| **To:** | Mayor and Members  
Board of Health |
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| **From:** | Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
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| **Date:** | September 2008 |
| **Re:** | Emergency Planning Update – BOH08037 (City Wide) |

**Council Direction:**
N/A

**Information:**
The purpose of this report is to update the Mayor and Board of Health on Emergency Planning within Public Health Services.

**Background:**
Public Health Services Emergency Management Program has evolved over several years as required by legislation and through the needs of the City. The governing legislation for municipal emergency management has changed significantly over the years. With the introduction of the Emergency Management Act (EMA) municipalities were required to have an emergency management program. This included the positioning of an Emergency Management Coordinator, program committees, emergency plans, training and education. Regulations were enacted under the EMA listing the specific objectives defined in the Act (Ontario Regulation 380/04). ‘Program elements’ were completed and continue to be maintained within the City of Hamilton. Adjustments were made to the EMA and it was renamed the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (R.S.O. 1990, chapter E.9). Public Health Services has aligned their Emergency Management Program under the required legislation following the regulations of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (R.S.O. 1990, chapter E.9)

In the spring of 2008, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has introduced the draft Ontario Public Health Standards. These standards specify the mandatory health programs and services provided by boards of health. Public Health Emergency
Preparedness is a new standard. Its goal is to enable and ensure a consistent and effective response to public health emergencies. In preparation of these standards and to guide our work Public Health Services developed a strategic plan for emergency preparedness. Goal B of the strategic plan; ‘Support community preparedness for and response to public health emergencies’, has been the focus of the emergency preparedness initiatives at Public Health Services.

Emergency program components that have been addressed to meet the objectives of Goal B action plan are:

- the development of emergency policy’s & procedures including emergency plans with sub plans for contaminated water, suspicious packages and infectious disease outbreaks such as a pandemic influenza
- the establishment of an identified Emergency Management Program Committee for managing and coordinating emergency operations and providing the personnel and resources needed during an emergency
- ensuring a method of notifying key Public Health officials and employees when an emergency response is required
- dedicating an Emergency Operations Centres from which to manage the entire emergency A team of trained emergency response Public Health employees
- developing a training and awareness program to keep public health service employees informed of their role during an emergency response has been initiated
- ensuring a process for coordinating and requesting assistance from health care and community agencies has been established

Public Health Services collaborates at the municipal and provincial level to ensure alignment of the emergency management program. The PHS emergency planner works with the City Emergency Management Coordinator on evacuation planning, continuity of operations planning, critical infrastructure assurance program and awareness campaigns such as Emergency Preparedness Day. The PHS emergency planner coordinates quarterly meetings with Emergency Public Health Planners from Central-West Ontario. The mission of this group is to enhance emergency management programs across health units in Central-West Ontario.

Public Health Services under the leadership of the Medical Officer of Health has led the coordination of a health systems response to a Pandemic Influenza. The Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee comprised of representatives from our hospitals, the public health lab, Emergency Medical Services, Community Care Assess Centre, Long Term Care Homes, infectious disease physicians and community physicians meet every two months to plan and prepare for a pandemic influenza in the City of Hamilton. Pandemic plans for these respective agencies have been developed and an awareness campaign has been initiated to keep staff informed of pandemic planning initiatives.
Summary

As Public Health Services continues to prepare for an emergency, the framework and partnerships developed for emergency response has brought together many community partners to strengthen coordination at the municipal level and increase our joint capacity to respond to an emergency. Through emergency preparedness planning and working together, the City, PHS and its partners will be well equipped to reduce illness, death and social disruption in the City Of Hamilton in the event of a large-scale human health emergency.

Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
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Public Health Services