

# Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS)



The Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS): Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability are established by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for the provision of mandatory health programs and services, pursuant to Section 7 of the **Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7**. The revised Standards were updated in 2017 and came into effect in 2018.

## The Standards:

- Establish requirements for public health programs and services and outline the expectations for boards of health, describing how programs are to be implemented
- Define the responsibilities of boards of health in an integrated health system and are informed by the core public health functions which include:
  - Assessment and Surveillance
  - Health Promotion and Policy Development
  - Health Protection
  - Disease Prevention
  - Emergency Management
- Are focused in four domains: Social Determinants of Health, Healthy Behaviours, Healthy Communities, and Population Health Assessment.
- Highlight four principles: Need, Impact, Capacity, and Partnership, Collaboration and Engagement. These principles guide boards of health to ensure they assess, plan, deliver, manage and evaluate public health programs and services to meet local needs, while continuing to work towards common outcomes.
- Include nine **Program Standards**:
  - 1. Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being** - to reduce the burden of chronic diseases of public health importance and improve well-being.
  - 2. Food Safety** - to prevent or reduce the burden of food-borne illnesses.
  - 3. Healthy Environments** - to reduce exposure to health hazards and promote the development of healthy built and natural environments that support health and mitigate existing and emerging risks, including the impacts of a changing climate.
  - 4. Healthy Growth and Development** - to achieve optimal preconception, pregnancy, newborn, child, youth, parental, and family health.
  - 5. Immunization** - to reduce or eliminate the burden of vaccine preventable diseases through immunization.
  - 6. Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control** - to reduce the burden of communicable diseases and other infectious diseases of public health significance.
  - 7. Safe Water** - to prevent or reduce the burden of water-borne illnesses related to drinking water; to prevent or reduce the burden of water-borne illnesses and injuries related to recreational water use.
  - 8. School Health** - to achieve optimal health of school-age children and youth through partnership and collaboration with school boards and schools.
  - 9. Substance Use and Injury Prevention** - to reduce the burden of preventable injuries and substance use.

- Are accompanied by requirements, **protocols** and **guidelines** for each Program Standard, and **reference documents** that provide information on evidence and best practices
- Include four **Foundational Standards** which articulate specific requirements that underlie and support all program standards:

**1. Population Health Assessment**

**2. Health Equity**

**3. Effective Public Health Practice** divided into three sections:

- Program Planning, Evaluation and Evidence-Informed Decision-Making
- Research, Knowledge Exchange and Communication
- Quality and Transparency

**4. Emergency Management**

Both the Foundational and Program Standards articulate broad population-based goals and program outcomes, and specific requirements.

**Organizational Requirements**

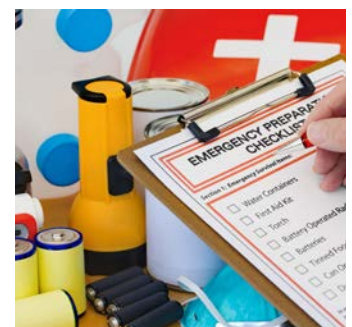
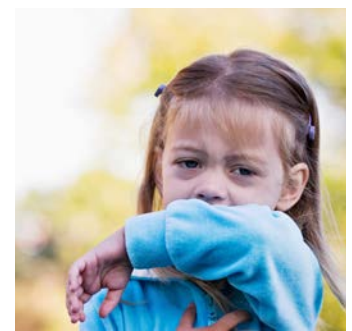
Within the Standards, the Organizational Requirements outline the expectations for the effective governance of boards of health and effective management of public health units. They incorporate the following functions:

- **Monitoring and reporting** to measure the activities and achievement of boards of health and assess the results (to demonstrate value and contribution of public health)
- **Continuous quality improvement** to encourage changes in processes, address identified problems, and improve performance, efficiency and effectiveness
- **Financial management** to ensure that resources are used efficiently and in line with local and provincial requirements
- **Compliance** to ensure boards of health meet ministry expectations for required activities articulated in legislation, standards, funding agreements, and policies.

The Organizational requirements support the achievement of a high standard and quality of public health practice and good governance and management practices that provide the foundation for effective delivery of programs and services.

The **full PDF version** of the OPHS can be found on the **Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's** website.

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.



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