

Municipality Of Chatham-Kent
Community Human Services
Public Health Unit

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Teresa Bendo, Director, Public Health
Date: July 20, 2020
Subject: COVID-19 Response- Public Health Staffing Needs

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The immediate hiring of one Program Assistant, one Public Health Inspector, and two Public Health Nurses for a period up to one year be approved.
2. Any municipal cost-share requirements be funded through the CHS Reserve.

Background

In response to the declaration of a global pandemic and local public health emergency, CK Public Health implemented its pandemic and business continuity plan. As a result, CK Public Health has maintained only its essential services.

Significant efforts and resources, both staffing and financial, have been dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic here in Chatham-Kent to minimize the pandemic's impact.

In recognition of the extraordinary and ongoing efforts of public health units to manage this pandemic, on April 23, 2020 Boards of Health received written notice from the Ministry of Health of additional funding to mitigate extraordinary costs as a result of the management of the pandemic.

Comments

As Chatham-Kent has entered Stage 3, CK Public Health has begun a gradual, staged approach to resuming programs and services that were scaled back or stopped since March 13, 2020.

Some of the programs and services that were scaled back or stopped include:

- dental services for low-income children and seniors;
- healthy sexuality clinics;
- regular student immunizations;
- in-home family visits for the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program;
- health promotion campaigns;
- prenatal and breastfeeding classes;
- food handler classes;
- routine inspections of food establishments, personal service settings; and
- beach water testing.

Based on the most recent flu pandemics, this outbreak will likely last 18 to 24 months with hot spots popping up periodically.

In order to 'return to normal business' while continuing to respond to the pandemic, CK Public Health requires additional support in a number of areas to:

- assist businesses in operating safely in this new reality;
- return to routine inspections to enforce food safety, water safety, and infection control standards;
- support ongoing mobile COVID testing in the community and at local farms;
- support school boards with their plans for schools in the fall;
- plan for a potential second wave of the pandemic;
- ensure the ongoing timely contact tracing and case management of positive COVID cases;
- plan for mass COVID immunization clinics; and
- catch up on student immunizations and other services that were put on hold in March.

Additional staffing will be required when mass immunization clinics for COVID-19 begins.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendations in this report support the following areas of strategic focus:

Economic Prosperity:

Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy

A Healthy and Safe Community:

Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth

People and Culture:

Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community

Environmental Sustainability:

Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendations in this report support the following critical success factors:

Financial Sustainability:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable

Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership

Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors

Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

Staffing requirements were discussed with both the CK Public Health management team, and the General Manager, Community Human Services.

Financial Implications

CK Public Health will endeavor to fund these positions within its current 2020 and 2021 budgets. Should additional funding be required, CK Public Health will seek this additional funding through the Province’s mechanism for reimbursing extraordinary pandemic expenses. Any cost shared financial municipal requirements for these additional positions will be covered through the CHS Reserve.

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Attachment: None

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