support for infection prevention and control practices.



MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

- Development of long-term plans/supports based on the assessment of local needs, partner service plans, and evidence-based interventions.
- Mental health and substance supports for school-aged children and youth, families, and workplaces.
- Enhanced support for existing mental health programs/services provided by the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.
- Enhanced support for existing substance use programs/services provided by the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.



HEALTHY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Increased support for positive parenting.
- Support for maternal mental health through new or existing programs and services.
- Breastfeeding support for new mothers.



CAPACITY BUILDING

- Staff re-orientation, training, and preparation for response to long-term local public health priorities.
- Assessing and providing internal support for burnout and mental health considerations because of the COVID-19 pandemic response.