

# WDG Board of Health Highlights

## Board of Health Members

George Bridge  
Chair,  
Councillor, County of Wellington  
Mayor, Town of Minto

Allan Ails,  
Councillor, County of Wellington

Chris White  
Secretary-Treasurer,  
Councillor, County of Wellington  
Mayor, Township of Guelph-Eramosa

Christine Billings  
Vice-Chair  
Councillor, City of Guelph

Guy Gardhouse  
Councillor, County of Dufferin  
Mayor, Township of East Garafraxa

Rodrigo Goller,  
Councillor, City of Guelph

June Hofland  
Councillor, City of Guelph

Ralph Manktelow  
County of Dufferin

Dr. Nicola Mercer  
Ex-Officio Member  
Medical Officer of Health & CEO,  
WDG Public Health

**Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health is governed by a Board of Health consisting of local municipal councillors, mayors and community members and is mandated to support the well-being of individuals and communities.**

**Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health, updated the Board on:**

**COVID-19 Impacts on Public Health:** The COVID-19 response has impacted Public Health substantially. Most programs, outside of essential functions, ceased and staff and nurses have been deployed to new COVID-19 response roles. Financially, the cost savings of ceasing programs has not outweighed the cost of the response, which is close to \$1 million so far. The ministry has set aside \$100 million for Ontario's public health COVID-19 related costs, and WDGP will be submitting our costs at the end of Q2. The amount of reimbursement, which is expected in Q3, is yet to be determined (i.e., dollar-for-dollar or a portion). WDGP is currently looking at what our recovery plan will entail, including recovering programs in a safe way, moving to a virtual platform where appropriate, determining how to provide in-person care and adapting to the new COVID-19 reality from a healthcare perspective.

**COVID-19 Testing:** Locally, the latest provincial testing strategy has not impacted WDG as much as other areas of Ontario, as we have had broad testing criteria and did not require a referral. However, with the addition of asymptomatic testing, volumes at our three area Assessment Centres (ACs) have increased, with Guelph and Orangeville completing approximately 200 tests per day. The Guelph AC has also started to assess and treat patients with other respiratory conditions. ACs are a very important part of the testing strategy as the province reopens, and they are prepared for a long-term COVID-19 response.

**Regional reopening:** Restarting the economy is incredibly important for population health, and Public Health is not advocating for the economy to remain shut down. There is currently no regional reopening strategy, however local MOH's input will help enhance and localize any future reopening plan, alongside the province. What works in one area may not work in another. The MOH is unable to override provincial closures orders, however, the MOH can order more restrictive measures if transmissions in an area increase. The goal is for a safe reopening where people can get back to work and stay healthy.

**Childcare:** Childcare is an important part of reopening and allowing people to return to work. There are many challenges with this currently. Schools are closed, with a tentative plan to open in September. Emergency childcare centres are open, but with restrictions. The ministry released guidance for day camps, which are permitted to run this summer, but with many restrictions and requirements, resulting in many day camps choosing not to open. Due to these challenges, there is an increased demand for alternative childcare options, and public health will be advising on a broader childcare strategy to help get people back to work.

**Good news story:** During the pandemic, Public Health has seen a remarkable decrease in infectious diseases including STIs, STDs and the flu.