

Modernizing Ontario's Public Health Units

Ontario currently has 35 public health units across the province delivering programs and services, including monitoring and population health assessments, emergency management and the prevention of injuries. Funding for public health units is shared between the Province and the municipalities.

However, the current structure of Ontario's public health units does not allow for consistent service delivery, could be better coordinated with the broader system and better aligned with current government priorities. This is why Ontario's Government for the People is modernizing the way public health units are organized, allowing for a focus on Ontario's residents, broader municipal engagement, more efficient service delivery, better alignment with the health care system, and more effective staff recruitment and retention to improve public health promotion and prevention.

As part of its vision for organizing Ontario public health, the government will, as first steps in 2019–20:

- Improve public health program and back-office efficiency and sustainability while providing consistent, high-quality services, be responsive to local circumstances and needs by adjusting provincial–municipal cost-sharing of public health funding; and
- Streamline the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion to enable greater flexibility with respect to non-critical standards based on community priorities.

The government will also:

- Establish 10 regional public health entities and 10 new regional boards of health with one common governance model by 2020–21;
- Modernize Ontario's public health laboratory system by developing a regional strategy to create greater efficiencies across the system and reduce the number of laboratories; and
- Protect what matters most by ensuring public health agencies focus their efforts on providing better, more efficient front-line care by removing back-office inefficiencies through digitizing and streamlining processes.