

February 12 Board of Health Meeting Summary

Written by [Communications](#), February 14, 2020

Peterborough Regional Health Centre – Transforming Healthcare within a Shifting Provincial Landscape

Dr. Peter McLaughlin, President & CEO of Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) together with Don Gillespie, PRHC Board Chair, provided an update on the hospital's operations and current plans. They highlighted the continuing increase in emergency department visits which are expected to top 90,000 in 2020. PRHC developed a new partnership with Rubidge Retirement Residence to develop a transitional care unit in support of alternative level of care patients. PRHC is one of 23 community partners who have formed the Peterborough Ontario Health Team that was approved by the Ministry of Health in 2019. The goal of this team is to make it easier for patients to navigate the healthcare system, with an initial focus on frail, elderly patients with co-morbidities, and also mental health patients. Dr. Salvaterra commended PRHC for successfully recruiting an Infectious Disease Specialist to our community.

BWXT Application for Licence Renewal

In 2019, BWXT began the process of [requesting a licence](#) from the [Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission](#) (CNSC) for the option to produce natural uranium dioxide pellets at its Peterborough facility. The BWXT site in Peterborough also uses [beryllium](#), a hazardous substance, and known carcinogen. The CNSC is responsible for regulating the use of nuclear energy and materials to protect health, safety, security and the environment; and to share objective scientific, technical and regulatory information to the public. Some community members have expressed concerns about the possibility of increased health risks to people living in the area, children attending a nearby school, and employees at the BWXT plant if the licence is approved. Staff at Peterborough Public Health have been consulting with Public Health Ontario, the CNSC, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, BWXT and others to ensure these

concerns are addressed. PPH staff visited BWXT's Toronto site on February 11 to learn more about the pelleting process and the use of liquid hydrogen. The CNSC is holding public hearings in March to review community concerns. PPH submitted an intervention letter that made the following recommendations prior to licence approvals:

1. That BWXT implement a comprehensive environmental monitoring program to provide sufficient data to assess the full extent of uranium and beryllium emissions in the surrounding area prior to any decision regarding renewal of the licence and the addition of pelleting at the Peterborough site.
2. That the BWXT Peterborough facility retain the services of an independent, neutral third party for soil, water, and air testing for Uranium and Beryllium, as appropriate, and publicly share all reports and test results in their entirety; and
3. That the BWXT Peterborough facility establish a Community Liaison Committee (CLC) in Peterborough, similar to that which has been established in Toronto.

The board received a staff report which states Peterborough Public Health's hope that these additional recommendations will be considered by CNSC and believe that these measures will help increase our community's confidence with sampling results and ensure that moving forward, our community's concerns are addressed.

Annual Service Plan 2020

Donna Churipuy, Director of Public Health Programs, shared PPH's 2020 Annual Service Plan, a document that all local public health agencies are required to submit to the Ministry of Health. It is organized according to the Ontario Public Health Standards and outlines all activities to be undertaken this year by PPH and the associated budget assignments. The plan also details the epidemiological evidence used to identify public health needs and priorities in the community. This evidence informs the public health programs and services PPH will deliver to local priority populations. Addressing health inequities over the long-term is fundamental to public health work. Health inequities exist when differences in health status are systematic across population groups; are socially produced and modifiable; and are unfair and/or unjust because opportunities for

health and well-being are limited. Reducing the negative impact of social determinants that contribute to health inequities remains a core focus of PPH. Achieving health equity means that all people can reach their full health potential and are not disadvantaged from attaining it because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, social class, socioeconomic status or other socially-determined circumstance. The program areas covered by the 2020 Annual Service Plan include:

- Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-being
- Food Safety
- Emergency Management
- Foundational Standards (Population Health Assessment, Health Equity, Effective Public Health Practice)
- Healthy Environments
- Healthy Growth and Development
- Immunization
- Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control
- Safe Water
- School Health
- Substance Use and Injury Prevention

Report on 2019 Donations

The Board of Health commended PPH staff for their generous donations in 2019 which increased by \$1,000 over the previous year.

Update: COVID-19

The World Health Organization has renamed the disease caused by the novel coronavirus as COVID-19. Dr. Salvaterra noted that there are some positive trends, such as the lack of identification of new cases in Ontario, which still stands at 3 confirmed cases. So far three flights of repatriated Canadians have arrived at CFB Trenton. There has been a change in the management of travellers returning from

Hubei province as they will all need to self-isolate for 14 days. Public health agencies are expected to contact them daily. The local Interagency Pandemic Planning Committee has re-convened and is working on updating their pandemic plans and business continuity plans.

Next meeting:

The Board of Health meets next on **Wednesday, March 11, 2020** at 5:30 p.m. in the Dr. J. K. Edwards Board Room, third floor, 185 King St., Peterborough, Ontario.