

**Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health
MINUTES OF BOARD OF HEALTH
Wednesday December 4, 2024**

The Board of Health of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Unit met at 2:08 p.m. virtually via the ZOOM platform.

Members in attendance were: George Bridge (Chair), Guy Gardhouse, David Anderson, Duncan Bull, Linda Busuttil, Steve Cavell, and Chris White.

Member(s) with regrets: Sandra Starr, Erin Caton, Rodrigo Goller and Ralph Manktelow.

Ex-officio member(s) in attendance: Dr. Mercer, Medical Officer of Health & CEO.

Staff members in attendance were: Chris Beveridge, Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, Rita Isley, David Kingma, Kyle Wilson, Lisa Hebden, Emerson Rajaram, Camille Loucks, Brian Herman, Anna Vanderlaan, Lisa Needham, Meghan Wiles, Patryk Wardach, Katrina Arellano, Taylor Beasley, Shelley Nuhn, Phil Wong, Liliana Marinko, Jessica Tomasik, Chuck Ferguson, Shelby Leenders, Danny Williamson, Karen Mulvey, and Laura Kelly (Recording Secretary).

Guests in attendance were: Joanne Shuttleworth (MEDIA), Santana Bellantoni (MEDIA)

1.0 Call to Order

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

Chair G. Bridge called the meeting to order at 2:08 p.m., and Dr. Mercer read the WDGPH Land Acknowledgement in full.

2.0 Disclosure(s) of Pecuniary Interest

There are no disclosures of pecuniary interest declared at this time.

3.0 Approval of Minutes

MOTION: “To approve the Minutes of November 6, 2024 as presented.”

Moved:	L. Busuttil	
Seconded:	D. Anderson	CARRIED

4.0 MOH Updates

MOH Update(s):

Dr. Mercer provided MOH updates as follows:

Walking Pneumonia

- An update was provided on walking pneumonia, a mild form of pneumonia often caused by *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, but other bacteria or viruses may have similar symptoms. The organism causing the illness has become more prevalent due to a reduction in natural immunity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Physicians' offices are observing an increase in cases.
- *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* is not a reportable disease, as such public health does not have formal case numbers to show how many people locally have been diagnosed with this illness.
- Dr. Mercer emphasized the importance of adhering to recommended precautions during the flu and COVID-19 season such as staying home when ill to protect others.

IPAC Hubs

- An update on the Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) hub was provided, delivering an appropriate introduction to BH.01.DEC0424.R35 which was discussed later in the meeting.
- During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Long-Term Care (LTC) and Retirement Home (RH) facilities were significantly impacted by COVID-19, with high mortality rates in some settings.
- In April 2020, WDGPH formed a congregate settings team to address the specific needs of LTC and RH facilities, resulting in significant progress since its inception. This team has become the Infection Control team which also contains the IPAC hub for our community.
- Currently, outbreaks in our congregate settings are unusually low for this time of year, which is extremely positive news and a testament to the positive impact of IPAC measures.
- Fewer affected congregate settings mean less strain on hospitals, ensuring better availability of beds for other patients, such as those undergoing surgery.
- Acknowledgment and appreciation were extended to the IPAC team for their continued efforts, both during the pandemic and presently.

5.0 Business Arising

- The 2025 Tentative Board of Health Schedule was reviewed for the Board by Dr. Mercer. Official approval will be completed at the inaugural meeting on February 5, 2025.
- Dr. Mercer provided the Board with details about the proposed Board of Health Day, historically approved by the Board of Health, which would allow Dr. Mercer to close all WDGPH offices for one additional day on December 27,

2024. Coverage by the MOH/AMOH, VPs, and managerial staff has been established to ensure no disruption to community services.

MOTION: “That the Board of Health authorizes and directs Dr. Nicola Mercer, MOH + CEO, to close the WDGPH offices, for a full day on Friday December 27, 2024.”

Moved: S. Cavell
Seconded: D. Bull **CARRIED**

6.0 Presentation(s)

Monitoring Food Affordability 2024 Report

L. Needham presented in conjunction with Board of Health report BH.01.DEC0424.R34 – Monitoring Food Affordability 2024 Report (see 8.0 BOH Report(s) for summary).

7.0 Consent Agenda

- **BH.01.DEC0424.C17 – Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program**

MOTION: “To receive the Consent Agenda item(s) which have been given due consideration, for information.”

Moved: L. Busuttil
Seconded: D. Anderson **CARRIED**

8.0 BOH Report(s)

BH.01.DEC0424.R34 – Monitoring Food Affordability 2024 Report

Dr. Mercer introduced and L. Needham presented on screen and reviewed the contents of BOH Report BH.01.DEC0424.R34 – as follows:

- L. Needham provided a comprehensive summary of the report, highlighting the strong alignment with the Agency’s 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, emphasizing improved health outcomes and addressing community needs.
- A detailed discussion took place exploring the challenges and opportunities related to accessing data on food distribution program usage to address food insecurity. WDGPH will continue to monitor and respond to critical public health issues.
- While the current constraints limit immediate data gathering, WDGPH is actively engaging in discussions with community partners to identify solutions.
- WDGPH is committed to monitoring food insecurity within the WDG region and will continue to implement strategic and collaborative measures, while also ensuring alignment with its mission and goals.
- Board members requested clarification regarding WDGPH’s strategic plan initiatives and the challenges and opportunities related to accessing food data. A robust discussion followed, with answers provided by L. Needham.

MOTION: “That the Board of Health receive BOH Report BH.01.DEC0424.R34 – Monitoring Food Affordability 2024 Report – as presented for information.”

Moved: L. Busuttill
Seconded: S. Cavell **CARRIED**

BH.01.DEC0424.R35 – LTC/RH 2024 Fall Vaccine Campaign Mid-Year Update

Dr. Mercer introduced and S. Leenders presented on screen and reviewed the contents of BOH Report BH.01.DEC0424.R35 – as follows:

- S. Leenders highlighted the 2024 Fall Vaccine Campaign which targeted Long-Term Care Homes (LTCs) and Retirement Homes (RHs) to administer vaccines for Influenza, COVID-19, and RSV.
- New eligibility criteria for RSV vaccines expanded to include all residents aged 60+ in these facilities.
- The success in engaging residents and ensuring high coverage rates for eligible individuals, was noted.
- Comprehensive support was provided by WDGPH, including vaccine storage inspections, detailed information packages, and public health nurse assistance.
- The campaign demonstrated WDGPH’s commitment to protecting at-risk populations through innovative partnerships and adaptive strategies.
- Lessons learned will inform future initiatives to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

MOTION: “That the Board of Health receive BOH Report BH.01.DEC0424.R35 – LTC/RH 2024 Fall Vaccine Campaign Mid-Year Update – as presented, for information.”

Moved: G. Gardhouse
Seconded: D. Bull **CARRIED**

BH.01.DEC0424.R36 – A Review of the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) and Public Health Dental Programs

Dr. Mercer introduced and M. Wiles presented on screen and reviewed the contents of BOH Report BH.01.DEC0424.R36 – as follows:

- The Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) provides partial dental coverage for eligible Canadians with adjusted family net incomes under \$90,000 and no access to dental insurance. The CDCP expands access to dental care, benefiting a substantial portion of the WDG community, where 53% of households have after-tax incomes under \$90,000.
- The program aims to make dental care accessible for up to 9 million Canadians, with 2.7 million applicants already approved as of October 2024. Those interested in applying can do so online via the Government of Canada website.
- Gaps remain for certain groups, such as new Canadian families who have not filed taxes and seniors unable to afford out-of-pocket costs for services not fully covered by CDCP.

- WDGPH will continue monitoring clinic trends, addressing emerging gaps, and adapting services to maximize community benefit.
- Board members requested clarification regarding program accessibility and costs to the community, answers were provided by M. Wiles and R. Isley.

MOTION: “That the Board of Health receive BOH Report BH.01.DEC0424.R36 – A Review of the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) and Public Health Dental Programs –as presented, for information.”

Moved: S. Cavell
Seconded: C. White **CARRIED**

9.0 Committee (Verbal) Report(s)

Finance + Audit Committee Report:

- NONE.

Human Resources Committee Report:

- NONE.

Executive Committee Report:

- NONE.

10.0 Correspondence

- NONE

12.0 Approval of Closed Session Minutes

MOTION: “To approve the Closed Session Minutes of November 6, 2024 as presented.”

Moved: L. Busuttill
Seconded: G. Gardhouse **CARRIED**

13.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

MOTION: “To adjourn the meeting.”

Moved: D. Anderson
Seconded: S. Cavell **CARRIED**

APPROVED this 5th day of February, 2025.

Board of Health Chair

Medical Officer of Health, CEO

