

2023 Strategic Framework

To: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

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Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board of Health (BOH):

1. Receive this report for information.

Key Points

- The Agency is required to have a strategic plan that extends for a 3–5-year period.
- Due to the uncertainty surrounding public health re-organization (2019), followed by the pandemic that began in 2020, the BOH and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) chose to instead develop a streamlined 1-yr strategic framework that would be refreshed annually until such time that it was deemed appropriate to return to a more comprehensive strategic planning process.

- An updated 1-year strategic framework was developed in the 2022 year for use in 2023.
- The Agency plans to return to a longer-term strategic planning process for 2024 and is taking steps to begin this activity later in the 2023 year.

Background

As part of the Agency's annual report and attestation process with the Ministry of Health (the Ministry), every year WDGPH is asked to verify the existence of a strategic plan to demonstrate compliance with Ministry requirements.

In its strategic plan requirement, the Ministry outlines three criteria that should be met:

- that the plan must establish the Agency's key priorities over a 3 -5-year term
- that the plan must include input from staff, clients and community partners
- that the plan must be reviewed at least every other year

Prior to 2019, WDGPH met this requirement as prescribed, every year without exception. However, following the provincial announcement in 2019 regarding the re-organization of public health units, and the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020, the Agency temporarily altered its approach. Both these events triggered uncertainty of the immediate future and in the case of the pandemic, a full-blown emergency response demanding the deployment of all organizational resources.

In response to these unique contexts, a streamlined, one-year strategic review process and framework document was developed in 2020. This 1-year approach has continued up-to and including 2023.

In the 4th quarter of 2022, the Senior Leadership Team together with Management members from each division refreshed the strategic framework document to reflect the Agency's transition to a new normalized state of program service delivery in a post-emergency response context.

The report and appendix content that follows provides information about the priority areas within the 2023 framework, and a number of key activities that the Agency will be focusing on throughout the year.

It is important to note that with the return to a more stable operating environment the Agency is planning to initiate a new longer term (3-5 year) strategic planning process later this year, in a return to the strategic plan requirements outlined by the Ministry.

Discussion

Similar to the previous three years, the 2023 Strategic Framework is intended to provide the organization with a lens that can be efficiently utilized for decision-making, creating plans and resource allocation. It has been designed to reflect the Agency's new operating context and the lessons learned during the pandemic. In addition, the framework has been linked to the Agency's 2023 goal setting and performance management process to ensure that strategic alignment occurs organization-wide. It is also being visually integrated into template documents and posted throughout WDGPH's physical facilities.

Vision / Mission

WDGPH's vision statement remains unchanged given the short term (12 month) outlook of the new framework. It will be re-visited during the more extensive strategic planning process planned for later this year.

The Agency's mission statement, however, has been simplified to ensure that its applicability is more broadly understood and therefore will enhance its resonance internally and externally. It is meant to quickly capture WDGPH's core identity and clearly communicate the role of public health throughout the community. It reads as follows:

Mission: Improve and sustain the health of the communities we serve

Values

The Agency's values remain unchanged and collectively describe the desired character of the Agency. Like the pillars that follow, the values also reflect the altered environment that organizational members are operating amidst. For example:

- The altered workforce (significant number of new people, new employee roles and assignments, etc.)
- A new hybrid operating environment for some staff and a desire to be deliberate about its impact on organizational culture.

- Evolving relationships with community partners and the impacts that the pandemic has had on these connections.
- An evolving health system and the challenges and opportunities that have been exposed more broadly as a result of the pandemic.

The Agency’s values are as follows:



Strategic Priority

The key strategic priority has been altered slightly to communicate the spirit of change that the organization hopes to achieve, and have reflected in all its efforts. While the previous framework also identified *change* as a core priority, the 2023 version depicts a desire not simply to be ready for change – but to assume a posture of leadership when comes to discerning and enacting change. To that end, change-management competencies have been integrated into the annual performance management system referenced above. The 2023 strategic priority is as follows:

Strategic Priority: Embrace, Live and Lead Change

Strategic Pillars

The 2023 Strategic Framework is comprised of three strategic pillars as follows:

- 1) People and Culture
- 2) Partner Relations
- 3) Health System Change

As with the strategic priority, these three pillars which form the foundation of the framework have been updated to reflect 2023 needs and opportunities. Taken together, they provide focus and alignment for all WDGPH employees and direction for the allocation of Agency's resources.

The first pillar provides an intentional inward focus on Agency employees and culture. Its objective is to equip people, enrichen culture, and ultimately to strengthen the identity and capabilities of the organization.

The second pillar looks outwards to the community and partners within WDGPH's geographical boundaries. It is relational in its perspective, and seeks to strengthen and redefine connections with community partners, while at the same time work to identify and address the unique post-pandemic needs facing community members.

The third pillar is fixed on the health sector more broadly throughout the province. It tasks WDGPH to look for opportunities to join, inform and take a leadership role where able in the discussions and planning efforts related to reform and change throughout the sector.

The strategic pillars are as follows:

1. People & Culture - WDGPH has an organizational culture of engagement, inclusion and agility.

Actions:

- Maximize relationships through meaningful in-person interaction
- Further integrate equity, diversity and inclusion objectives throughout the organization
- Equip ourselves for change

2. Partner Relations - WDGPH strategically collaborates with partners to address priority health issues in the community.

Actions:

- Re-engage with community partners
- Work with a range of partners to achieve positive health outcomes

3. Health System Change - WDGPH is positioned to be an agent of change within the broader health sector.

Actions:

- Advance the work of Ontario Health Teams
- Lead change in public health

Outcomes

As part of the development process, the Agency also considered and envisioned the outcomes of success in each of the three pillars. The desired outcomes of success are defined as follows:

1. People & Culture - Have an organizational culture of engagement, inclusion, and agility

- Collegial relationships supporting positive organizational culture
- WDGPH is more inclusive and diverse
- Staff have the skills, knowledge and organizational supports they need to navigate change

2. Partner Relations - Lead community partners to collaboratively address priority health issues, in a coordinated way with clear roles and intended outcomes

- An engagement strategy that is informed by the needs of the community and partners
- WDGPH is connected with relevant partners, who are together positioned to act on health issues

3. Health System Change – Be positioned to be an agent of change within the broader health sector

- WDGPH and local partners are appropriately positioned/aligned in a modernized local health system
- WDGPH is an innovative leader within the public health system

Measuring Implementation

A measurement plan has been developed to ensure timely and accurate monitoring of the 2023 Strategic Framework. Performance indicators have been selected for both actions and outcomes. Measuring actions provides insight on what activities are being undertaken

to support the strategic framework and how well they are implemented. Outcome measures are critical to determining whether the actions are achieving desired results.

Performance indicators will be assessed using a variety of tools, including a performance measurement framework, staff and partner surveys as well as several innovative qualitative approaches, such as collaboration mapping and journalling. Indicators will be assessed frequently in order to guide activities and allow timely adjustments when necessary.

Ontario Public Health Standards

Foundational Standards

- Population Health Assessment
- Health Equity
- Effective Public Health Practice
- Emergency Management

Program Standards

- Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being
- Food Safety
- Healthy Environments
- Healthy Growth and Development
- Immunization
- Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control
- Safe Water
- School Health
- Substance Use and Injury Prevention

2023 WDGPH Strategic Directions

People & Culture: We will maximize relationships through meaningful in-person interaction. Further integrate equity, diversity, and Inclusion objectives throughout the organization and equip ourselves for change.

Partner Relations: We will strategically collaborate with partners to address priority health issues in the community, re-engage with community partners and work with a range of partners to achieve positive health outcomes.

☒ **Health System Change:** We will ensure we are positioned to be an agent of change within the broader health sector, advance the work of Ontario Health Teams and lead change in public health.

References

NA

Appendices

2023 Strategic Framework