

NEW REPORT SAYS SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO ONTARIO'S PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM SINCE 2004

Operation Health Protection Reviewed In The Chief Medical Officer Of Health's Report To The Ontario Legislature

NEWS

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Operation Health Protection, the Ontario government's plan to revitalize the province's public health system has resulted in significant improvements but more work needs to be done to address the issue of leadership vacancies in senior public health positions, says Dr. David Williams, Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health, in his annual report to the Ontario legislature.

Dr. Williams' annual report reviews Operation Health Protection, the three-year action plan to improve public health that was launched by the government in 2004. Key accomplishments of Operation Health Protection include:

- Improvements to the province's capacity to deal with infectious and communicable diseases
- The creation of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion
- Investments in the renewal of the Ontario Public Health Laboratories
- Improvements to health emergency preparedness and response through the creation of the Emergency Management Unit in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

At the same time, Dr. Williams called on the government to address the issue of leadership vacancies in the public health system and to respond to the recommendations of the Capacity Review Committee. The Capacity Review Committee was established as part of Operation Health Protection to examine capacity issues at the local public health unit level. The committee's final report was released in May 2006 and made 50 recommendations to strengthen local health units.

QUOTES

"Operation Health Protection has revitalized the province's public health system," said Dr. David Williams, Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health. "Much has been accomplished through this action plan but more needs to be done to ensure that we have an even stronger foundation for the future."

QUICK FACTS

- Operation Health Protection, a three-year action plan which began in 2004, represented the first comprehensive changes to the province's public health system since the 1980s.
- Ontario's investment in local public health units grew to \$459 million in 2007, compared to \$252 million in 2004.
- As of September 1, 2008, thirteen public health units did not have permanent Medical Officers of Health.
- As of September 1, 2008, six public health units had vacant Associate Medical Officer of Health positions.

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